

# Psychologists discover connection between a 'calm mind' and better capacity for self-control

August 15 2022

---



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

People who have a "calmer mind"—that is, their neuronal processes take longer on average and whirl around less than others—have greater self-

control. This was the finding of Dr. Tobias Kleinert, Prof. Dr. Markus Heinrichs and Dr. Bastian Schiller from the Department of Psychology at the University of Freiburg, together with Prof. Dr. Kyle Nash and Dr. Josh Leota from the University of Alberta/Canada, and Prof. Dr. Thomas König from the University Hospital of Bern/Switzerland.

Their research is being published in the journal *Psychological Science*. The paper has been accepted and is already available online as a preprint.

"Self-controlled behavior is important to achieving long-term objectives—for example when we do without high-calorie food to lose surplus pounds," explains Schiller. Why is this easier for some people than for others? Are these [individual differences](#) based in a fundamentally different organization of the brain? To find answers to these questions, the Freiburg researchers recorded the [electrical activity](#) in the brains of over 50 relaxed yet wakeful participants in the laboratory.

The scientists also recorded the participants' capacity for self-control in other ways: self-evaluation reports, behavioral tasks and the [brain activity](#) recorded while they did these tasks. The results of the study carried out at the University of Freiburg were confirmed in a second cooperative study that took place at the University of Alberta/Canada, with more than 100 subjects.

"On both sides of the Atlantic we were able to prove a robust connection between non-task-dependent neuronal processing and the capacity for self-control," explains Kleinert.

Schiller says, "Our results indicate that people with greater self-control have a calmer mind, which in itself generates fewer distracting stimuli."

Heinrichs adds that "these findings are hugely significant to a better

understanding of clinical disorders associated with deficient [self-control](#) processes."

**More information:** Tobias Kleinert et al, A Self-Controlled Mind is Reflected by Stable Mental Processing, *Psychological Science* (2022).  
[DOI: 10.31234/osf.io/fzg9y](https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/fzg9y)

Provided by University of Freiburg

Citation: Psychologists discover connection between a 'calm mind' and better capacity for self-control (2022, August 15) retrieved 21 June 2024 from  
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-08-psychologists-calm-mind-capacity-self-control.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.