

Believing that willpower is limitless makes your workday more productive after a bad night's sleep

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Lack of sleep negatively affects daily work performance by reducing willpower and emotional as well as motivational resources, according to

new research from Trinity College Dublin.

An [employee](#)'s state of mind, however, can overcome the negative effects of lack of sleep by helping them believe that their [willpower](#) is limitless, according to the study, which was recently published in the international peer-reviewed journal *Human Relations*.

The study, led by Dr. Wladislaw Rivkin, associate professor in organizational behavior at Trinity Business School, involved two daily diary studies with a combined sample of 214 employees who were surveyed across a total of 1,317 workdays.

Researchers have long understood sleep as a crucial recovery experience which can make or break a workday. One particular area of research has focused on how good sleep allows employees to resist distractions and remain focused or to stick with their work even when their tasks become more demanding. Dr. Rivkin's research seeks to further understand the psychological mechanisms that link sleep to employee [effectiveness](#) and what we can do to combat the negative effects of poor sleep.

Dr. Rivkin said, "Our study finds further strong links between sleep and employee effectiveness. It illustrates that a lack of sleep affects employees' work effectiveness by reducing their willpower—the ability to control impulses, emotions, and desires—as well as their emotional resources such as a [positive outlook](#) towards daily task completion and motivational resources such as feelings of aliveness and energy during the day. The study also reveals that a person's mindset about whether willpower is limited or limitless has a strong impact on performance at work particularly on days with a lack of sleep. Believing that your willpower is unlimited helps you to sustain your effectiveness at work particularly on days with a lack of sleep."

The research also offers practical interventions on how to prevent the

adverse consequences of lack of sleep. These include interventions such as guided mindfulness meditation to improve sleep duration and employers allowing employees to have micro breaks at work to combat the negative consequences of [lack of sleep](#).

The paper, titled "Role of Regulatory, Affective, and Motivational Resources in the Adverse Spillover of Sleep in the Home Domain to Employee Effectiveness in the Work Domain," was published in *Human Relations*.

More information: Wladislaw Rivkin et al, The role of regulatory, affective, and motivational resources in the adverse spillover of sleep in the home domain to employee effectiveness in the work domain, *Human Relations* (2021). [DOI: 10.1177/00187267211052469](https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267211052469)

Provided by Trinity College Dublin

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