Hippocampal sequences span experience relative to rewards

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ABSTRACT

Hippocampal place cells fire in sequences that span spatial environments, and remap, or change their preferred firing locations, across different environments. This sequential firing is common to multiple modalities beyond space, suggesting that hippocampal activity can anchor to the most behaviorally relevant or salient aspects of experience. As reward is a highly salient event, we hypothesized that broad sequences of hippocampal activity can likewise become anchored relative to reward. To test this hypothesis, we performed two-photon imaging of calcium activity in hippocampal area CA1 as mice navigated virtual linear environments with multiple changing hidden reward locations. We found that when the reward moved, a subpopulation of cells remapped to the same relative position with respect to reward, including previously undescribed cells with fields distant from reward. These reward-relative cells constructed sequences that spanned the task structure irrespective of spatial stimuli. The density of the reward-relative sequences increased with task experience as additional neurons were recruited to the reward-relative population. In contrast, a largely separate subpopulation of cells maintained a place code relative to the spatial environment. These findings provide insight into how separate hippocampal ensembles may flexibly encode multiple behaviorally salient reference frames, reflecting the structure of the experience.

INTRODUCTION

Memories of positive experiences are essential for reinforcing rewarding behaviors. These memories must also have the capacity to update when knowledge of reward changes (i.e. a water source moves to a new location)[1,2]. How does the brain both amplify memories of events surrounding a reward and maintain a stable representation of the external world? The hippocampus provides a potential neural circuit for this process. Hippocampal place cells fire in one or a few spatially restricted locations, defined as their place fields[3]. In different environments, place cells "remap", such that the preferred location or firing rate of their place field changes[4–12]. Together, the population of place cells creates reliable sequences of activity as an animal traverses an environment, creating a unique neural ensemble for each environment and a unique sequence of spiking for each traversal[9,13–21]. While these patterns support spatial navigation[22–26], recent evidence has revealed that hippocampal neurons also show reliable tuning relative to a variety of non-spatial modalities and create sequences of activity for these modalities[17,27,28]. For instance, sequential hippocampal firing has been observed across time[29–35], in relation to progressions of auditory[36], olfactory[37–42], or multisensory stimuli[43–45], and during accumulation of evidence for decision-making tasks[46]. Together, these findings suggest that the hippocampus can be understood as generating sequential activity[13,17,47,48] to encode the progression of events as they unfold in a given experience[27,28,49–51]. Yet whether different aspects of experience are represented through a combinatorial code in individual cells[35,40,52–56] or via distinct subpopulations[34,57,58], or both, remains unclear.

Multiple lines of evidence demonstrate that the hippocampus also prioritizes coding for aspects of experience that are particularly salient or that can affect the animal's behavior[27,33–46,57–65]. The presence of food or water reward is one such highly salient event that is consistently prioritized, as demonstrated by prior work finding that place cells tend to cluster near (i.e. "overrepresent") reward locations[1,2,57,58,66–69]. In addition, a small subpopulation of hippocampal cells are active precisely at rewarded locations[57,67], even when the reward is moved to a new location or the animal is put in a new environment[57]. Moreover, optogenetic activation of cells with place fields near reward drives the animal to engage in reward-seeking actions[24], suggesting a causal role for hippocampal activity in reward-related behaviors.

We therefore hypothesized that reward may anchor the sequential activity of the hippocampus in a subpopulation of pyramidal cells. Remapping dynamics supporting this hypothesis have been reported at locations very close to reward sites[1,2,57,58,66–69], but in order to support memory of events leading up to and following rewarding experiences, hippocampal activity encoding events at distances further away from reward must also be able to update when reward conditions change. Yet predictable remapping that spans the entire environment in response to changing reward locations has not been demonstrated. We reasoned that previously reported reward-specific cells[57] may comprise a subset of a larger population encoding an entire sequence of events relative to reward. This hypothesis predicts that moving the reward within a constant environment should induce remapping even at locations far from reward, in a manner that preserves sequential firing relative to each reward location. In parallel, we predicted that a subset of hippocampal neurons should preserve their firing relative to the spatial environment, reflecting an ability of the hippocampus to flexibly anchor to both the spatial environment and the experience of finding reward as two salient reference frames[45,62,63,70–76] that are required to solve the task at hand.

To investigate whether the hippocampus simultaneously encodes sequential experience relative to reward and the spatial environment, we used 2-photon (2P) calcium imaging[77,78] to monitor large populations of CA1 neurons in head-fixed mice learning a virtual reality (VR) task. The use of VR provided tight control of the sensory stimuli and constrained the animal's trajectory, allowing us to more readily observe remapping of neurons in relation to distant rewards, a phenomenon potentially less visible in freely moving scenarios. Further, the task included multiple updates to hidden reward zones across two

environments, allowing us to dissociate spatially-driven and reward-driven remapping. We find a subpopulation of neurons that, when rewards moved, remapped to the same relative position with respect to reward and thus constructed a sequence of activity relative to the reward location. With increasing experience, more neurons were recruited to these "reward-relative sequences". These results suggest that the hippocampus learned a generalized representation of the task anchored to reward, while also maintaining a spatial map in largely separate neural ensembles.

RESULTS

Monitoring neural activity in mice during a virtual reality navigation and reward learning task

We performed 2P calcium imaging to monitor CA1 neurons expressing GCaMP7f in head-fixed mice learning a VR linear navigation task (**Fig. 1A-C**). To observe putative remapping related to rewards, and examine how this remapping might develop with experience, we designed a task with multiple changing hidden reward locations. Mice were first pre-trained to run to the end of a virtual linear training track to collect a cued reward. Imaging then began on a visually distinct and novel 450 cm virtual linear environment (Env 1) with a single hidden, 50-cm reward zone at one of three possible locations. These locations were positioned equidistant from each of the visual "tower" landmarks along the track, thus controlling for proximity of the reward to visual landmarks which are known to have a strong influence on hippocampal activity[8,58,79–84] (**Fig. 1D-E**). Sucrose water reward was delivered operantly for licking within the hidden reward zone (**Fig. 1E**). After 2 days of acquiring the initial zone, on day 3 the reward zone was moved within a "switch" session to a new location on the track. Reward was automatically delivered at the end of the zone on the first 10 trials of any new reward condition if the mouse failed to lick; otherwise, reward was delivered operantly at the first lick within the zone. On day 5, a third reward zone was introduced, followed by a return to the original zone on day 7. On day 8, the reward switch coincided with the introduction of a novel environment (Env 2) that evokes spatially-driven global remapping[7]. The sequence of switches was subsequently reversed in Env 2 (**Fig. 1E**). On intervening non-switch ("stay") days, the last reward location from the previous day was maintained, and the reward switch sequences were counterbalanced across animals (n=7 "switch" mice, **Fig. S1A-D**). A separate "fixed-condition" group of mice (n=3) experienced only one reward location in a single environment (Env 1) (**Fig. S1D,F**), to control for the effect of extended experience alone compared to learning about the reward switches.

To keep animals engaged and prevent the movement of the reward zone from being a completely novel experience, on ~15% of trials the reward was randomly omitted for all animals. At the end of the track, the mouse passed through a brief gray "teleport" tunnel (~50 cm + temporal jitter up to 10 s; see Methods) before starting the next lap in the same direction. Time in the teleport tunnel was randomly jittered so that exact time of track entry could not be anticipated. We observed that mice developed an anticipatory ramp of licking that, on average, peaked at the beginning of the reward zone (**Fig. 1F-G, Fig. S1A-C**). This is the earliest location where operant licking triggered reward delivery, demonstrating successful task acquisition. When we moved the reward zone, mice entered an exploratory period of licking but then adapted their licking to anticipate each new zone, typically within a session (**Fig. 1F-G, Fig. S1A-C**). We quantified this improvement in licking precision across the switch as the ratio of anticipatory lick rate 50 cm before the currently rewarded zone compared to everywhere else outside the zone (**Fig. S1E**). We found that all mice were able to improve and retain their licking precision for the newly rewarded zone (**Fig. 1H**, n=7 mice), demonstrating accurate spatial learning and memory.

Figure 1. 2P imaging of CA1 neurons in a VR task with changing hidden rewards.

A) Top-down view (left) and side view (right) of head-fixed VR set-up. Movement is read by a rotary encoder on the running cylinder, and 5% sucrose water reward is automatically delivered when the mouse licks a capacitive lick port.

B) Coronal histology showing imaging cannula implantation site and calcium indicator GCaMP7f expression under the pan-neuronal synapsin promoter (AAV1-Syn-jGCaMP7f, green) in dorsal CA1 (DAPI, blue).

C) Example field of view (mean image) from the same mouse in (B) (mouse m12) with identified CA1 neurons in shaded colors (n=1780 cells).

D) Task timeline. On "stay" days, the reward remains at the same location throughout the session; on "switch" days, it moves to a new location after the first 30 trials ("switch", typically 80 trials/session).

E) Side views of virtual linear tracks showing an example reward switch sequence, which was counterbalanced across mice. Shaded regions indicate hidden reward zones, for illustration only. On intervening days, the last reward location from the previous day is maintained.

F) Licking behavior for an example mouse (m14) on the first day and first 3 switches. Top row: Smoothed lick rasters. Rewarded trials are in black; omission trials are in magenta. Shaded regions indicate the active reward zone. Bottom row: Mean ± s.e.m. lick rate for trials at each reward location (blue=A, purple=B, red=C).

G) Licking behavior for a second example mouse (m3) that experienced a different starting reward zone and switch sequence from the mouse in (F). See Fig. S1D for the full set of sequence allocations per mouse.

H) Behavior across animals performing reward switches (n=7 mice). An anticipatory lick ratio of 1 indicates licking exclusively in the 50cm before a reward zone ("anticipatory zone", see Fig. S1E); 0 (horizontal dashed line) indicates chance licking across the whole track outside of the reward zone. Thin lines represent individual mice, with lines colored according to the reward zone active for each mouse on a given set of trials (blue=A, purple=B, red=C); thick gray and black lines show mean ± s.e.m. across mice for pre- and post-switch trials, respectively.

Moving the reward induces remapping that spans a constant environment

We focused on the switch days to analyze single-cell remapping patterns, using binned spatial activity maps on each trial and excluding slow movement times <2 cm/s. First, we identified place cells active either before or after the reward switch (see Methods; mean ± std: 408 ± 216 place cells out of 868 ± 356 cells imaged per session per mouse in 7 switch mice; 48.6% ± 16.7% place cells active before or after). We found that when we moved the reward location within each environment, a subset of place cells maintained a stable field at the same location on the track ("track-relative" cells, 20.2% ± 8.8%, mean ± std. of all place cells, averaged across all switches within environment, 7 mice; **Fig. 2A**, **Fig. S2A**). However, many place cells remapped, despite the constant visual stimuli and visual landmarks (**Fig. 2A, Fig. S2A-D).** First, we observed subsets of cells with place fields that disappeared ("disappearing", 11.5% ± 7.8%) or appeared ("appearing", 8.3% ± 5.2%) after the reward location switched (**Fig. 2A, Fig. S2A**). Other cells precisely followed the reward location ("remap near reward", 4.7% ± 3.9%, **Fig. 2A, Fig. S2A-D**), consistently firing within ±50 cm of the front of the reward zone, similar to previous reports[57]. Notably, a subset of place cells with fields distant from reward (>50 cm) also remapped after the reward switch ("remap far from reward", 15.6% ± 3.7%; **Fig. 2A, S2A, right**). A remaining 39.7% ± 19.4% of place cells did not show sufficiently stereotyped remapping patterns to be classified by these criteria. At the population level, we observed that moving the reward within a constant environment induced more remapping than the spontaneous instability seen with a fixed reward and fixed environment[85–89], but less remapping than the introduction of a novel environment with the reward switch[5–11] (**Fig. S2B-D**).

An above-chance fraction of reward-relative remapping cells

To test our hypothesis that the hippocampus can encode experience anchored to reward, we next investigated whether some of the cells that remapped their fields distant from reward might remap to a similar distance relative to the new reward zone. To visualize this form of remapping, we circularly shifted the spatial activity of cells on trials following the switch to align the reward locations (**Fig. 2B**). Only cells that had significant spatial information before and after the reward switch with place fields >50 cm away from one another (prior to the circular shift) were included in this analysis. This approach revealed that a subset of cells indeed remapped to a similar relative distance from the reward, both within and across environments ("reward-relative" cells; see below and Methods for criteria) (**Fig. 2B**). This was true even for some cells that, from the perspective of the linear track position, remapped from the latter half of the track to the beginning, or vice versa (e.g. **Fig. 2B** cell m14.482). Given that this field alignment relative to reward occurred despite the variable-length teleport zone, it suggests that rather than merely tracking distance run from the last reward, some reward-relative cells maintain their preferred distance from reward according to where the animal is in the task structure, which spans across the teleport and the trial start. This alignment of activity at a consistent distance from reward suggests that this subpopulation of cells maps a circular axis of experience from reward to reward, consistent with the cyclical manner in which

the animal repeats the task structure in the same direction on each trial. At the same time, other cells seemed to remap randomly, as circular shifting did not align their fields ("non-reward-relative remapping", 12.6% ± 3.3% of all place cells; **Fig. 2B**, rightmost columns).

Figure 2. A subpopulation of CA1 cells remaps relative to reward.
A) Five place cells from an example mouse (m4) with fields that are either track-relative, disappearing, appearing, following the reward location closely ("remap near reward", with spatial firing peaks ≤ 50 cm from both reward zone starts), or "remap far from reward" (peaks >50 cm from at least one reward zone start; see Methods). Data are from an example switch day in Env 2 (day 14). Left of each cell: Spatial activity per trial shown as smoothed deconvolved calcium events normalized to the mean activity for each cell within session. White lines indicate beginnings of reward zones. Right of each cell: Trial-by-trial correlation matrix for that cell.

B) Example place cells that remap to the same relative distance from reward (orange cell ID labels), compared to cells that do not (black cell ID labels). Top row: Mean-normalized spatial activity plotted on the original track axis. Bottom row: Post-switch trials (after the horizontal blue dotted line) are circularly shifted to align the reward locations, to illustrate alignment of fields at a similar relative distance from reward both within (left, examples from day 14) and across environments (right, day 8).

C) Illustration of method to quantify remapping relative to reward. Left: A scatter of peak activity positions before vs. after the reward switch (shown for example animal m12 on day 14, switching from reward zone "B" before to "A" after) in linear track coordinates reveals track-relative place cells along the diagonal. An off-diagonal band at the intersection of the starts of the reward zones suggests cells remapping relative to both rewards. Middle left: We center this reward-relative band by converting the linear coordinates to circular and rotating the data to align the starts of reward zones at 0. Middle right: Track-relative place cells are removed to isolate remapping cells. Right: The data are then compared to a random remapping shuffle (one shuffle iteration shown in red). Together, these shuffles (n=1000) produce the distribution marked in red lines in (E) and (G). All points are jittered slightly for visualization (see Methods).

D) Peak activity positions relative to reward for all animals on the first switch (day 3), for remapping cells with significant spatial information both before and after the switch (n=677 cells, 7 mice). Orange shaded region indicates a range of ≤50 cm (~0.64 radians) between relative peaks, corresponding to points included in the histogram in (E, bottom).

E) The fraction of cells remapping to a consistent reward-relative position (≤0.64 radians between relative peaks) on the first switch day is higher than expected by chance. Top: histogram of the circular distance between relative peaks after minus before the switch (i.e. orthogonal to the unity line in D), compared to the mean and upper 95% of the shuffle distribution (solid and dotted red lines, respectively). Bottom: Distribution of mean firing position relative to reward for cells with ≤ 50 cm distance between relative peaks, corresponding to orange shaded area along the unity line in (D) (n=245 cells, 7 mice, non-zero median=0.378 radians, p=3.61e-6, circular median test). Blue dashed line marks the start of the reward zone, shading marks the extent of the reward zone.

F) Same as (D) but for the last switch (day 14) (n=707 cells, 7 mice).

G) Same as (E) but for the last switch (day 14). Bottom: n=371 cells with ≤ 50 cm distance between relative peaks (non-zero median=0.169 radians, p=7.53e-5, circular median test).

H) Fraction of cells above chance that remap relative to reward grows linearly with task experience (number of switches). Each dot shown is the combined fraction across n=7 mice, mean ± confidence interval of linear regression is shown in gray.

To assess whether reward-relative remapping occurred at greater than chance levels, we plotted the peak spatial firing of all cells that maintained significant spatial information before versus after the switch. This revealed the track-relative place cells along the diagonal, as they maintained their peak firing positions pre- to post-switch. In addition, this analysis showed an off-diagonal band of cells at the intersection of the reward locations, which extended linearly away from the cluster of reward cells that has been previously described[57] (**Fig. 2C**, far left panel; **Fig. S2B**, middle). As noted above, we reasoned that the animals may experience the task as periodic instead of a sequence of discrete linear episodes—the animal progresses through the teleport zone and then views the optic flow of the track smoothly approaching as it exits the teleport, completing a loop to approach reward on the next trial. We therefore transformed the linear track coordinates to circular, allowing us to shift the data to align the reward zones at zero and isolate the band of cells with peaks at this intersection (**Fig. 2C,** middle-left panel). Cells which fall along the unity line in this analysis thus putatively remap to the same relative distance from reward, with a difference between their relative peak positions close to zero. Due to counterbalanced reward locations, each animal had a different relationship between its track-relative and reward-relative place field locations. Therefore, we excluded the track-relative cells to focus on the remapping cells across animals (**Fig. 2C**, middle-right panel). We measured the circular distance of each cell's peak firing position relative to the reward zone pre- or post-switch (**Fig. 2D**) and compared the distribution of differences to a "random-remapping" shuffle (**Fig. 2C,** far right panel). We found that the fraction of place cells that exhibited reward-relative remapping across animals exceeded chance on the first switch day (**Fig. 2E**,

top). Further, the fraction of cells that exceeded the chance level increased by the last switch day (**Fig. 2F-G, Fig. S2E**) and significantly increased linearly across task experience with each switch (**Fig. 2H**). A linear mixed effects model accounting for mouse identity revealed a similar, significant increase in reward-relative remapping over experience (**Fig. S2F**). When we analyzed the distribution of reward-relative peak firing positions (i.e. position along the unity line in Fig. 2D), we observed that the median of the distribution was significantly greater than zero (**Fig. 2E**, bottom). This indicates that more reward-relative place fields are in locations following reward delivery (as indicated by maximal licking, **Fig. 1F-G, Fig. S1A-C**) than in locations preceding the reward. This post-reward shift of the distribution of cells was fairly consistent across days (**Fig. 2G**, bottom).

To investigate the degree to which cells active in close proximity to the reward contribute to the above-chance levels of reward-relative remapping, we excluded cells with peaks within ± 50 cm of the start of both reward zones. Note that this excludes both the reward and anticipatory zones. With this exclusion, we still found above-chance reward-relative remapping (**Fig. S2G-J**), though the increase in this remapping across days did not reach significance (**Fig. S2K**), suggesting there is more growth in the population of reward-relative cells at closer proximities to reward. Finally, to isolate a reliable subpopulation of reward-relative cells for further analysis, as an initial criterion we included place cells whose reward-relative spatial peaks were within 50 cm of each other before versus after a reward switch. This value of 50 cm was based on the mean range around the unity line in which we observed the fraction of cells remapping relative to reward exceeding the shuffle (**Fig. 2E,G, Fig. S2E**). This criterion included cells with peaks both very close and potentially very far from the reward. To reduce the influence of noise in spatial peak detection and take into account the shape of the firing fields, we added a second criterion: we performed a cross-correlation of the cells' activity in coordinates relative to reward and required the offset at the maximum of this cross-correlation to be ≤50 cm and exceed chance levels (**Fig. S2L-N**). From here on, we refer to cells that passed both of these criteria as "reward-relative" (RR) (14.6% ± 5.2% of place cells averaged over all switch days; 12.0% ± 3.2% on the first switch, 18.4% ± 6.2% on the last switch).

Reward-relative sequences are preserved when the reward moves

Next, to ask whether the reward-relative cells constructed sequences of activity anchored to reward, we sorted the reward-relative cells within each animal by their peak firing position on trials before the reward switch, using split-halves cross-validation (see Methods). We applied this sort to the post-switch trials and found that the reward-relative subpopulation indeed constructed sequences that strongly preserved their firing order relative to reward across the switch within an environment (**Fig. 3A-B, Fig. S3A**). Sequence preservation was quantified as a circular-circular correlation coefficient between the peak firing positions in the pre- and post-switch sequences, which was much higher than the shuffle of cell identities for nearly all animals and days (47 out of 49 sessions positively correlated, with rho >95% of the shuffle, two-sided permutation test) (**Fig. 3C**). These sequences spanned the task structure from reward to reward, such that cells firing at the furthest distances from reward would occasionally "wrap around" from the beginning to the end of the linear track or vice versa (see **Fig. 3A**, mouse4 and **Fig. S3A**). When we introduced the novel environment on day 8, despite apparent global remapping in the total population of place cells (**Fig. S3B**), reward-relative sequences were clearly preserved (**Fig. S3C**). The track-relative place cells likewise constructed robust sequences (48 out of 49 sessions positively correlated, with rho >95% of the shuffle, two-sided permutation test) both within (**Fig. 3D-F**) and even across environments (**Fig. S3C**) in a minority of place cells (20.2% ± 8.8% within vs. 8.4% ± 3.6% across, mean ± std. across 7 mice). The sequence stability of both the reward-relative and track-relative subpopulations contrasted starkly with the absence of sequence preservation for most of the non-reward-relative remapping cells (41

out of 49 sessions did not exceed the shuffle; **Fig. 3G-I; Fig. S3C**, bottom) and for the disappearing and appearing cells (**Fig. S3D-E**), as expected.

Figure 3. Preserved sequences relative to reward and space.
A) Preserved firing order of reward-relative sequences across the 1st switch (day 3) (2 example mice, top and bottom rows; m4 is the same mouse shown in Fig. 2A, m12 had the maximum number of cells). Reward-relative remapping cells within each animal are sorted by their cross-validated peak activity before the switch, and this sort is applied to activity after the switch. Data are plotted as the spatially-binned, unsmoothed dF/F normalized to each cell's mean within session, from which peak firing positions are identified in linear track coordinates that have been converted to radians (see Fig. 2C). White dotted lines indicate starts and ends of each reward zone. Each sequence's circular-circular correlation coefficient (rho), p-value relative to shuffle, and number of cells is shown above, where $p < 0.001$ indicates that the observed rho exceeded all 1000 shuffles.
B) Reward-relative sequences on the last switch (day 14), for the same mice shown in (A).
C) Circular-circular correlation coefficients for reward-relative sequences before vs. after the reward switch, for each mouse (n=7), with the upper 95th percentile of 1000 shuffles of cell IDs marked as "x". Closed circles indicate coefficients with $p<0.05$ compared to shuffle using a two-sided permutation test; open circles indicate $p\geq0.05$.
D) Sequences of track-relative place cells on the 1st switch day for the same mice as in (A-B).
E) Sequences of track-relative place cells on the last switch day for the same mice as in (A-B,D).
F) Circular-circular correlation coefficients for track-relative place cell sequences (n=7 mice), colored as in (C).
G-H) Sequences of non-reward-relative remapping cells with significant spatial information before and after the switch, for the same mice as above and on the 1st (G) and last (H) switch day. Note that a cross-validated sort of the "before" trials produces a sequence, but in general this sequence is not robustly maintained across the switch.
I) Circular-circular correlation coefficients for non-reward-relative remapping cells (n=7 mice), colored as in (C).
J) Distribution of peak firing positions for the reward-relative sequences after the switch on each switch day, shown as a fraction of total place cells within each animal, averaged across animals (n=7 mice). Standard errors are omitted for visualization clarity. Horizontal dotted lines indicate the expected uniform distribution for each day (see Methods); vertical gray dashed lines indicate the reward zone start and surrounding ±50 cm.
K) Distribution of peak firing positions for the track-relative sequences after the switch on each switch day, shown on the track coordinates converted to radians (not reward-relative). Arrows indicate the start position of each reward zone ("A", "B", "C"). Horizontal dotted lines indicate the expected uniform distribution for each day.
L-O) Quantification of the changes in sequence shape across animals and days, using linear mixed effects models with switch index as a fixed effect and mice as random effects (n=7 mice). β is the coefficient for switch index, shown with corresponding p-value. Each point is the fraction of place cells within that mouse and day in the reward-relative (L-M) or track-relative (N-O) sequences, specifically within ±50 cm of the reward zone start (L) or >50 cm from reward (M) for the reward-relative sequences, and within ±50 cm of either end of the track (N) or >50 cm from the track ends (O) for the track-relative sequences.

We next quantified the mean sequence shape for each subpopulation, either relative to reward or to the VR track coordinates. The reward-relative sequences strongly overrepresented the reward zone[1,2,57,58,66–69] and were most concentrated near the start of the reward zone (**Fig. 3J**). Further, this density near the reward zone grew across task experience (**Fig. 3J, 3L**). The fraction of place cells at further positions (>50 cm) from the start of the reward zone showed a trending increase over days, but to a much lesser degree than positions near the reward (**Fig. 3M**). By contrast, the track-relative place cell sequences tended to overrepresent the ends of the track, as opposed to the reward zones (**Fig. 3K**). In addition, the track-relative sequences showed a subtle but significant drop in density at positions away from the ends of the track across days, consistent with selective stabilization of place fields near key landmarks[8,58,80–84,90] (**Fig. 3K,N-O**). These stark differences in sequence shape between the reward-relative and track-relative cells suggest that each of these subpopulations anchors to the most salient point in the "space" they encode. For the reward-relative sequences, this is the reward zone, and for the track-relative sequences, this is likely the start and end of the track where the animal exits and enters the teleportation zone. By comparison, the disappearing, appearing, and non-reward-relative remapping cells encoded a more uniform representation of the track (**Fig. S3D-F**), with only subtle overrepresentation of the track ends and an observable decrease across the track for the disappearing cells across days (**Fig. S3F-G**).

Non-track-relative place cells are increasingly recruited to the reward-relative population over days

The growth in reward-relative sequence density across task experience raised three possibilities: (1) reward-relative cells may become more consistent at remapping to precise reward-relative positions with extended learning, (2) more cells might be recruited from other populations to the reward-relative population, or (3) a combination of both of these changes could occur. To investigate these possibilities and understand how individual neurons are dynamically reallocated to represent updated reward information within and across environments, we tracked the activity of the same neurons across days by matching the aligned regions of interest (ROIs) for each cell. Specifically, we tracked single neurons across pairs of switch days and analyzed their spatial firing patterns from one switch to the next (**Fig. 4**). Using linear mixed effects models, we found that there was an increase in the fraction of cells that remained reward-relative on consecutive reward switches, indicating that reward-relative cells are more likely to maintain their reward-relative coding across experience (**Fig. 4A-B**). In addition, an increasing proportion of non-track-relative cells (appearing, disappearing, and non-reward-relative remapping) (**Fig. 4C-D**) and non-place cell populations (**Fig. 4E-F**) were recruited into the reward-relative population with task experience. However, track-relative place cells exhibited a constant rate of turnover into reward-relative cells that did not increase over days (**Fig. 4G-H**). Furthermore, the reward-relative cells were less likely to be recruited into the track-relative population over days (**Fig. 4I**). In addition, the track-relative cell population did not recruit more cells from the appearing/disappearing/remapping populations (**Fig. 4J**) or the non-place cell population (**Fig. 4K**). These results suggest that the track-relative place cells remain a more independent population from the reward-relative cells, and that cells exhibiting high flexibility (such as appearing/disappearing) are more likely to be recruited into the reward-relative representation with extended experience in this task.

The track-relative population itself showed a steady rate of turnover over days (**Fig. 4L**), consistent with representational drift[85–89]. Indeed, when we analyzed place cell sequences identified on each reference day and tracked two days later, we observed drift even in the fixed-condition animals (n=3 mice) that experienced a single environment and reward location for all 14 days (**Fig. S4A,F**). Drift was prevalent as well in the reward-relative and track-relative sequences tracked across consecutive switch days (**Fig. S4B-E, G-J**), at a slightly higher degree than the fixed-condition animals (**Fig. S4F**), consistent with our observation that moving a reward induces more remapping than not moving a reward (**Fig. 2A, Fig. S2A-D**). For reward-relative and track-relative cells that remained reward-relative or track-relative, respectively, on the subsequent switch day, their firing order tended to be maintained in a subset of animals. In general, however, sequence preservation across days was lower (i.e. closer to the shuffle) (**Fig. S4C,E,H,J**) compared to within-day sequences (**Fig. 3C,F; Fig. S3A,C**). These results imply that rather than being dedicated cell classes, reward-relative and track-relative cells are both subject to the same plasticity across experience as the overall hippocampal population[85–89]. However, the increasing recruitment of cells into the reward-relative population, despite this population having different membership on different days, suggests an increased allocation of resources to the reward-relative representation. We conclude that as animals become more familiar with the task demands–specifically the requirement to estimate a hidden reward location that can be dissociated from spatial stimuli–the hippocampus builds an increasingly dense representation of experience relative to reward, while preserving a fixed representation of the spatial environment in a largely separate population of cells.

Figure 4. Tracking cells over days reveals increased recruitment into the reward-relative population.
A) Example cells from 2 separate mice that were tracked from switch 6 to 7 (days 12-14) that were identified as reward-relative (RR) on both switch 6 and switch 7, and which maintained their firing position relative to reward. Top of each cell: spatial firing over trials and linear track position on each day (deconvolved activity normalized to the mean of each cell). White vertical lines indicate the beginnings of the reward zones. Bottom of each cell: Mean local field of view (FOV) around the ROI of the cell on both days (blue shading highlights ROI, indicated by the yellow arrow).
B) Fraction of tracked RR cells on each switch day that remain RR on subsequent switch days increases over task experience. All β coefficients and p-values in (B, D, F, H, and I-L) are from linear mixed effects models with switch day pair as a fixed effect and mice as random effects (n=7 mice in each plot, key in H). Coefficients correspond to the fractional increase in recruitment per switch day pair, from the model fit.
C) Same as (A) but for 2 example cells that were identified as appearing (top) or non-RR remapping (bottom) on switch 6 but were converted to RR on switch 7.
D) Fraction of "non-track-relative" place cells (combined appearing, disappearing, and non-RR remapping) that convert into RR cells on subsequent switch days increases over task experience.

E) Same as (A) but for 2 example non-place cells on switch 6 (did not have significant spatial information in either trial set) that were converted to RR place cells on day 7.

F) Fraction of non-place cells converting to RR cells on subsequent switch days shows a modest increase over task experience.

G) Same as (A) but for 2 example track-relative (TR) cells on switch 6 that were converted to RR on switch 7.

H) Fraction of TR cells converting to RR cells does not increase over task experience.

I) Fraction of RR cells converting to TR cells decreases over task experience.

J) Fraction of non-TR cells (combined appearing, disappearing, and non-RR remapping) converting to TR does not change significantly.

K) Fraction of non-place cells converting to TR does not change significantly.

L) Fraction of TR cells remaining TR does not change significantly.

DISCUSSION

Here, we reveal that the hippocampus encodes an animal's physical location and its position relative to rewards through parallel sequences of neural activity. We employed 2-photon calcium imaging to observe large groups of CA1 neurons in the hippocampus as mice navigated virtual linear tracks with changing hidden reward locations. This paradigm allowed us to identify reward-relative sequences that are dissociable from the spatial visual stimuli, as they instead remain anchored to the movable reward location. This suggests that the brain employs a parallel coding system to simultaneously track an animal's physical and reward-relative positions, pointing to a mechanism for how the brain could monitor an animal's experience relative to multiple frames of reference[45,62,63,70–76,91], such as proximity to physical landmarks versus rewards. Further, we found that the reward-relative sequences, but not the "track-relative" sequences locked to the spatial environment, show a notable increase in the number of neurons involved as the animal gains more experience with the task. These results suggest that the hippocampus builds a strengthening representation of generalized events surrounding reward as animals become more familiar with the task structure. Altogether, this work thus provides new insight regarding how the hippocampus can flexibly encode the most behaviorally relevant aspects of an experience, by enhancing representations of salient events alongside a spatial framework.

We replicated previous work reporting neurons that precisely track reward locations[57] and found that the subset of reward-relative neurons firing closest to rewards was especially reliable across days **(Fig. 2D-H, Fig. S2G-K, Fig. 3J,L)**. At the same time, we extended these findings in two key ways: (1) we found that the reward-relative code spans the entire environment, involving cells firing at distances up to hundreds of centimeters away (i.e. as far as from one reward to the next), and (2) additional neurons are recruited into the reward-relative sequences over time, demonstrating a dynamic and evolving coding strategy. Importantly, we observed a noticeable turnover in the neurons that form the reward-relative population from day to day, indicating a high degree of reorganization in terms of which neurons participate. Despite this daily fluctuation in individual neurons, the overall sequential structure appears to be maintained within the population.

This latter finding is consistent with recent studies which have highlighted a phenomenon known as representational drift in neuronal populations[85–89]. In the hippocampus[85–89] and in other cortical areas[92–94], this drift is characterized by changing spatial tuning and stability of single neurons as a function of extended experience[86,87], while the population continues to accurately code for the spatial environment[85] or task[92]. This flexibility is thought to increase the storage capacity of neuronal networks[95–98]. Related changes over time have also been proposed to support the decoding of temporal separation between unique events[50,93,95,99], which could be particularly important for separating memories of events surrounding

different rewarding experiences. Our observation of drift in the reward-relative sequences indicates that while ensemble membership is dynamic and increases over experience, the network structure of the representation remains stable and becomes reliably anchored to reward within a session. Further, the frequent reorganization we observed suggests that rather than comprising a dedicated subpopulation that exclusively encodes reward-related experiences, neurons in the reward-relative population in our study can switch coding modes—though this flexibility may vary by anatomical location within CA1[57,100,101]. At the same time, more resources (neurons) are allocated to support a strengthened reward-relative representation at the population level. This stability amidst flux offers insight into the brain's ability to balance dynamic coding with the preservation of population-level representations[92,93,98].

In the hippocampus, spatial firing can also be highly flexible at short timescales even within a fixed environment. This flexibility is evident in the variability of place cell firing even within a field[60,89] and especially when an animal takes different routes[102–107] or targets a different goal[91,108–111] through the same physical position. Our work is consistent with such trajectory specific coding and raises the possibility that the reward-relative population may split even further by specific destinations or reward sites when there are multiple possible reward locations. Indeed, in cases where multiple rewards are present at once, hippocampal activity may multiplex spatial and reward-relative information to dissociate different goal locations[67,91,112]. This discrimination is enhanced over learning[112], consistent with the manner in which hippocampal maps are likewise dependent on learned experience[4,6,7,12,54,56,113].

Furthermore, place cells undergo significant remapping in response to changes in the animal's motivational state, such as during task engagement[64,65,73] or disengagement[114], or upon removal of a reward[115]. Importantly, in our task the animal must remain engaged when the reward zone updates in order to accurately recall and seek out the new location. Consistent with this enhanced attention[61,62,64,65], we see predictable structure in how the neurons remap surrounding reward (i.e. they maintain their firing order relative to reward), in contrast to the more random reorganization observed with task disengagement[114] or the absence of reward[115]. However, an important consideration for all of these short timescale firing differences and for representational drift is the contribution of behavioral variability to neural activity changes[116,117], as small changes in path shape[118] and the movement dynamics involved in path integration[119–123] may influence aspects of hippocampal activity. Further work will be required to disentangle which aspects of reward-seeking behavior are encoded in the hippocampus. Interestingly, however, even in cases where remapping is seen after abrupt behavioral changes such as the cessation of anticipatory licking, hippocampal neurons still preserve a sequential structure within a given set of trials[115], similar to the structure we observed in the subpopulation of neurons that randomly remap when reward is moved (**Fig. 3G-H**). Consistent with previous proposals, this suggests that a primary function of the hippocampus is to generate sequential activity as a baseline state[17,29,47,48,124,125]. These sequences could then act as a substrate that can become anchored to particular salient reference points[16,17,27,126,127], allowing maximal flexibility to learn new information as it becomes relevant and layer it onto existing representations[128–131].

The origin of the input that informs reward-relative neurons remains an open question. One possibility is that subpopulations of neurons in CA1 receive stronger neuromodulatory inputs than others[1], increasing their plasticity in response to reward-related information[132,133]. CA1 receives reward-related dopaminergic input from both the locus coeruleus (LC)[134,135] and the ventral tegmental area (VTA)[115,136,137] that could potentially drive plasticity to recruit neurons into reward-relative sequences. Both of these inputs have recently been shown to restructure hippocampal population activity, with both LC and VTA input contributing to the hippocampal reward overrepresentation[115,135,136], and VTA input

additionally stabilizing place fields[115] in a manner consistent with reward expectation[115,138]. Alternatively, it's possible that upstream cortical regions, such as the prefrontal cortex[139], contribute to shaping these reward-relative sequences. Supporting this idea, the prefrontal cortex has been observed to exhibit comparable neural activity sequences that generalize across multiple reward-directed trajectories[140–144] to encode the animal's progression towards a goal[145,146]. Another potential source of input is the medial entorhinal cortex, which exhibits changes in both firing rate and the location where cells are active in response to hidden reward locations[147,148]. In particular, layer III of the medial entorhinal cortex is thought to contribute significantly to the overrepresentation of rewards by the hippocampus[66]. Additionally, the lateral entorhinal cortex, which also projects to the hippocampus, exhibits a strong overrepresentation of positions and cues just preceding and following rewards[122,149–151] and provides critical input for learning about updated reward locations[149].

These insights point to a complex network of brain regions potentially interacting to inform reward-relative sequences in the hippocampus. In turn, the hippocampal-entorhinal network may send information about distance from expected rewards back to the prefrontal cortex and other regions where similar activity has been observed[1], such as the nucleus accumbens[152–157]. Such goal-related hippocampal outputs to prefrontal cortex[158] and nucleus accumbens[159] have recently been reported, specifically in the deep sublayer of CA1[158], where goal-related remapping is generally more prevalent[158,160]. Over learning, reward-relative sequences generated between the entorhinal cortices and hippocampus may become linked with codes for goal-related action sequences in the prefrontal cortex and striatum, helping the brain to generalize learned information surrounding reward to similar experiences[1]. Understanding these interactions in future work will provide new insight regarding how the brain integrates spatial and reward information, which is crucial for navigation and decision-making processes.

The significance of reward-relative sequences in the brain may lie in their connection to hidden state estimation[7,43,161–165], a concept closely related to generalization[28,166]. Hidden state estimation refers to the process by which an animal or agent infers an unobservable state, such as the probability of receiving a reward under a certain set of conditions, in order to choose an optimal behavioral strategy[161]. For example, in our study involving mice, reward-relative sequences could be instrumental in helping the animals discern different reward states, such as whether they are in a state of the task associated with reward A, B, or C. If the hippocampus is able to build a code during learning that allows it to accurately infer such states, then this inference process can generalize to similar future scenarios, allowing the animal to learn which features of an experience predict reward and use these predictions in future[161,162]. Interestingly, however, the density of the reward-relative sequences we observed was highest following the beginning of the zone where animals were most likely to get reward, rather than preceding it. This finding contrasts with computational simulations of predictive codes in the hippocampus that are skewed preceding goals[167]. Instead, the shape of the reward-relative sequences may be more consistent with anchoring to the animal's estimate of the reward zone, with decreasing density around the zone as a function of distance which mirrors the organization seen around other salient landmarks[79,84].

A role for hippocampal sequences in state estimation extends to computational studies[28,129,168] and human research[169–173], where such coding schemes have been linked to the organization of knowledge and the chronological order of events in episodic memory[27,49,169–172,174–176]. As memories incorporate spatial information with a myriad of other features, the ability of the hippocampus to parallelize coding schemes for these different features may help both build complete memories and generalize knowledge about specific features without interfering with the original memory. As observed in our study, the hippocampus may then amplify the representations of some of these features over others according to task demands. A

similar effect has been observed in humans, in that memory recall is particularly strong for information that either precedes or follows a reward[177,178]. This suggests that rewards can significantly enhance the strength and precision of memory storage and retrieval, especially for events closely associated with these rewards. Thus, reward-relative sequences may play a crucial role in how we form and recall our experiences, with implications stretching beyond spatial navigation.

Author contributions

MS, MHP, and LMG conceptualized the study. MS collected the data and designed and performed analyses. MHP developed data preprocessing and analysis infrastructure, built the microscope and virtual reality rig, and collected data for pilot studies. LMG supervised the project. MS, MHP, and LMG wrote the manuscript.

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METHODS

Subjects

All procedures were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee at Stanford University School of Medicine. Male and female (n = 5 male, 5 female) C57BL/6J mice were acquired from Jackson Laboratory. Mice were housed in a transparent cage (Innovive) in groups of five same-sex littermates prior to surgery, with access to an in-cage running wheel for at least 4 weeks. After surgical implantation, mice were housed in groups of 1-3 same-sex littermates, with all mice per cage implanted. All mice were kept on a 12-h light–dark schedule, with experiments conducted during the light phase. Mice were between ~2.5 to 4.5 months at the time of surgery (weighing 18–31 g). Before surgery, animals had *ad libitum* access to food and water, and *ad libitum* access to food throughout the experiment. Mice were excluded from the study if they failed to perform the behavioral pre-training task described below.

Surgery: calcium indicator virus injections and imaging window implants

We adapted previously established procedures for 2-photon imaging of CA1 pyramidal cells[7,179]. The imaging cannula was constructed using a 1.3-mm long stainless-steel cannula (3 mm outer diameter, McMaster) affixed to a circular cover glass (Warner Instruments, number 0 cover glass, 3 mm in diameter; Norland Optics, number 81 adhesive). Any excess glass extending beyond the cannula edge was removed with a diamond-tipped file. During the imaging cannula implantation procedure, animals were anesthetized through intraperitoneal injection of ketamine (~85 mg/kg) and xylazine (~8.5 mg/kg). Anesthesia was maintained during the procedure with inhaled 0.5–1.5% isoflurane and oxygen at a flow rate of 0.8-1 L/min using a standard isoflurane vaporizer. Prior to surgery, animals received a subcutaneous administration of ~2 mg/kg dexamethasone and 5-10 mg/kg Rimadyl (to reduce inflammation and promote analgesia, respectively). First, the viral injection site targeting the left dorsal CA1 was determined by stereotaxis (AP -1.94 mm, ML -1.10 to -1.30 mm) and an initial hole was drilled only deep enough to expose the dura. An automated Hamilton syringe microinjector (World Precisions Instruments) was used to lower the syringe (35-gauge needle) to the target depth at the CA1 pyramidal layer (DV -1.33 to -1.37 mm) and inject 500 nL adenovirus (AAV) at 50 nL/min, to express the genetically encoded calcium indicator GCaMP under the pan-neuronal synapsin promoter (AAV1-Syn-jGCaMP7f-WPRE, AddGene, viral prep 104488-AAV1, titer 2x10^{12}). The needle was left in place for 10 min to allow for virus diffusion.

After retracting the needle, a 3 mm diameter circular craniotomy was then performed over the left hippocampus using a robotic surgery drill for precision (Neurostar). The craniotomy was centered at AP -1.95 mm, ML -1.8 to -2.1 mm (avoiding the midline suture). During drilling, the skull was kept moist by applying cold sterile artificial cerebrospinal fluid (ACSF; sterilized using a vacuum filter). The dura was then delicately removed using a bent 30-gauge needle. To access CA1, the cortex overlying hippocampus was carefully aspirated using a blunt aspiration needle, with continuous irrigation of ice-cold, sterile ACSF. Aspiration was stopped when the fibers of the external capsule were clearly visible, leaving the external capsule intact. Hemorrhaging was controlled using gel foam pieces soaked in sterile ACSF. Following hemostasis, the imaging cannula was gently lowered into the craniotomy until the cover glass lightly contacted the fibers of the external capsule. To optimize an imaging plane tangential to the CA1 pyramidal layer while minimizing structural distortion, the cannula was positioned at an approximate 10° roll angle relative to horizontal. The cannula was affixed in place using cyanoacrylate adhesive. A thin layer of adhesive was also applied to the exposed skull surface, which was pre-scored with a number 11 scalpel before the craniotomy to provide increased surface area for adhesive binding. A headplate featuring a left-offset 7-mm diameter beveled window and lateral screw holes for attachment to the

imaging rig was positioned over the imaging cannula at a matching 10° angle. The headplate was cemented to the skull using Metabond dental acrylic dyed black with India ink or black acrylic powder.

Upon completion of the procedure, animals were administered 1 mL of saline and 10 mg/kg of Baytril, then placed on a warming blanket for recovery. Monitoring continued for the next several days, and additional Rimadyl and Baytril were administered if signs of discomfort or infection appeared. A minimum recovery period of 10 days was required before initiation of water restriction, head-fixation, and virtual reality training.

Histology

After the conclusion of all experiments, mice were deeply anesthetized and administered an overdose of Euthasol, then perfused transcardially with PBS followed by 4% paraformaldehyde (PFA) in 0.1M PB. Brains were removed and post-fixed in PFA for 24 hours, followed by incubation in 30% sucrose in PBS for >4 days. 50 μm coronal sections were cut on a cryostat, mounted on gelatin-coated slides, and coverslipped with DAPI mounting medium (Vectashield). Histological images were taken on a Zeiss widefield fluorescence microscope.

Virtual Reality (VR) Design

All VR tasks were designed and operated using custom code written for the Unity game engine (https://unity.com/). Virtual environments were displayed on three 24-inch LCD monitors surrounding the mouse at 90° angles relative to each other. The VR behavior system included a rotating fixed axis cylinder to serve as the animal's treadmill and a rotary encoder (Yumo) to read axis rotations to record the animal's running. A capacitive lick port, consisting of a feeding tube (Kent Scientific) wired to a capacitive sensor, detected licks and delivered sucrose water reward via a gravity solenoid valve (Cole Palmer). Two separate Arduino Uno microcontrollers operated the rotary encoder and lick detection system. Unity was controlled on a separate computer from the calcium imaging acquisition computer. Behavioral data were sampled at 50 Hz, matching the VR frame rate. Both the start of the VR task as well as each 50 Hz frame were synchronized with the ~15 Hz sampled imaging data via Unity-generated TTL pulses from an Arduino to the imaging computer.

Behavioral training and VR tasks

Handling and pre-training

After ~1 week of recovery, the mice were handled for 2-3 days for 10 minutes each day, then acclimated to head-fixation (no earlier than 10 days from surgery) on the cylindrical treadmill in a stepwise fashion for at minimum 15-min sessions for 2-3 days (increasing to 30 min-1 hour on the second to third day). Mice were then acclimated to the lick port by 1-2 days of pre-training to lick for water rewards delivered at 2-second intervals (i.e. a minimum of 2 s between rewards if mice were actively licking, otherwise no reward was delivered). For this pre-training and all subsequent behavior, sucrose water reward (5% sucrose w/v) was delivered when the mouse licked the capacitive lick port. The water delivery system was calibrated to release ~4 μL of liquid per drop. To motivate behavior, mice were water restricted to 85% or higher of their baseline body weight. Mice were weighed daily to monitor health and underwent hydration assessments (via skin tenting). The total volume of water consumed during the training and behavioral sessions was measured, and after the experiment each day, supplemental water was supplied up to a total of ~0.045 mL/gm per day (typically 0.8-1 mL per day, adjusted to maintain body weight). After the training and water consumption, the animals were returned to their home cage each day.

Once acclimated to the lick port, mice were then pre-trained on a "running" task on a 350 cm virtual linear track with random black and white checkerboard walls and a white floor to collect a cued

reward. The reward location was marked by two large gray towers, initially positioned at 50 cm down the track. If the mouse licked within 25 cm of the towers, it received a liquid reward; otherwise, an automatic reward was given at the towers. After dispensing the reward, the towers advanced (disappeared and quickly reappeared further down the track). Covering the distance to the current reward in under 20 s increased the inter-reward distance by 10 cm, but if the mouse took longer than 30 s, the distance decreased by 10 cm, with a maximum reward location of 300 cm. Upon consistent completion of 300 cm distance in under 20 s, the automatic reward was turned off, requiring the mice to lick to receive reward. At the end of the track, the mice passed through a black "curtain" and into a gray teleport zone (50 cm long) that was equiluminant with the VR environment before re-entering the track from the beginning. Once mice were reliably licking and completing 200 laps of the pre-training track within a 30-40 min period, they were advanced to th-e main task and imaging (mean ± std.: 6.1 ± 1.8 days of running pre-training across 10 mice).

Hidden reward zone "switch" VR task

The main "switch" task reported in this study involved two virtual environments highly similar to those previously used to study hippocampal remapping[7], each with visually distinct features from the pre-training environment. Both environments consisted of a 450 cm linear track, with two colored towers and two patterned towers along the walls. Environment 1 (Env 1) had diagonal low-frequency black and white gratings on the walls, a gray floor and dark gray sky, and began with two green towers. Environment 2 (Env 2) had higher frequency gratings on the wall, a gray floor, a very light gray sky, and began with two blue towers. The reward zone was a "hidden" (not explicitly marked) 50-cm span at one of 3 possible locations along the track, each equidistantly spaced between the towers but with different proximity to the start or end of the track: zone A: 80-130 cm, zone B: 200-250 cm, zone C: 320-370 cm. Only one reward zone was ever active at a time. On the first 10 trials of any new condition, including the first day and each switch subsequently described, the reward was automatically delivered at the end of the zone if the mouse had not yet licked within the zone to signal reward availability. Otherwise, reward was delivered at the first location within the zone where the mouse licked. After these 10 trials, reward was operantly delivered for licking within the zone. Reward was randomly omitted on approximately 15% of trials (i.e. if a random number generator exceeded 0.85). Each lap terminated in a black curtain and gray teleportation "tunnel" to return the mouse to the beginning of the task. Time in the teleport tunnel was randomly jittered between 1 and 5s (5-10s on trials following reward omissions or trials where the mouse did not lick in the reward zone), followed by 50 cm of running during which the beginning of the track was visible to provide smooth optic flow.

Each mouse encountered a different starting reward zone and sequence of reward zone switches, counterbalanced across mice (n=7 mice). Mice were allowed to learn an initial reward zone (e.g. A as in **Fig. 1E**) for days 1-2 of the task. On day 3 (Switch 1), the zone was moved to one of the two other possible locations on the track after 30 trials (e.g. B). For the first 10 trials at the new location, automatic delivery was activated again, but empirically, we observed that the mice often started licking at the new location before that 10 trials had elapsed (**Fig. S1A-C**). The new reward zone was maintained on day 4. On day 5 (Switch 2), the zone was moved to the third possible reward zone (e.g. C), maintained on day 6, and moved back to the original location on day 7 (e.g. A). Each switch occurred after 30 trials. On day 8, the reward zone switch coincided with a switch into Env 2, where the sequence of zone switches was then reversed on the same day-to-day schedule for a total of 14 days (**Fig. 1**, **Fig. S1**).

An additional "fixed-condition" cohort (n=3 mice) experienced only Env 1 and one fixed reward location throughout the 14 days (**Fig. S1D,F**).

We targeted 80-100 trials per session with simultaneous two-photon imaging (described below), with 1 imaging session per day (mean ± std: 80.9 ± 8.8 trials across 10 mice). The session was terminated

early if the mouse ceased licking for an extended period of time or ceased running consistently, and/or if the imaging time exceeded 50 minutes. Prior to the imaging session for this task, mice were provided 30 "warm-up" trials using the task and reward zone from the previous day to re-acclimate them to the VR setup. On day 1 of imaging, this warm-up session used the pre-training environment from prior days. On days 2 onward, it used whichever environment and reward zone was active at the end of the previous day. Following the completion of the daily imaging session, mice were given another ~100 training trials without imaging on the last reward zone seen in the imaging session until they acquired their daily water allotment.

Two-photon (2P) imaging

We used a resonant-galvo scanning 2P microscope from Neurolabware to image the calcium activity of CA1 neurons. Excitation was achieved using 920-nm light from a tunable output femtosecond pulsed laser (Coherent Chameleon Discovery). Laser power modulation was accomplished with a Pockels cell (Conoptics). The typical excitation power, measured at the front face of the objective (Leica 25X, 1.0NA, 2.6 mm working distance), ranged from 13-40 mW for mice m12, m13, m14; 15-68 mW for mice m2, m3, m4, m6, m7; and 50-100 mW for m10 and m11. The hidden reward zone task was imaged starting from day 1 for all mice except m11, for whom imaging started on day 3 due to lower viral expression. Continuous imaging under constant laser power persisted through each trial of the imaging session. For most animals and sessions, to minimize photodamage and photobleaching, the Pockels cell was used to reduce laser power to minimal levels between trials (during the teleport zone). For mice m11, m12, m13, and m14, laser power was maintained and imaging continued throughout the teleport zone on days 1, 3, 7, 8, and 14 of the task. Photons were collected using Hamamatsu gated GAsP photomultiplier tubes (part H11706-401 for Neurolabware microscopes). Imaging data were acquired via Scanbox software (https://scanbox.org/), operated through MATLAB (Mathworks). The imaging field of view (FOV) was collected at 1.0 magnification with unidirectional scanning at 15.5 Hz, resulting in a ~0.64 x 0.64 mm FOV (512 x 716 pixels). The same FOV was acquired each session by aligning to a reference image from previous days prior to the start of data acquisition, with the aid of the 'searchref' plugin in Scanbox. This allowed us to track single cells across days (see *Calcium data processing*).

Calcium data processing

The Suite2P software package[180] (v0.10.3) was used to perform xy motion correction (rigid and non-rigid) and identify putative cell regions of interest (ROIs). Manual curation was performed to eliminate ROIs containing multiple somas or dendrites, lacking visually obvious transients, suspected of overexpressing the calcium indicator, or exhibiting high and continuous fluorescence fluctuation typical of putative interneurons. This approach yielded between 155 and 1982 putative pyramidal neurons per session, due to variation in imaging window implant quality and viral expression. Custom code was used to identify cells that were successfully tracked across imaging sessions using the intersection over union (IOU) of their ROI pixels. The threshold for ROI matching was chosen algorithmically for each dataset such that the IOU for the best match for an ROI pair was always greater than the IOU for any second best match.

To compute the *ΔF/F* (dF/F) for each ROI, baseline fluorescence was calculated within each trial independently using a maximin procedure with a 20-s sliding window (modification of default suite2p procedure). Limitation to individual trials both accounts for potential photobleaching over the session and avoids the teleport periods for sessions where the laser power was "blanked" (see *Two-photon imaging*). dF/F was then calculated for each cell as the fluorescence minus the baseline, divided by the absolute value of the baseline. dF/F was smoothed with a 2-sample (~0.129 s) s.d. Gaussian kernel. The activity rate was then extracted by deconvolving dF/F with a canonical calcium kernel using the OASIS

algorithm[181] as used in suite2p. It is important to note that this deconvolution is not interpreted as a spike rate but rather as a method to eliminate the asymmetric smoothing effect on the calcium signal induced by the indicator kinetics.

Statistics

To avoid assumptions about data distributions, we used nonparametric tests or permutation tests in most cases, except where a Shapiro–Wilk test for normality confirmed that parametric tests were reasonable. Specific tests are described in further detail in specific Methods sections. In the main text, percentages of cells classified by remapping type are reported as mean ± standard deviation out of all place cells identified on the specified days (n=7 mice for the "switch" task). Place cell criteria are defined below in *Place cell and peak firing identification*. Averaged data in figures are shown as mean ± s.e.m. unless otherwise indicated. For the distributions of sequence positions over days in Fig. 3 and Fig. S3, s.e.m. shading is omitted for clarity, but the variance for these distributions is taken into account in linear mixed effects models to quantify these plots (see *Sequence detection and quantification*).

All analyses were performed in Python3.8.5. Linear mixed effects models were performed using the statsmodels package (https://www.statsmodels.org/stable/index.html). Pairwise repeated measures (paired) t-tests run using the pingouin package (https://pingouin-stats.org/) with a Holm step-down Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Linear regressions were performed using the SciPy (https://scipy.org/) statistics module, with confidence intervals computed with the Uncertainties package (https://pypi.org/project/uncertainties/). Circular statistics were performed using Astropy (https://docs.astropy.org/en/stable/stats/circ.html), pycircstat[182] (https://github.com/circstat/pycircstat), and circular-circular correlation code originally written to analyze hippocampal theta phase precession[183] (https://github.com/CINPLA/phase-precession).

The number of mice to include was determined by having coverage of every possible reward sequence permutation (6 sequences) with at least one mouse. In addition, our mouse sample sizes were similar to those reported in previous publications[7,160].

Quantification of licking behavior

The capacitive lick sensor allowed us to detect single licks. A very small number of trials where the sensor had become corroded were removed from subsequent licking analysis by setting these values to NaN (~0.8% of all imaged trials, n=64 removed trials out of 7736 trials across the 7 switch mice). These trials were detected by >30% of the imaging frame samples in the trial containing ≥3 Unity frames where licks were detected, as this would have produced a sustained lick rate ≥20 Hz. Remaining lick counts were converted to a binary vector at the imaging frame rate and spatially binned at the same resolution as neural activity (10 cm bins), then divided by the time occupancy in each bin to yield a lick rate. We quantified the licking precision of the animals over blocks of 10 trials using an anticipatory lick ratio inspired by the ramp of anticipatory licking we observed preceding the reward zone (**Fig. 1F-G, Fig. S1A-C**). The ratio was computed as:

$$lick\ ratio = \frac{lick_{in} - lick_{out}}{lick_{in} + lick_{out}}$$

Where *lick_{in}* is the mean lick rate in a 50 cm "anticipatory" zone before the start of the reward zone, and *lick_{out}* is the mean rate outside of this zone and the reward zone. The reward zone itself is thus excluded to exclude consummatory licks (**Fig. S1E**). A ratio of 1 indicates perfect licking only in the anticipatory zone, a ratio of -1 indicates licking only outside of this zone, and a ratio of 0 indicates chance licking everywhere excluding the reward zone.

Place cell and peak firing identification

To get a trial-by-trial activity rate matrix for each cell, we binned the 450 cm linear track into 45 bins of 10 cm each. For each cell, we took the mean of the activity samples (dF/F or deconvolved calcium activity) on each trial within each position bin (note that taking the mean activity over time samples is equivalent to normalizing by the occupancy within a trial), producing a matrix of trials x position bins. For all spatial activity analyses we excluded imaging frames when the animal was moving at <2 cm/s unless otherwise specified.

We defined place cells as cells with significant spatial information[184] (SI) in either trial set 1 (pre-switch) *or* trial set 2 (post-switch) in a session. On days without a switch, we used the 1st and 2nd half of trials. For the spatial information computation and for plotting spatial firing over trials, we used the deconvolved calcium activity as this reduces the asymmetry of the calcium signal (smoothed only for plotting with a 10 cm s.d. Gaussian). SI was calculated using a formula implemented for calcium imaging[185] as:

$$SI = \sum_{i=1}^{N} p_i \frac{f_i}{f} \log_2 \frac{f_i}{f}$$

Where p_i is the occupancy probability in position bin i for the whole session, f_i is the trial-averaged activity per position bin i, and f is the mean activity rate over the whole session, computed as the sum of $f_i * p_i$ over all N bins. To get p_i, we calculated the occupancy (number of imaging samples) in each bin on each trial, and divided this by the total number of samples in each trial to get an occupancy probability per position bin per trial. We then summed the occupancy probabilities across trials and divided by the total per session to get an occupancy probability per position bin per session. To get the spatial "tuning curve" over the session, we averaged the activity in each bin across trials. To determine the significance of the SI scores, we created a null distribution by circularly permuting the position data relative to the timeseries of each cell, by a random amount of at least 1 s and a maximum amount of the length of the trial, independently on each trial. SI was calculated from the trial-averaged activity of each shuffle, and this shuffle procedure was repeated 100 times per cell. A cell's true SI was considered significant if it exceeded 95% of the SI scores from all shuffles within animal (i.e. shuffled scores were pooled across cells within animal to produce this threshold, which is more stringent than comparing to the shuffle of each individual cell[186]).

To identify spatial peaks, we used the unsmoothed spatially binned dF/F, as this signal is the closest to the raw data. Place cell firing peaks or "spatial peaks" refer to the position bin of the maximum spatially-binned activity, usually averaged across trials within a set. There was no restriction to field boundaries, thus allowing cells to have multiple fields. To plot single cell place fields and cell sequences, neural activity was normalized to the mean of each cell within a session.

Trial-by-trial similarity matrices

Correlation matrices for single cells were computed using the spatially binned deconvolved activity on each trial, smoothed with a 2-bin (20 cm) s.d. Gaussian. This resulted in a matrix A_i for each cell i of J trials x M position bins. Each trial was z-scored across the position axis, and the trial-by-trial correlation matrix C was computed as:

$$C = \frac{1}{M-1} A_i A_i^T$$

Cell category definitions for remapping subtypes

We defined the remapping types shown in **Fig. 2** and **Fig. S2** as follows: *track-relative*: significant SI before and after the switch, with spatial peaks (position bin of maximum trial-averaged dF/F) ≤50 cm from each other before vs. after; *disappearing*: significant SI before but not after the switch, with a mean spatially-binned dF/F after that is less than the 50th percentile of the per-trial mean dF/F before; *appearing*: significant SI after but not before, with a mean spatially-binned dF/F after that is greater than 1 s.d. above the mean in trials before; *remap near reward*: significant SI before and after, with spatial peaks ≤50 cm from the starts of both reward zones; *remap far from reward*: significant SI before and after, not "track-relative" (i.e. peaks >50 cm apart before vs. after) and not "near reward" cells (i.e. peaks >50 cm from the start of at least one reward zone).

Reward-relative remapping

Quantification of reward-relative remapping compared to chance

To perform statistics on reward-relative remapping (**Fig. 2, Fig. S2**), we additionally restricted the set of included place cells to require significant spatial information in the 1st *and* 2nd trial set in each session (pre- and post- switch), to allow for more reliable spatial peak identification. For all scatter plots of spatial peaks before vs. after a reward switch, points are jittered by a random amount between -π /200 and +π/200 for visualization only. As outlined in **Fig. 2**, we converted the track axis (i.e. the original position timeseries of the animal) to circular coordinates, setting the beginning of the track to -π and the end of the track (beginning of the teleport zone) to π. Spatial peaks for each cell were re-computed using dF/F binned into 45 bins on this axis (bin size 2π/45, corresponding to ~10 cm). Putative track-relative cells were removed by excluding cells with spatial peaks before vs. after the switch that fell within 0.635 radians (~50 cm) of each other. The coordinates of the remaining data were then circularly rotated to align the start of each reward zone at 0, such that spatial peaks could be measured relative to the start of each reward zone (as the signed circular distance). We measured the distance between relative peaks as the "after" peaks minus the "before" peak, circularly wrapped, creating a distribution that can be thought of as orthogonal to the unity line shown in the scatters in **Fig. 2D, F**. We compared this distribution (shown in **Fig. 2E, G**) to a "random-remapping" shuffle, generated by maintaining the pre-switch position of each cell's peak and generating 1000 random post-switch positions for each cell. To define a range of acceptable error in reward-relative remapping (i.e. a range around the unity line in **Fig. 2D,F**), we computed the circular difference between the maximum and minimum bin of the distribution that exceeded the upper 95% of the shuffle across all cells, divided by 2, and averaged across switches (**Fig. S2E**). This produced a mean range of ~0.65 radians, or close to 50 cm, which was used as a subsequent threshold for putative reward-relative remapping.

Criteria to define reward-relative cells

Reward-relative cells could encompass "remap near reward" and "remap far from reward" cells as defined in *Cell category definitions for remapping subtypes*. However, we observed variable latencies over trials for the spatial activity of these cells to stabilize after a reward switch (**Fig. 2A-B, Fig. S2A**), which could affect spatial information scores. We therefore relaxed the SI criterion for reward-relative cells such that they were required to have significant SI either before or after the switch but not necessarily both, to allow for these dynamics. We began by finding place cells which had peak spatial firing within ≤50 cm (~0.64 radians) of each other when these peaks were calculated using circular bins relative to reward zone starts. As the detection of peak firing can be noisy, especially if spatial firing is changing trial to trial, we then took into account the shape of the field by performing a cross-correlation between each place cell's spatial activity before vs. after. For this, we used the circularly aligned deconvolved activity

matrices (trials x position bins, smoothed with a 1 bin or $2\pi/45$ s.d. Gaussian) where reward zone starts are aligned between trial sets 1 and 2. We computed a cross-correlation between the trial-averaged deconvolved activity in trial set 1 vs. trial set 2, with the hypothesis that reward-relative cells should have a peak cross-correlation close to zero on this reward-centered axis. We calculated a shuffle for the cross-correlation by circularly permuting the activity in trial set 2 by a random offset between 1 and 45 bins on each trial 500 times, and required that the real cross-correlogram had a peak exceeding the 95% confidence interval (upper 97.5% threshold) of the shuffle, and that the offset of this peak was within 5 bins (~50 cm) of zero (see **Fig. S2L-N**). Place cells that passed this final criterion were defined as reward-relative.

Sequence detection and quantification

The sequential firing of neural subpopulations was detected using a split-halves cross-validation procedure[7]. For these analyses, we used the unsmoothed, spatially binned dF/F in circular track coordinates (not aligned to reward, though aligning to reward makes no difference for the circular sequence order). To sort the activity of neurons before the switch, we used the activity averaged over the odd trials to find and sort the peak firing positions. This sort was validated by plotting the trial-averaged activity of the even trials before the switch (e.g. left-hand columns of **Fig. 3A**). The same sort was then applied to the trials after the switch. The sequence positions before vs. after were then taken as the peak firing positions of the trial-averaged "even-before" trials and the trial-averaged "after" trials. Preservation of sequence order was quantified as the circular-circular correlation coefficient[182,183,187] between the sequence positions before vs. after. Though a p-value can be directly computed for this correlation coefficient, its significance was further validated through a permutation procedure. We randomly permuted the cell identities of the neurons after the switch and re-computed the correlation coefficient 1000 times to get a null distribution. The observed correlation coefficient was considered significant if it was outside 95% of the null distribution using a two-tailed test. The p-value was calculated as:

$$p = \frac{n_{|coef_{shuf}| \geq |coef_{obs}|} + 1}{N_{perm} + 1}$$

where $n_{|coef_{shuf}| \geq |coef_{obs}|}$ is the number of shuffled coefficients with absolute values $\geq$ the absolute value of the observed coefficient, and N_{perm} is the total number of shuffles.

For sequences tracked across days, we again used the cross-validated sort from the trial set 1 (before the switch, or the 1st half of trials if the reward did not move) on the reference day (the first day in each day pair) and applied this sort to trial set 2 (after the switch, or 2nd half) on the reference day as well as activity in trial sets 1 and 2 on the target day (the second day in the pair). To measure drift between days, we computed the across-day correlation coefficient between the sequence positions on reference day trial set 2 vs. target day trial set 1.

To quantify the density of sequences, we divided the number of cells in the sequence with peaks in each position bin by the total number of place cells for that animal. These density curves were smoothed only for visualization in **Fig. 3J, K** and **Fig. S3F** with a 1-bin ($2\pi/45$) s.d. Gaussian and shown as the mean across animals per each switch day. To visualize the expected uniform distribution across animals, we calculated this as the mean fraction of cells in each sequence out of the place cells in each animal on a given switch day, divided by the number of position bins.

Linear mixed effects models

To quantify neural activity changes across task experience, we used linear mixed effects models to take into account variance across animals. Linear mixed effects models were implemented using the mixedlm method of the statsmodels.formula.api package (https://www.statsmodels.org/stable/mixed_linear.html).

The fixed effect was either the switch index or day-pair index as a continuous variable, and random effects were mice. Random intercepts for each mouse were allowed; we also confirmed that including random slopes did not affect the results. When the dependent variable was reported in fractions of cells, we applied a logit transform to the fractions when a large proportion of the values were near zero. In most cases, however, we chose to display results in the original fractions for interpretability. In these cases, we confirmed that performing a logit transform on the fractions did not qualitatively change the results and only modestly improved the model fit.

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SUPPLEMENTAL FIGURES

Figure S1. Behavior across multiple reward switch sequences, related to Figure 1.

A) Expanded behavior over the 14-day task for the example animal in Fig. 1F which started the task with reward zone "A" (m14), showing days 1-5 and then each subsequent switch (day 7, 8, 10, 12, 14). Top: smoothed lick raster over 80 trials per session; black indicates rewarded trials, and magenta indicates omission trials. Shaded regions indicate the reward zone active on each set of trials. Middle: The mean ± s.e.m. lick rate for trials at each reward location (blue=A, purple=B, red=C). Bottom: Mean ± s.e.m. speed for trials at each reward location.

B) Behavior for an example animal that started the task with reward zone "B" (m12), organized as in (A).

C) Expanded behavior for the example animal in Fig. 1G which started the task with reward zone "C" (m3), organized as in (A).

D) Mouse identities, sexes, and reward switch sequence allocation. Top 7 mice are "switch" mice, bottom 3 mice are "fixed-condition" mice that maintained the same reward zone and environment throughout the experiment. Sequences are shown as "(0, 1, 2), 0" where 0 is the first reward zone experienced in a given environment, 1 is the first switch (2nd zone), 2 is the second switch (3rd zone), and the third switch which is a return to zone 0.

E) Schematic depicting anticipatory lick ratio calculation around reward zone "B" as an example. The anticipatory lick ratio compares lick rate in an anticipatory zone 50 cm before the start of the reward zone vs. everywhere outside the reward zone (the reward zone is excluded to eliminate consummatory licks). A value of 1 indicates licking exclusively in the anticipatory zone, 0 is chance everywhere outside the anticipatory zone and the reward zone.

F) Anticipatory lick ratio across blocks of 10 trials for fixed-condition animals (n=3 mice) which maintained the same reward zone and environment throughout the entire experiment. Colored lines represent individual mice and the reward zone active for each mouse (blue=A, purple=B, red=C); gray lines and shading show mean ± s.e.m across mice.

Figure S2. Quantification of remapping types and controls for reward-relative remapping, related to Figure 2.

A) Example cells from 2 mice not shown in Fig. 2A on the last switch (day 14), replicating the co-existence of remapping types within animal shown in Fig. 2A. Top row: Data from mouse m14. Bottom row: Data from mouse m12. The "reward-relative" designation (orange text) encompasses cells both near and far from reward that maintain their firing distance with respect to the reward zone (see Fig. 2B).

B) Examples of population maps from mouse m14 illustrating a day that is "stay" (same reward location, same environment), "switch within" (change reward location, same environment), or "across environment" (change reward location, change environment). Each plot shows the smoothed 2D histogram of the fraction of place cells with peak firing in each 10 cm bin before vs. after the reward zone switch (or in the 1st and 2nd half of trials on "stay" days). White lines indicate the start of each reward zone. For this analysis, only cells with significant spatial information both before and after are included. On stay days, this produces a strong density along the diagonal, corresponding to place cells that remain track-relative throughout the session. On switch days, this diagonal degrades as more cells remap, and the off-diagonal cluster around the reward intersection appears (see also Fig. 2C). On the across-environment switch, the diagonal degrades further indicating more global remapping, but the reward-relative cluster is maintained. Cyan boxes mark bins used for the "diagonal" and "near reward" categories shown in (C).

C) Quantification of population-level remapping using bins of the histograms illustrated in (B) (unsmoothed for quantification). Each dot is the mean fraction of cells across days of each category and environment per animal (n=7 mice); violins show the distribution across mice, horizontal lines show the mean across mice. In (C) and (D), *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001 from pairwise paired t-tests between categories ("stay", "switch within" environment, or "across env"), on the logit-transformed fractions. P-values are Holm corrected for multiple comparisons within each plot. Left: Near reward; cells with peaks within ≤50 cm of both reward zone starts; Pink shaded box signifies that on stay days, this fraction reflects the fraction of total place cells near the reward across the 1st to 2nd half of the session, thus no t-tests are shown for this category as the reward is not moved. Switch within vs. across env: t = -3.0, p = 0.024. Middle: Diagonal; peaks within ≤50 cm of the same position before vs. after. Stay vs. switch within: t = 2.6, p = 0.042; stay vs. across env: t = 11.82, p = 6.6e-5; switch within vs. across env: t = 8.2, p = 3.6e-4. Right: All other remapping; all non-reward and non-diagonal bins. Stay vs. switch within: t = -7.7, p = 2.5e-4; stay vs. across env: t = -29.4, p = 3.1e-7; switch within vs. across env: t = -9.1, p = 2.0e-4. .

D) Mean fractions of total place cells defined as track-relative (peaks ≤50 cm apart), disappearing, appearing, remap near reward (≤50 cm from both reward zone starts), or remap far from reward (>50 cm from at least one reward zone), averaged across days of each type per mouse as in (C). See (C) for description of statistics. Track-relative: Stay vs. switch within: t = 5.7, p = 0.0012; stay vs. across env: t = 18.4, p = 5.0e-6; switch within vs. across env: t=6.6, p = 0.0011. Disappearing: Stay vs. switch within: t = -3.6, p = 0.033; stay vs. across env: t = -2.5, p = 0.093; switch within vs. across env: t = -0.96, p = 0.37. Appearing: Stay vs. switch within: t = -3.2, p = 0.018; stay vs. across env: t = -8.6, p = 4.1e-4; switch within vs. across env: t = -5.9, p = 0.002. Remap near reward: switch within vs. across env: t = -0.23, p = 0.83. As in (C), the pink box indicates a fraction near reward on stay days that cannot be identified as "reward-specific", as there is no reward switch; thus no statistical comparisons are shown for this category. Remap far from reward: Stay vs. switch within: t = -4.8, p = 0.0093; stay vs. across env: t = -3.8, p= 0.018; switch within vs. across env: t = -1.6, p = 0.16.

E) Histograms of the circular distance between relative peaks after minus before for remapping place cells as in Fig. 2E, G, shown for all switch days (days 3 and 14 repeated from Fig. 2). n=7 mice; day 3 n=677 cells, day 5 n=583 cells, day 7 n=725 cells, day 8 n=706 cells, day 10 n=507 cells, day 12 n=505 cells, day 14 n=707 cells.

F) Increase in the fraction of cells remapping relative to reward above the shuffle over experience, at the level of individual animals. Each point is color-coded by mouse (n=7 mice) and represents the fraction of cells (logit-transformed) exceeding the "random-remapping" shuffle calculated within each individual mouse and switch day. Regression coefficient β and p-value are from a linear mixed effects model with switch index as the fixed effect and mice as random effects (random intercepts were allowed, and using random slopes did not change the outcome of the model; data not shown).

G-K) Control for Fig. 2D-H, excluding cells with peaks within ± 50 cm (~0.64 radians) from both reward zone starts (indicated by the magenta lines), intended to exclude putative reward-dedicated cells reported previously[57]. (G) n=565 cells, 7 mice. (I) n=481 cells, 7 mice. All points are jittered slightly for visualization (see Methods). The

fraction of cells remapping relative to reward at distances greater than 50 cm from reward still exceeds the shuffle (H, top; J, top). (H, bottom) and (J, bottom): the distribution of mean reward-relative positions for the remaining cells shown in the orange shaded region around the unity line in (G) and (I), respectively. The medians of these distributions are significantly non-zero: (H) non-zero median=0.816, p=2.75e-3, circular median test, n = 154 cells. (J) non-zero median=2.65, p=2.75e-3, circular median test, n=154 cells. Note that cells that fire within 50 cm of one reward but not the other may have a mean relative distance of <0.64 radians (50 cm); this is visible as the small fractions between the magenta lines in (H, bottom) and (J, bottom). In (K), note that the fraction of cells above the shuffle shows a trending but non-significant increase across task experience .

L-N) Illustration of methods to identify reward-relative remapping cells. (L) and (M) are the same example reward-relative cells shown in (A), top row; (N) is a cell that did not pass the cross-correlation criterion. Left of each cell: cross-correlation (xcorr) between trial-averaged spatial firing with reward zones aligned, before vs. after the switch. The offset of the xcorr maximum and the distance between relative spatial peaks is listed above. Gray lines mark the mean (solid) and 95% confidence interval (dashed) of the shuffle for that cell. Middle of each cell: spatial activity with reward zones aligned as in Fig. 2B; blue line marks the switch between reward zones. Right of each cell: trial-by-trial correlation matrix computed on the circularly aligned spatial activity. Note the more uniform structure of these matrices for (L) and (M), akin to a track-relative place cell in linear coordinates (e.g. (A), left). By contrast, (N) has a more block-like correlation matrix, indicating that using noisy peak firing alone in this case would have included a cell with poor remapping relative to reward.

Figure S3. Sequences across animals, remapping types, and environments, related to Figure 3.

A) Reward-relative sequences on the last switch (day 14) for the 5 mice not shown in Fig. 3A (organized as in Fig. 3A).

B) Population level remapping upon the switch from Env 1 to novel Env 2 (day 8). All place cells identified in mouse m14 are shown, sorted in the left two panels by their order in Env 1 before the switch, and by their order in Env 2 in the right-most panel. Note population-level overrepresentation in both sorts as the bend away from the diagonal around the start of the reward zone.

C) Remapping (or lack thereof) of specific subpopulations on the switch from Env 1 to Env 2 (day 8), shown for mouse m14. Top: reward-relative (RR) sequences are preserved across environments; Middle: a subset of track-relative place cells also retain their firing positions across environments, especially at the beginning of the track; Bottom: non-reward-relative, non-track-relative cells ("non-RR remapping") with significant spatial information in both Env 1 and Env 2 instead remap globally, mirroring the overall population. The left two columns in (C) are sorted by their position in Env 1; the right-most column is sorted (and cross-validated) by position in Env 2, which improves the sort for the non-RR remapping cells but not the reward-relative or track-relative cells.

D) Example sequences of disappearing cells from mouse m14. In (D) and (E), cross-validated sort was performed on the trials in which cells had significant spatial information (before for disappearing, after for appearing).

E) Example sequences of appearing cells from mouse m14.

F) Mean distributions of peak firing positions across days (n=7 mice, s.e.m. omitted for clarity) for non-RR remapping cells (left), appearing cells (middle), and disappearing cells (right). Top row: sequences according to original linear track position, converted to radians. Bottom row: sequences according to position relative to the starts of reward zones. Horizontal dotted lines indicate the expected uniform distribution for each day.

G) Both near (top) and far from (bottom) the start of the reward zone, the fraction of disappearing place cells out of total place cells decreases across experience. Fractions are shown as a logit transform here to account for values close to zero, and sessions with zero disappearing cells on any given day have been removed. Regression coefficients β and p-values are from linear mixed effects models with switch index as the fixed effect and mice as random effects. Non-remapping and appearing fractions did not show significant changes over experience (data not shown).

Figure S4. Drift in sequences tracked across days, related to Figure 4.

A) An example place cell sequence tracked from days 3 to 5 in an animal (m2) from the fixed-condition cohort, which experienced the same reward zone and environment for all 14 days. Neurons in this animal were identified using the same criteria as reward-relative cells (i.e. their field position relative to reward had to be stable in terms of its peak position and spatial cross-correlation, from the 1st to the 2nd half of trials), but without a reward switch to identify reward-relative cells, this likely includes other cell categories. In (A-E), cells within an animal are sorted by their cross-validated peak activity in the 1st trial set (1st half, or before the switch) on the reference (ref) day, which is defined as the first day in each day pair. This sort then is applied to activity in the 2nd trial set on the reference day, as well as the 1st and 2nd trial sets on the target day (the second day in the pair). Also in (A-E), the

sequence correlation coefficient, p-value relative to shuffle (two-sided permutation test), and n of cells tracked across the day pair are shown above each plot (within ref day correlation on the left, across-day correlation on the right; the across-day correlation is computed between the 2nd trial set on the ref day and the 1st trial set on the target day). In (A), note that drift is apparent across days in this fixed-condition animal as denoted by the drop in correlation coefficient, despite the cell ordering remaining significantly correlated across days.

B) A reward-relative sequence identified in animal m14 on day 3 (switch 1) and tracked to day 5 (switch 2), agnostic of the cell categories for the cells on day 5.

C) Reward-relative cells from day 3, m14 that were tracked to day 5 and remained reward-relative on day 5.

D) A track-relative sequence identified in animal m14 on day 3 (switch 1) and tracked to day 5 (switch 2), agnostic of the cell categories for the cells on day 5.

E) Track-relative cells from day 3, m14 that were tracked to day 5 and remained track-relative on day 5.

F) Across-day circular-circular correlation coefficients for place cell sequences tracked across pairs of days in the fixed-condition cohort (n = 3 mice; 95 ± 54 cells, mean ± std across mice and day pairs). Place cells included for these sequences were identified as described in (A). In (F-J), coefficients are plotted with the upper 95th percentile of 1000 shuffles of cell IDs (marked as x and color-coded by animal). Closed circles indicate coefficients with p<0.05 compared to shuffle using a two-sided permutation test; open circles indicate p≥0.05.

G) Across-day circular-circular correlation coefficients for all cells in reward-relative sequences on each reference day tracked to each target day, for the animals performing the hidden reward zone switch task (n = 7 mice; 26 ± 20 cells, mean ± std across mice and day pairs).

H) Across-day circular-circular correlation coefficients for reward-relative cells on each reference day that were tracked and remained reward-relative on each target day (n = 7 mice; 8 ± 10 cells, mean ± std across mice and day pairs). Note slightly higher correlation coefficients for this subset compared to (G), though the small numbers of cells that were both successfully tracked and remained reward-relative preclude a robust comparison. One outlier on day pair 4-5 with non-significant rho < -0.4 is not shown.

I) Across-day circular-circular correlation coefficients for all cells in track-relative sequences on each reference day tracked to each target day (n = 7 mice; 45 ± 37 cells, mean ± std across mice and day pairs).

J) Across-day circular-circular correlation coefficients for track-relative cells on each reference day that were tracked and remained track-relative on each target day (n = 7 mice; 15 ± 17 cells, mean ± std across mice and day pairs).