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Reporting Summary

Nature Portfolio wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. For further information on Nature Portfolio policies, see our [Editorial Policies](#) and the [Editorial Policy Checklist](#).

Statistics

For all statistical analyses, confirm that the following items are present in the figure legend, table legend, main text, or Methods section.

n/a Confirmed

- ☐ ☒ The exact sample size (n) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement
- ☐ ☒ A statement on whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly
- ☐ ☒ The statistical test(s) used AND whether they are one- or two-sided
Only common tests should be described solely by name; describe more complex techniques in the Methods section.
- ☐ ☒ A description of all covariates tested
- ☐ ☒ A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as tests of normality and adjustment for multiple comparisons
- ☐ ☒ A full description of the statistical parameters including central tendency (e.g. means) or other basic estimates (e.g. regression coefficient) AND variation (e.g. standard deviation) or associated estimates of uncertainty (e.g. confidence intervals)
- ☐ ☒ For null hypothesis testing, the test statistic (e.g. F , t , r) with confidence intervals, effect sizes, degrees of freedom and P value noted
Give P values as exact values whenever suitable.
- ☒ ☐ For Bayesian analysis, information on the choice of priors and Markov chain Monte Carlo settings
- ☐ ☒ For hierarchical and complex designs, identification of the appropriate level for tests and full reporting of outcomes
- ☐ ☒ Estimates of effect sizes (e.g. Cohen's d , Pearson's r), indicating how they were calculated

Our web collection on [statistics for biologists](#) contains articles on many of the points above.

Software and code

Policy information about [availability of computer code](#)

Data collection	Experimental presentation: Stimuli were presented using PsychToolbox v3 for MATLAB. MEG data were recorded using a 306-channel Elekta Neuromag TRIUX MEG system with MaxFilter software (Elekta Oy) for temporal signal space separation (tSSS). Eye movements were recorded with an EyeLink 1000 system (SR Research Ltd.). Structural MRI data were processed using FreeSurfer v7.1 (Fischl, 2012).
Data analysis	MEG analysis: Data processing used MNE-Python v1.8.0 (Gramfort et al., 2013) with NumPy v1.26.4, pandas v2.2.2, and SciPy v1.14.1. Source reconstruction employed linear constraint minimum variance (LCMV) beamforming with boundary element method (BEM). Machine learning: Multivariate decoding used scikit-learn v1.5.2 with Ridge regression. ResNet50 classification entropy used PyTorch v1.13.1 and torchvision v0.14.1 via thingsvision v2.4.1. ResMem memorability scores used ResMem v1.1.6 with PyTorch v1.13.1. Phase-amplitude coupling: Custom Python implementation following Tort et al. (2010) with surrogate testing using Aru et al. (2015). Statistical analysis: Mixed-effects modelling used statsmodels v0.14.4. Visualisation: matplotlib v3.9.2, seaborn v0.13.2, and MNE-Python plotting functions. The complete analysis code is publicly available at https://github.com/KietzmannLab/memdur .

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the research but not yet described in published literature, software must be made available to editors and reviewers. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). See the Nature Portfolio [guidelines for submitting code & software](#) for further information.

Data

Policy information about [availability of data](#)

All manuscripts must include a [data availability statement](#). This statement should provide the following information, where applicable:

- Accession codes, unique identifiers, or web links for publicly available datasets
- A description of any restrictions on data availability
- For clinical datasets or third party data, please ensure that the statement adheres to our [policy](#)

All derived data necessary to reproduce the analyses and figures are available at GRO.data: Sulewski, P., Amme, C., Hebart, M. N., König, P. & Kietzmann, T. C. (2026). Data: Fixation duration on natural scenes is explained by memory encoding not processing demand. <https://doi.org/10.25625/DDJ5C3>.

Research involving human participants, their data, or biological material

Policy information about studies with [human participants or human data](#). See also policy information about [sex, gender \(identity/presentation\), and sexual orientation](#) and [race, ethnicity and racism](#).

Reporting on sex and gender	Sex and gender information was collected through self-reporting during participant recruitment. Five participants (3 female, 2 male; mean age = 27.8 years, SD = 2.6)
Reporting on race, ethnicity, or other socially relevant groupings	Race and ethnicity information was not systematically collected in this study. The research questions focused on fundamental neural mechanisms of visual attention and memory that are not expected to vary by racial or ethnic background. Participants were recruited from the local university community without specific consideration of racial or ethnic diversity. No analyses based on race, ethnicity, or other socially constructed variables were conducted.
Population characteristics	Participants were five healthy adults (3 female, 2 male; mean age = 27.8 years, SD = 2.6) with normal or corrected-to-normal vision. All participants were neurologically healthy with no history of psychiatric or neurological disorders. Participants had no contraindications for MEG recording and met standard inclusion criteria for neuroimaging studies.
Recruitment	Participants were recruited through the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences (MPI CBS) Leipzig participant database. Potential participants underwent screening to ensure they met inclusion criteria: neurologically healthy adults with normal or corrected-to-normal vision and no contraindications for MEG recording.
Ethics oversight	The study was approved by the Ethik-Kommission an der Medizinischen Fakultät der Universität Leipzig (Ethics Committee at the Medical Faculty of the University of Leipzig) and conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. All participants provided written informed consent prior to participation. with normal or corrected-to-normal vision participated in the study. All participants provided written consent prior to participation and were financially compensated (€10/hour for the MRI session, €9/hour for MEG sessions plus a fixed €25 travel reimbursement per MEG session). The study was approved by the local ethics committee and conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.

Field-specific reporting

Please select the one below that is the best fit for your research. If you are not sure, read the appropriate sections before making your selection.

☐ Life sciences ☐ Behavioural & social sciences ☐ Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences

For a reference copy of the document with all sections, see nature.com/documents/nr-reporting-summary-flat.pdf

Life sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Sample size	Describe how sample size was determined, detailing any statistical methods used to predetermine sample size OR if no sample-size calculation was performed, describe how sample sizes were chosen and provide a rationale for why these sample sizes are sufficient.
Data exclusions	Describe any data exclusions. If no data were excluded from the analyses, state so OR if data were excluded, describe the exclusions and the rationale behind them, indicating whether exclusion criteria were pre-established.
Replication	Describe the measures taken to verify the reproducibility of the experimental findings. If all attempts at replication were successful, confirm this OR if there are any findings that were not replicated or cannot be reproduced, note this and describe why.
Randomization	Describe how samples/organisms/participants were allocated into experimental groups. If allocation was not random, describe how covariates were controlled OR if this is not relevant to your study, explain why.
Blinding	Describe whether the investigators were blinded to group allocation during data collection and/or analysis. If blinding was not possible, describe why OR explain why blinding was not relevant to your study.

Behavioural & social sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Study description	This study employed a quantitative experimental design combining magnetoencephalography (MEG) with eye-tracking to investigate the neural mechanisms underlying fixation duration control during natural scene viewing. The study utilised multivariate pattern analysis of MEG source-space data, behavioural analyses of fixation patterns, and computational modelling using artificial neural networks to test competing hypotheses about fixation timing control.
Research sample	The research sample consisted of five healthy adult participants (3 female, 2 male; mean age = 27.8 years, SD = 2.6) recruited through the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences Leipzig participant database. All participants had normal or corrected-to-normal vision and met standard inclusion criteria for neuroimaging studies (neurologically healthy with no contraindications for MEG recording). This sample size is representative for high-quality MEG studies involving extensive data collection per participant, enabling robust within-subject analyses across a large number of trials.
Sampling strategy	The study design prioritised within-subject analyses with extensive trial numbers per participant (4,080 scenes per participant, yielding >200,000 fixation events total) rather than between-subject comparisons. This approach follows established practices in neuroimaging research where high-quality, extensive within-subject data collection is prioritised to achieve sufficient statistical power for complex neural analyses.
Data collection	Data were collected using simultaneous MEG (306-channel Elekta Neuromag TRIUX system) and eye-tracking (EyeLink 1000 system at 1000 Hz) during natural scene viewing. Participants explored 4,080 natural scenes for 4 seconds each, with a scene description task performed on 25% of randomly selected trials. During the captioning task, participants' verbal scene descriptions were recorded using audio equipment within an 8-second response window while a blank grey screen was presented. The experimenter and a medical-technical assistant (MTA) responsible for the MEG system were present during data collection. The researcher was not blinded to experimental conditions, as this was an observational study without experimental manipulations requiring blinding.
Timing	Data collection began in August 2022 at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences Leipzig. Each participant completed 10 recording sessions spread over approximately 40 days. This multi-session approach enabled acquisition of the full dataset of 4,080 scenes per participant whilst minimising fatigue effects and maintaining data quality.
Data exclusions	Fixations shorter than 50 ms or longer than 1000 ms were excluded based on pre-established physiological criteria. For specific analyses, additional exclusions were applied: (1) last fixations of each trial were excluded to avoid boundary effects, (2) duration and entropy outliers were removed using the 2nd-98th percentile range per participant.
Non-participation	No participants dropped out or declined participation. All five recruited participants completed the full experimental protocol.
Randomization	Participants were not allocated into experimental groups as this was an observational study examining natural viewing behaviour. Scene presentation order was randomised for each participant. The scene description task was presented on 25% of randomly selected trials to encourage active engagement while maintaining naturalistic viewing behaviour.

Ecological, evolutionary & environmental sciences study design

All studies must disclose on these points even when the disclosure is negative.

Study description	<i>Briefly describe the study. For quantitative data include treatment factors and interactions, design structure (e.g. factorial, nested, hierarchical), nature and number of experimental units and replicates.</i>
Research sample	<i>Describe the research sample (e.g. a group of tagged <i>Passer domesticus</i>, all <i>Stenocereus thurberi</i> within Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument), and provide a rationale for the sample choice. When relevant, describe the organism taxa, source, sex, age range and any manipulations. State what population the sample is meant to represent when applicable. For studies involving existing datasets, describe the data and its source.</i>
Sampling strategy	<i>Note the sampling procedure. Describe the statistical methods that were used to predetermine sample size OR if no sample-size calculation was performed, describe how sample sizes were chosen and provide a rationale for why these sample sizes are sufficient.</i>
Data collection	<i>Describe the data collection procedure, including who recorded the data and how.</i>
Timing and spatial scale	<i>Indicate the start and stop dates of data collection, noting the frequency and periodicity of sampling and providing a rationale for these choices. If there is a gap between collection periods, state the dates for each sample cohort. Specify the spatial scale from which the data are taken</i>
Data exclusions	<i>If no data were excluded from the analyses, state so OR if data were excluded, describe the exclusions and the rationale behind them, indicating whether exclusion criteria were pre-established.</i>
Reproducibility	<i>Describe the measures taken to verify the reproducibility of experimental findings. For each experiment, note whether any attempts to repeat the experiment failed OR state that all attempts to repeat the experiment were successful.</i>
Randomization	<i>Describe how samples/organisms/participants were allocated into groups. If allocation was not random, describe how covariates were</i>

Randomization

Blinding

Did the study involve field work? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Field work, collection and transport

Field conditions

Location

Access & import/export

Disturbance

Reporting for specific materials, systems and methods

We require information from authors about some types of materials, experimental systems and methods used in many studies. Here, indicate whether each material, system or method listed is relevant to your study. If you are not sure if a list item applies to your research, read the appropriate section before selecting a response.

Materials & experimental systems

Methods

n/a	Involved in the study	n/a	Involved in the study
☐	☐ Antibodies	☐	☐ ChIP-seq
☐	☐ Eukaryotic cell lines	☐	☐ Flow cytometry
☐	☐ Palaeontology and archaeology	☐	☐ MRI-based neuroimaging
☐	☐ Animals and other organisms		
☐	☐ Clinical data		
☐	☐ Dual use research of concern		
☐	☐ Plants		

Antibodies

Antibodies used

Validation

Eukaryotic cell lines

Policy information about [cell lines and Sex and Gender in Research](#)

Cell line source(s)

Authentication

Mycoplasma contamination

Commonly misidentified lines (See [ICLAC](#) register)

Palaeontology and Archaeology

Specimen provenance

export.

Specimen deposition

Indicate where the specimens have been deposited to permit free access by other researchers.

Dating methods

If new dates are provided, describe how they were obtained (e.g. collection, storage, sample pretreatment and measurement), where they were obtained (i.e. lab name), the calibration program and the protocol for quality assurance OR state that no new dates are provided.

☐ Tick this box to confirm that the raw and calibrated dates are available in the paper or in Supplementary Information.

Ethics oversight

Identify the organization(s) that approved or provided guidance on the study protocol, OR state that no ethical approval or guidance was required and explain why not.

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.

Animals and other research organisms

Policy information about [studies involving animals](#); [ARRIVE guidelines](#) recommended for reporting animal research, and [Sex and Gender in Research](#)

Laboratory animals

For laboratory animals, report species, strain and age OR state that the study did not involve laboratory animals.

Wild animals

Provide details on animals observed in or captured in the field; report species and age where possible. Describe how animals were caught and transported and what happened to captive animals after the study (if killed, explain why and describe method; if released, say where and when) OR state that the study did not involve wild animals.

Reporting on sex

Indicate if findings apply to only one sex; describe whether sex was considered in study design, methods used for assigning sex. Provide data disaggregated for sex where this information has been collected in the source data as appropriate; provide overall numbers in this Reporting Summary. Please state if this information has not been collected. Report sex-based analyses where performed, justify reasons for lack of sex-based analysis.

Field-collected samples

For laboratory work with field-collected samples, describe all relevant parameters such as housing, maintenance, temperature, photoperiod and end-of-experiment protocol OR state that the study did not involve samples collected from the field.

Ethics oversight

Identify the organization(s) that approved or provided guidance on the study protocol, OR state that no ethical approval or guidance was required and explain why not.

Note that full information on the approval of the study protocol must also be provided in the manuscript.

Clinical data

Policy information about [clinical studies](#)

All manuscripts should comply with the ICMJE [guidelines for publication of clinical research](#) and a completed [CONSORT checklist](#) must be included with all submissions.

Clinical trial registration

Provide the trial registration number from ClinicalTrials.gov or an equivalent agency.

Study protocol

Note where the full trial protocol can be accessed OR if not available, explain why.

Data collection

Describe the settings and locales of data collection, noting the time periods of recruitment and data collection.

Outcomes

Describe how you pre-defined primary and secondary outcome measures and how you assessed these measures.

Dual use research of concern

Policy information about [dual use research of concern](#)

Hazards

Could the accidental, deliberate or reckless misuse of agents or technologies generated in the work, or the application of information presented in the manuscript, pose a threat to:

No Yes

- ☒ ☐ Public health
- ☒ ☐ National security
- ☒ ☐ Crops and/or livestock
- ☒ ☐ Ecosystems
- ☒ ☐ Any other significant area

Experiments of concern

Does the work involve any of these experiments of concern:

No	Yes
☒	☐ Demonstrate how to render a vaccine ineffective
☒	☐ Confer resistance to therapeutically useful antibiotics or antiviral agents
☒	☐ Enhance the virulence of a pathogen or render a nonpathogen virulent
☒	☐ Increase transmissibility of a pathogen
☒	☐ Alter the host range of a pathogen
☒	☐ Enable evasion of diagnostic/detection modalities
☒	☐ Enable the weaponization of a biological agent or toxin
☒	☐ Any other potentially harmful combination of experiments and agents

Plants

Seed stocks	Report on the source of all seed stocks or other plant material used. If applicable, state the seed stock centre and catalogue number. If plant specimens were collected from the field, describe the collection location, date and sampling procedures.
Novel plant genotypes	Describe the methods by which all novel plant genotypes were produced. This includes those generated by transgenic approaches, gene editing, chemical/radiation-based mutagenesis and hybridization. For transgenic lines, describe the transformation method, the number of independent lines analyzed and the generation upon which experiments were performed. For gene-edited lines, describe the editor used, the endogenous sequence targeted for editing, the targeting guide RNA sequence (if applicable) and how the editor was applied.
Authentication	Describe any authentication procedures for each seed stock used or novel genotype generated. Describe any experiments used to assess the effect of a mutation and, where applicable, how potential secondary effects (e.g. second site T-DNA insertions, mosaicism, off-target gene editing) were examined.

ChIP-seq

Data deposition

- ☐ Confirm that both raw and final processed data have been deposited in a public database such as [GEO](#).
- ☐ Confirm that you have deposited or provided access to graph files (e.g. BED files) for the called peaks.

Data access links May remain private before publication.	For "Initial submission" or "Revised version" documents, provide reviewer access links. For your "Final submission" document, provide a link to the deposited data.
Files in database submission	Provide a list of all files available in the database submission.
Genome browser session (e.g. UCSC)	Provide a link to an anonymized genome browser session for "Initial submission" and "Revised version" documents only, to enable peer review. Write "no longer applicable" for "Final submission" documents.

Methodology

Replicates	Describe the experimental replicates, specifying number, type and replicate agreement.
Sequencing depth	Describe the sequencing depth for each experiment, providing the total number of reads, uniquely mapped reads, length of reads and whether they were paired- or single-end.
Antibodies	Describe the antibodies used for the ChIP-seq experiments; as applicable, provide supplier name, catalog number, clone name, and lot number.
Peak calling parameters	Specify the command line program and parameters used for read mapping and peak calling, including the ChIP, control and index files used.
Data quality	Describe the methods used to ensure data quality in full detail, including how many peaks are at FDR 5% and above 5-fold enrichment.
Software	Describe the software used to collect and analyze the ChIP-seq data. For custom code that has been deposited into a community repository, provide accession details.

Flow Cytometry

Plots

Confirm that:

- ☐ The axis labels state the marker and fluorochrome used (e.g. CD4-FITC).
- ☐ The axis scales are clearly visible. Include numbers along axes only for bottom left plot of group (a 'group' is an analysis of identical markers).
- ☐ All plots are contour plots with outliers or pseudocolor plots.
- ☐ A numerical value for number of cells or percentage (with statistics) is provided.

Methodology

Sample preparation	<i>Describe the sample preparation, detailing the biological source of the cells and any tissue processing steps used.</i>
Instrument	<i>Identify the instrument used for data collection, specifying make and model number.</i>
Software	<i>Describe the software used to collect and analyze the flow cytometry data. For custom code that has been deposited into a community repository, provide accession details.</i>
Cell population abundance	<i>Describe the abundance of the relevant cell populations within post-sort fractions, providing details on the purity of the samples and how it was determined.</i>
Gating strategy	<i>Describe the gating strategy used for all relevant experiments, specifying the preliminary FSC/SSC gates of the starting cell population, indicating where boundaries between "positive" and "negative" staining cell populations are defined.</i>

☐ Tick this box to confirm that a figure exemplifying the gating strategy is provided in the Supplementary Information.

Magnetic resonance imaging

Experimental design

Design type	resting state
Design specifications	<i>Specify the number of blocks, trials or experimental units per session and/or subject, and specify the length of each trial or block (if trials are blocked) and interval between trials.</i>
Behavioral performance measures	None

Acquisition

Imaging type(s)	structural
Field strength	3T
Sequence & imaging parameters	<i>Specify the pulse sequence type (gradient echo, spin echo, etc.), imaging type (EPI, spiral, etc.), field of view, matrix size, slice thickness, orientation and TE/TR/flip angle.</i>
Area of acquisition	Whole Brain
Diffusion MRI	☐ Used ☒ Not used

Preprocessing

Preprocessing software	freemurfer "recon-all" pipeline
Normalization	<i>If data were normalized/standardized, describe the approach(es): specify linear or non-linear and define image types used for transformation OR indicate that data were not normalized and explain rationale for lack of normalization.</i>
Normalization template	<i>Describe the template used for normalization/transformation, specifying subject space or group standardized space (e.g. original Talairach, MNI305, ICBM152) OR indicate that the data were not normalized.</i>
Noise and artifact removal	<i>Describe your procedure(s) for artifact and structured noise removal, specifying motion parameters, tissue signals and physiological signals (heart rate, respiration).</i>
Volume censoring	pydeface - https://github.com/poldracklab/pydeface

Statistical modeling & inference

Model type and settings

Specify type (mass univariate, multivariate, RSA, predictive, etc.) and describe essential details of the model at the first and second levels (e.g. fixed, random or mixed effects; drift or auto-correlation).

Effect(s) tested

Define precise effect in terms of the task or stimulus conditions instead of psychological concepts and indicate whether ANOVA or factorial designs were used.

Specify type of analysis: ☐ Whole brain ☐ ROI-based ☐ Both

Statistic type for inference

Specify voxel-wise or cluster-wise and report all relevant parameters for cluster-wise methods.

(See [Eklund et al. 2016](#))

Correction

Describe the type of correction and how it is obtained for multiple comparisons (e.g. FWE, FDR, permutation or Monte Carlo).

Models & analysis

n/a	Involvement in the study
☒	☐ Functional and/or effective connectivity
☒	☐ Graph analysis
☒	☐ Multivariate modeling or predictive analysis