

Study shows exercise, sleep are key to keeping employees from bringing home work frustrations

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A brisk walk or a long swim may be the key to preventing a bad day at the office from spilling over into the home.

A study published this month in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* tracked participants' [sleep patterns](#) and daytime physical movements found employees who recorded an average of more than 10,900 steps each day were less likely to perpetuate abuse at home than those recording fewer than 7,000.

"Research shows employees who are mistreated at work are likely to engage in similar behaviors at home," said University of Central Florida's College of Business management professor Shannon Taylor, who teamed up with researchers from Illinois and Wisconsin for the study. "If they've been belittled or insulted by a supervisor, they tend to vent their frustration on members of their household. Our study shows that happens because they're too tired to regulate their behavior."

The study concludes sleep and exercise are intervention points that can be leveraged to prevent the spread of harmful behavior. Study participants included 118 MBA students with full-time jobs who took a survey and then wore activity monitors for a week. A follow-up survey was then sent to the participants' cohabitants.

Taylor said the study found that burning an additional 587 calories can

reduce the harmful effects of mistreatment and help prevent it from carrying into the home. For the average American man, these gains can be achieved with an hour of swimming or a brisk 90-minute walk.

"The findings are particularly compelling given recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and the American Heart Association to walk between 8,000 and 10,000 steps per day," Taylor said. "I also think the study gives us a new perspective on the importance of getting an adequate amount of sleep and exercise. It's not just good for you, it's good for your spouse, too."

Taylor is an associate professor and Ph.D. program coordinator in the management department at the University of Central Florida in Orlando.

Provided by University of Central Florida

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