

Ants in space

蚂蚁在太空的表现

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据观察，被带到国际空间站的蚂蚁在从容器壁上摔落之后仍然能够借助团队合作来寻找新区域。研究人员想借鉴蚂蚁的合作方法来更好地开发机器人。以下是 BBC Julie Peacock 的报道：

Researchers studying how **microgravity** affected their behaviour found the ants demonstrated an impressive ability to walk on surfaces aboard the space station. Crucially, the ants still worked as a team **to map out** their environment. But Professor Deborah Gordon, who led the research, said they reacted very differently from the astronauts in **zero gravity**.

(Professor Deborah Gordon)

(They) kind of **skittered off** to one side and **tumbled around**. And it was always really interesting to see how they got their hold back. Sometimes they would grab on to another ant and climb back down on the ant back on to the surface, and sometimes they somehow managed to flatten themselves back on to the surface. And so I think the **biomechanics** of that are interesting.

The results from this research could have applications here on Earth. It's hoped that information gathered from the ants' search **patterns** could help researchers create robots which could perform tasks like searching disaster zones or burning buildings for survivors.

Questions

1. What did the ants do as a team in the space station?
2. How did the ants get back onto surfaces in zero gravity?
3. What kind of robot could be created with the help of this study?
4. Which verb from the article means 'to assemble'?

Vocabulary and definitions

| | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| microgravity | 微重力 |
| to map out | 筹划 |
| zero gravity | 失重 |
| to skitter off | 滑倒 |
| to tumble around | 翻滚 |
| biomechanics | 生物机械学 |
| patterns | 规律 |

Answers to the questions:

1. What did the ants do as a team in the space station?

Answer: They mapped out their environment.

2. How did the ants get back onto surfaces in zero gravity?

Answer: They grabbed onto another ant and climbed back down on to the surface.

3. What kind of robot could be created with the help of this study?

Answer: Robots that search for survivors in disaster zones and burning buildings.

4. Which verb used in the article means to assemble?

Answer: To gather.