

# Poor time management found to cause poor sleep for college students

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A lack of time management skills, particularly in organization, can lead to poor sleep quality for college students according to research conducted at The University of Alabama.

Dr. Adam Knowlden, associate professor of health science with the UA College of Human Environmental Sciences, investigated time management and how it influences sleep health in full-time [college students](#) in the areas of setting goals and priorities, mechanics of time management, and preference for organization.

"College students tend to deal with lifestyle-related sleep problems," said Knowlden. "For example, balancing academic and social obligations can be challenging for college students. Stress and [anxiety](#) also impact college students and we know that [stress](#) can impact the sleep quality college students receive by causing insomnia."

According to Knowlden, more than 65% of college students describe their sleep quality as poor.

The study, which was recently published in the *American Journal of Health Education*, found the three factors associated with time management significantly influenced the overall sleep quality of college students. Knowlden reported that time management explained around 20% of the sleep quality outcomes measured.

"Among the three factors, having a preference for organization was the most crucial factor influencing sleep quality," said Knowlden. "This suggests that individuals who prioritize and maintain an organized environment tend to experience better sleep quality."

Knowlden, who has also conducted [sleep health](#) studies related to body composition and stress, says time management strategies should be learned and implemented prior to the start of the school year.

"We know that there is a tradition of college students staying up late, sometimes an entire 24 hours, to study or cram for exams," said Knowlden. "This is a tell-tale sign of the need for more focus on time

management."

"However, until now, no study has looked specifically at time management to determine how much influence it has on the sleep of college students. We felt this was important to investigate because [time](#) management is something [college](#) students can work on improving."

Knowlden recommends blocking out eight to nine hours of sleep and making it the most important appointment of the day.

"We know that during sleep is when learning takes place," said Knowlden. "You can think of your mind like a computer. When we sleep, our brain is getting rid of information it doesn't need, and keeping information it does need. This is why students that prioritize sleep do better academically."

**More information:** Adam P. Knowlden et al, Time Management Behavior Structural Equation Model Predicts Global Sleep Quality in Traditional Entry University Students, *American Journal of Health Education* (2023). [DOI: 10.1080/19325037.2023.2209617](https://doi.org/10.1080/19325037.2023.2209617)

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