

# Bad sleep habits linked to higher self-control risks

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Poor sleep habits can lead to self-control risks, according to Clemson University research.

Poor sleep habits can have a negative effect on self-control, which presents risks to individuals' personal and professional lives, according to Clemson University researchers.

In a study titled "Interactions between Sleep Habits and Self-Control," Clemson psychologists concluded a sleep-deprived individual is at increased risk for succumbing to impulsive desires, inattentiveness and questionable decision-making.

"Self-control is part of daily decision-making. When presented with conflicting desires and opportunities, [self-control](#) allows one to maintain control," said June Pilcher, Clemson Alumni Distinguished Professor of psychology, one of four authors of the study. "Our study explored how [sleep habits](#) and self-control are interwoven and how sleep habits and self-control may work together to affect a person's daily functioning."

Other Clemson researchers included Drew Morris, a human factors psychology Ph.D. candidate; Janet Donnelly, a Ph.D. candidate in

industrial/organizational psychology; and Hayley B. Feigl, who has a Bachelor of Science in psychology.

Previous research has shown individuals working in today's 24-hour-a-day global economy often times sleep less or at irregular times, resulting in poor sleep and chronic sleep loss, which affects decision-making.

"Exercising self-control allows one to make better choices when presented with conflicting desires and opportunities. That has far-reaching implications to a person's career and personal life," Pilcher said.

Poor sleep habits, which include inconsistent sleep times and not enough hours of sleep, can also lead to health problems, including weight gain, hypertension and illness, according to prior research. Studies have also found that [sleep deprivation](#) decreases self-control but increases hostility in people, which can create problems in the workplace and at home," Pilcher said.

Better sleep habits can contribute to a more stable level of daily energy reserves, research has indicated. Availability of energy can refuel a person's ability to make more difficult choices rather than opting for the easier choice or the easier task.

"Many aspects of our daily lives can be affected by better-managed sleep and self-control capacity," Pilcher said. "Improved health and worker performance are two potential benefits, but societal issues such as addictions, excessive gambling and over spending could also be more controllable when sleep deficiencies aren't interfering with one's decision making."

**More information:** [journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00284/full](http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00284/full)

Provided by Clemson University

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