

# Is your busy schedule affecting your health? Time might not be the problem

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Image by Sam Rohn, flickr.com/photos/nylocations/

The modern schedule is infamously frantic, leaving many of us feeling constantly pressed for time. But that feeling may not have much to do with time itself, according to a new study in the *Journal of Marketing Research*.

"Beyond the number of activities actually competing for their [time](#), [emotional conflict](#) between activities makes consumers feel that they have even less time," write authors Jordan Etkin (Duke University), Ioannis Evangelidis (Erasmus University), and Jennifer Aaker (Stanford University). "Emotions such as guilt about where time is being spent or fear over loss of income both generate stress, and make a person feel more pressed for time than they actually are."

The study asked participants to list tasks that took a certain amount of time, and to then envision completing these tasks. Participants were then asked to imagine that tasks were in conflict with one another. In some cases the tasks actually competed for time, but in others, they were felt to be in competition for emotional or financial reasons only.

When participants thought certain activities were in conflict with one another, they felt even more pressed for time due to a feeling of increased anxiety over the conflict. This anxiety increased regardless of whether the conflict was physical, or

simply emotional.

The authors identify two simple strategies to help people reduce false feelings of being pressed for time: slow breathing, and channeling amped-up feelings of stress into more productive high-energy emotions such as excitement. Both techniques were successful in making participants feel that they weren't as pressed for time as they had first feared.

"Feeling pressed for time impacts how consumers spend time, and how much they are willing to pay to save it. From a consumer standpoint, feeling pressed for time can have many harmful consequences such as poorer health, trouble sleeping, and depression. By pausing to breathe or envision the source of stress in a more positive light, people can enjoy the time they actually have in a healthier and happier way," conclude the authors.

#### More information:

[papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2516760](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2516760)

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