

Velvet Hands

Your sense of touch can surprise you.

Try this:

- Lightly rub the big mesh disk between your hands. Move your hands across the mesh **VERY SLOWLY**, keeping them pressed gently together.
- Some people get a strange slippery or velvety sensation when they do this. If you don't feel it right away, keep trying—it can take a little while to set in.
- Try it with your hand on one side and a friend's on the other.



What's going on?

Scientists are not sure what causes this strange phenomenon.

There are many types of touch-sensitive nerves in your skin. Some respond to pressure, some to fast vibrations, some to slow. Everything you touch—water, a rubber ball, a feather—stimulates a distinct combination of nerves that helps you identify what you're touching.

There's clearly something special about the combination of nerves stimulated here. Some people say they feel as if there's a thin membrane between their hands. What does it feel like to you?