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Feeling unproductive at work? Blame sleep, not alcohol

Alexandra Gibbs | [@alexgibbsy](#)
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If you're worried about having a few too many drinks or cigarettes on a work night, a new study suggests that this isn't such a big deal for your productivity, it's how much sleep you get that counts.

Not getting enough shut-eye the night before is more detrimental to work productivity than drinking too much alcohol or smoking, according to a new study commissioned by VitalityHealth, a health insurance company.



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The report showed that employees who sleep five hours or less every night revealed "an increased work impairment" compared to those who got eight or more. The report suggested that productivity improved the more sleep one got, suggesting an optimum of seven to eight hours.

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There was no signs of a direct association between work productivity and how much a person drinks or smokes, according to the findings published by RAND Europe. However, it does note that whilst alcohol consumption might "not have a detrimental productivity effect now" it is linked to "negative health conditions in the future."

While there is an association between lack of physical activity and work productivity, severe obesity was not seen as related to an employee's absenteeism or "presenteeism," that is at work, but not functioning at normal levels.

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Other problems linked to lower rates of work productivity included employees who have financial concerns, mental health problems and/or suffered bullying in the workplace.


The study itself however does have its limitations, having focused more predominantly on short-term productivity rather than long term health effects; and the data was self-reported from a survey, suggesting that there could be over-estimating or under-estimating in what participants deem as bad habits or productivity.

The project monitored more than 21,800 UK individuals, to determine how particular health risks and work environment factors impacted productivity in the workplace. Research and data was collated by RAND Europe and the University of Cambridge, who used data from an employer-employee survey used in 2014's "Britain's Healthiest Company" competition.

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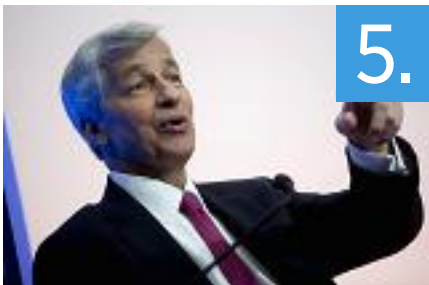
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