

THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL REGULATION STRATEGIES ON  
PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL RECOVERY FROM STRESS

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## Abstract

The ways in which people regulate their emotions following stressful situations is an important determinant of their psychological recovery. Rumination is a maladaptive emotion regulation strategy that has been associated with less psychological recovery from stress compared to more adaptive emotion regulation strategies such as distraction or reappraisal (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco & Lyubomirsky, 2008). The ways in which individuals regulate their emotions can also affect biological recovery from stress (Gross & Levenson, 1997); however, the biological effects of rumination, reappraisal, and distraction have never been directly compared. Thus, the current study aims to compare the effects of rumination, distraction, and reappraisal on both psychological and biological recovery from stress. We expected that rumination would be associated with less psychological and biological recovery from stress when compared to both distraction and reappraisal. Thirty undergraduate participants completed a modified version of the Trier Social Stress Test (TSST; Kirschbaum, Pirke & Hellhammer, 1993) and then were randomly assigned to one of the three emotion regulation conditions. Negative affect and salivary cortisol were collected at six different time points. As expected, preliminary analyses indicated that participants in the rumination condition had less recovery from stress than participants in the reappraisal or distraction conditions ( $p < 0.01$ ). Interestingly, participants in the reappraisal condition had less recovery than participants in the distraction condition ( $p < 0.01$ ). These findings provide important insights into the effect of different emotion regulation strategies on psychological and biological health.

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