



Taking Breaks May Impair The Completion of Future Actions



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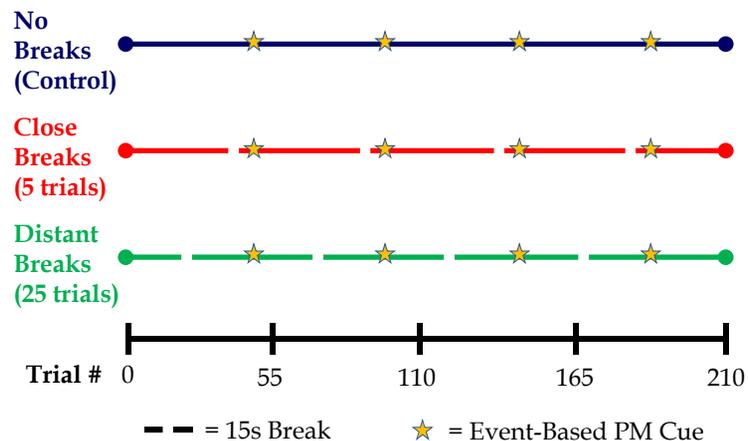
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Introduction

- Memory for future intentions has been termed Prospective Memory (PM).
- Types of PM intentions:
 - Event-Based (EB)
 - e.g., Taking out the trash when I see the trash can.
 - Activity-Based (AB)
 - e.g., Taking out the trash after I finish writing this poster.
 - Time-Based (TB)
 - e.g., Taking out the trash at 7:00 PM.
- Some have suggested that in naturalistic EB tasks participants will take advantage of unfilled breaks in order to rehearse future intentions (Sellen, Louie, Harris, & Wilkins, 1997).
- Rehearsal should increase activation of intentions, thus increasing the probability of completing the intentions.
- The goal of the current study was to empirically validate the role of unfilled breaks in event-based prospective memory.

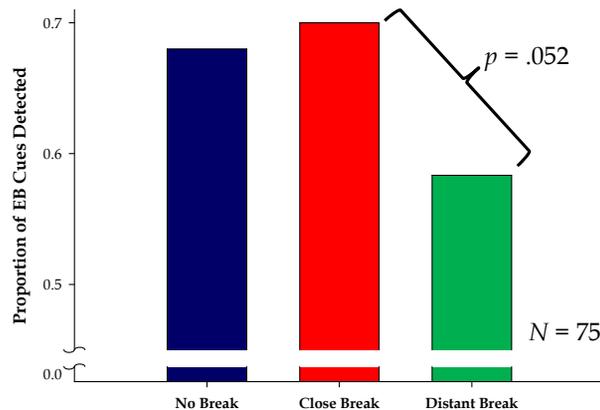
Procedure



Conclusions

- Breaks did *not* improve detection of PM cues.
- Cue detection was lowest when breaks occurred 25 trials before PM cues.
- Subjective responses to a post-experimental questionnaire suggest participants did not use the breaks to rehearse the PM intention.
- Our results may reflect a difference between naturalistic and laboratory-based paradigms.
- Participants in this study may have used the break to rehearse other intentions from their daily lives.

Results



Future Directions

- Examine the role of breaks in other types of prospective memory intentions.
- Examine the impact of varying lengths of breaks.
- Measure differences in cue activation that may or may not be occurring after the breaks.

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