Ashwin Balakrishna

Email: abalakrishna@gmail.com, Website, Google Scholar

BACKGROUND

My career goal is to build general-purpose robot brains. I have extensive experience in various aspects of robot learning, including designing data collection strategies and algorithms, training robot foundation models, and developing thorough evaluations to measure robot performance.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Physical Intelligence, Member of the Technical Staff — 2025 - Present
Research on large-scale robot data collection and VLA post-training

Google DeepMind, Senior Research Scientist — 2024 - 2025
Research on VLA post-training in the Gemini Robotics team

Toyota Research Institute, Research Scientist — 2023 - 2024
Research on large-scale robot data collection and VLM/VLA pre-training

EDUCATION

UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA — 2018 - 2022
Ph.D. in Computer Science
Thesis: Scalable Supervision for Safe and Efficient Online Robot Learning

California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA — 2014 - 2018
Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Gemini Robotics Team. Gemini Robotics: Bringing AI into the Physical World. *Preprint* 2025. See release here: `https://tinyurl.com/gemini-robotics`

Moo Jin Kim*, Karl Pertsch*, Siddharth Karamcheti*, Ted Xiao, **Ashwin Balakrishna**, Suraj Nair et al. OpenVLA: An Open-Source Vision-Language-Action Model. *Preprint* 2024.

Alexander Khazatsky*, Karl Pertsch*, Suraj Nair, **Ashwin Balakrishna**, et al. DROID: A Large-Scale In-The-Wild Robot Manipulation Dataset. *Preprint* 2024.

Brijen Thananjeyan*, **Ashwin Balakrishna***, Suraj Nair, Michael Luo, Krishnan Srinivasan, et al. Recovery RL: Safe Reinforcement Learning with Learned Recovery Zones. *Robotics and Automation Letters (RA-L) and International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA)* 2021.

AWARDS & HONORS

UC Berkeley Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award	2022
Qualcomm Innovation Fellowship Finalist	2021
Timothy B. Campbell Innovation Award (Berkeley EECS)	2021
Apple AI/ML PhD Fellowship Nomination (Berkeley EECS)	2020
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship	2018
Henry Ford II Scholar Award (Top GPA in EE at Caltech)	2017