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Abstract

Prompt detection of movement intention is fundamental to increase the reliability in prostheses control and increase the effectiveness of robotic devices for rehabilitation. A machine learning approach is proposed here to perform activity recognition (overground walking vs rest) using muscles or brain activity. EMG and EEG signals were preprocessed, features in the frequency domain were extracted and the achieved decoding accuracy was around 90%. Although extensive validation is still required, the results constitute a first step towards the goal of predicting gait initiation in real life.



EEG Decoding of Overground Walking and Resting, a Feasibility Study

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Abstract. Prompt detection of movement intention is fundamental to increase the reliability in prostheses control and increase the effectiveness of robotic devices for rehabilitation. A machine learning approach is proposed here to perform activity recognition (overground walking vs rest) using muscles or brain activity. EMG and EEG signals were preprocessed, features in the frequency domain were extracted and the achieved decoding accuracy was around 90%. Although extensive validation is still required, the results constitute a first step towards the goal of predicting gait initiation in real life.

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1 Introduction

In recent years, brain computer interfaces (BCI) have received increasing attention in recent years mainly due to their potential for rehabilitation protocols optimization and prostheses development [1]. Fast detection of the user's intention of movement is in fact fundamental both to increase the actuation reliability of robotic devices/prostheses, especially for amputees, and promote motor recovery at the cortical level through neural plasticity for instance with robot-assisted therapy, functional electrical stimulation or spinal cord stimulation [2].

Electromyographic (EMG) activity may be used to directly activate an external device as it is a direct result of a movement attempt, however it does not provide information on motor intention [3, 4]. On the contrary, recent studies have highlighted significant modifications of brain activity related to movement [5], even in tasks such as stereotyped walking [6, 7], that may be used as features to decode movement intentions. Electroencephalography (EEG) has been reported to contain artifacts, phase and time locked to movement, especially during gait e.g., cable sway, gel-electrode coupling etc. [8]. Notwithstanding its limitations, the EEG is the only imaging modality that has sufficient portability and resolution to allow investigation of brain activity during dynamic daily activities (e.g., locomotion [7]). Here we evaluated the feasibility of EEG-based decoding of rest (standing) and movement (overground walking) conditions.

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2 Materials and Methods

One healthy subject performed six 5-min overground walking trials (intermittent walking, back and forth, with 10 s respite) following a 5 min sitting and standing resting phase. EMG (Gastus Medialis GM, Tibialis Anterior TA, Vastus Medialis VM, Biceps Femoris BF) and 64 channel EEG (Ant Neuro) were simultaneously collected at 2 kHz. EEG data were preprocessed with a causal high-pass filter with a cut-off frequency of 2 Hz. Data with considerable nonstationary, high-amplitude and non-stereotyped artifacts, were removed (visual inspection). Stereotyped muscular, and

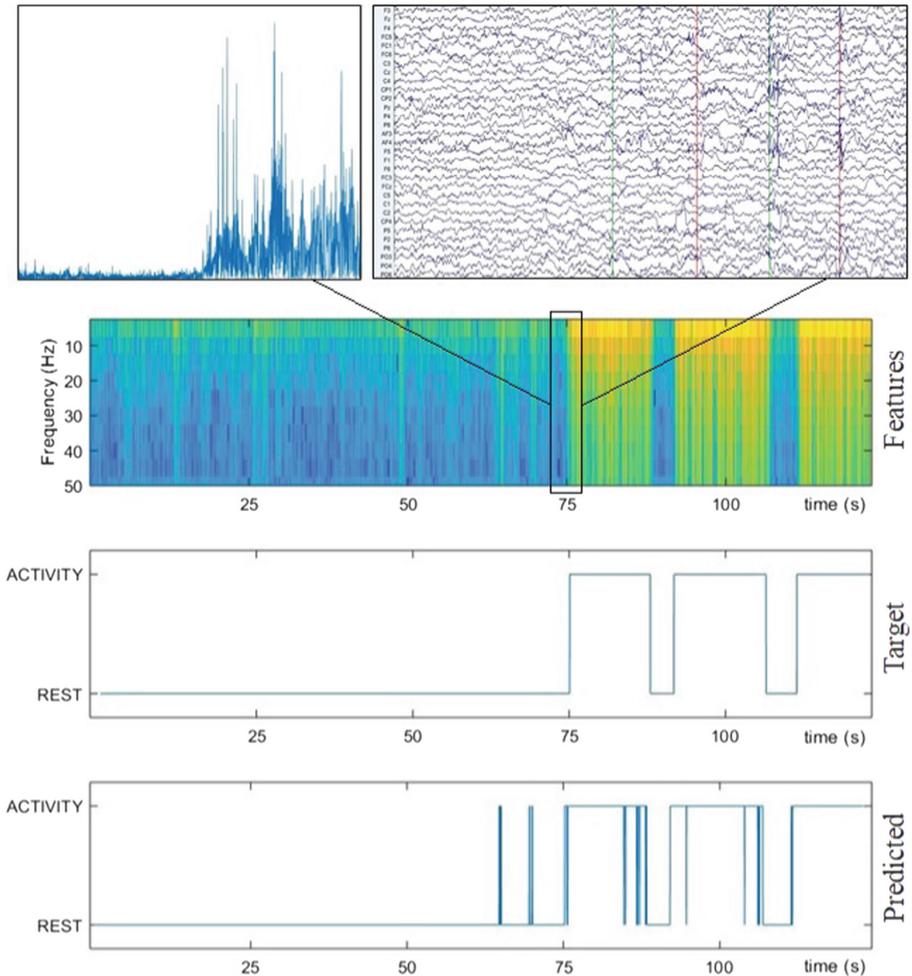


Fig. 1. An example of classification from an EEG channel. Rest is followed by intermittent walking. From top to bottom, EMG data (left), EEG data (right), the data given to the classifier as test set (Features), the binary target provided (Target), and the output predicted by the model (Predicted).

ocular artifacts were removed via Independent Component Analysis (ICA) - see [7]. Binary (Rest vs Activity) classification was performed via Linear Discriminant Analysis (LDA) with 10-fold cross validation and a sliding windows approach (200 ms, 150 ms overlap) for each EEG and EMG channel independently. Power at frequencies in the [2–50] Hz and [10–400] Hz ranges were used as features for EEG and EMG respectively.

3 Results

Activity Vs Rest EEG decoding showed overall performance ranging from 88.52% and 95.60% (Fig. 1) Similar performance was achieved with the EMG. It can be observed (Fig. 1) that Power spectra variations allow to visually identify task changes, i.e., walking phases from rest.

4 Discussion

The results presented constitute a first step towards demonstrating the feasibility of task decoding for overground walking using the EEG. Results show that it was possible to detect the activity phase with comparable performance to the EMG. In agreement with [7] the results constitute indirect evidence of the possibility of retrieving meaningful information from EEG even during dynamic tasks such as overground walking. However further validation (e.g. with source localization as in [7]) is necessary to exactly quantify the role that residual artifacts, time-locked to the gait phases, may have had on the decoder performance. Further studies will also be directed to better quantifying the extent to which the EEG, compared to EMG, allows to predict, as opposed to detect, movement onset.

5 Conclusion

Cortical activity measured by means of EEG may be used to discriminate rest and overground walking conditions with performance comparable to the EMG. These results constitute a first step towards the implementation of brain activity decoders to detect movement intentions, which may prove useful in the future to optimize control algorithms for robotic devices and lower limb prostheses. However, further studies are still required to quantify the effect of artifacts on the decoder performance.

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