

The Ying and Yang of Weight

How much weight you gain can influence your decision-making process.

By [Nina Elias](#)



Lose 10 percent of your body weight, and you (and everyone around you) will see a smaller, healthier you. But gain 10 percent and your loved ones will notice more than how you look—according to a new study recently published in *Psychological Science*, gaining a significant amount of weight alters your personality. Specifically, it may make you more impulsive.

Researchers examined data from more than 1,900 people who were participating in two large-scale studies. Participants' body weight and personality traits were collected at two check points, nearly a decade apart. What researchers found was that those who gained 10 percent or more of their weight in that time period showed significantly increased impulsiveness, the heightened tendency to give into temptations.

But there was an unexpected twist lurking in the data: those same participants showed an increased deliberation—aka, the tendency to think before acting—nearly twice as much as those who maintained a consistent weight between check points.

“We suspect there is a social element to it,” explains Angelina Sutin, Ph.D., study author and assistant professor at Florida State University College of Medicine. “When people gain weight, it usually does not go unnoticed, and family and friends will often comment on it. This may translate into a greater tendency to think before acting, even if the individual isn’t able to control his or her impulses.”

This is just one of the many examples of the connection between our psychology and physiology. Stress, for example, while a psychological burden, prompts a number of physiological responses like headaches, weird dreams, and even bleeding gums ([check out more signals you’re silently stressed, here](#)).

Deliberation is generally a good trait to have, says Sutin. It's keeping your impulses in check, especially the emotional ones, that will keep you from spiraling. Take [this short quiz](#) to find out where *you* sit on the impulsiveness scale, as well as tips for practicing extra patience.

Read more: <http://www.prevention.com/mind-body/emotional-health/overweight-behavior#ixzz2THrLIKe>

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