

[IMAGE]

The Perils of Procrastination

By Editorial Staff

Who among us hasn't been guilty of *procrastination* – in simplest terms, the act of putting things off, even though we know there could or will be negative consequences? The problem, of course, is those negative consequences, which seem to pop up everywhere: from failing a test in school (because you kept putting off studying); to missing the big meeting at work (because you kept putting off getting out of bed); to having to pay dramatically more for something (because you kept putting off buying it, even when it was on sale); to missing a family member's last words (because you waited too long to visit them in the hospital).

The perils of procrastination go even further; they can negatively impact your health, according to research that gathered data every three months for nine months to determine how procrastination impacted health outcomes. Study participants self-reported procrastination, using a 1-5 scale (1= "very rarely or does not represent me"; 5 = "very often or always represents me") to assess their procrastination. After nine months, researchers gathered data on 16 self-reported health outcomes and evaluated how participants' procrastination scores correlated with their health.

Participants with higher procrastination scores also had a higher likelihood of poor health outcomes after nine months, including symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress; disabling pain (neck, upper back, lower back, upper extremities and/or lower extremities); unhealthy lifestyle behaviors (poor sleep, physical inactivity); and loneliness. The higher the score, the greater risk of experiencing one or more of these health issues.

procrastination - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Even after the researchers accounted for potential variables that could also affect health (including previous physical and mental health diagnoses), the increased health risk associated with procrastination remained.

While this study, published in *JAMA Network Open*, involved young adults (university undergraduate and graduate students in Sweden; average age: 24.8 years), we all know procrastination can strike anyone, at any age, at any time. For tips on how to defeat procrastination – and in so doing, ward off the health perils associated with it, [click here](#).

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