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## Pickpocket 'magic' technique

After years of ignoring magic, neuroscientists, including those at the California Institute of Technology, are starting to realise that the methods magicians use to manipulate the human mind might hold important insights into how it works.

A good starting point for the science of magic is the magicians' own classification of their art into three broad types of tricks: misdirection, illusion and forcing (1):

### Misdirection

Misdirection lies at the heart of magic. It is the art of diverting the audience's attention away from what magicians call the "method" – the act of deception itself

### Illusion

Illusions rely on the fact that much of what you think you see is actually invented by your brain. Perception is not about capturing a full picture of reality, but taking snapshots of the world and making the rest up.

### Forcing

This is any technique that gives the target the illusion of free will when in fact they have none. The classic example is the "pick a card, any card" trick where the magician uncannily knows what you picked.

(1) New Scientist (2008) *Magicology: Casting a spell on the mind* [online].

### Downloads and links

[www.pickpockets.com](http://www.pickpockets.com)

[Apollo the Pickpocket video](#)

[Apollo Robbins – Magic of Consciousness Symposium](#)

[James Harrison – Pickpocket Show](#)

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