

# Slow down your typing to improve your writing, study says

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The quality of your writing will likely get better if you simply type slower, according to a recent study.

Researchers from the University of Waterloo asked [study participants](#) to type essays using both hands or with only one. Using text-analysis software, the team discovered that some aspects of essay writing, such as sophistication of vocabulary, improved when participants used only one hand to type.

"Typing can be too fluent or too fast, and can actually impair the writing process," said Srdan Medimorec, a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Arts at Waterloo and lead author of the study. "It seems that what we write is a product of the interactions between our thoughts and the tools we use to express them."

The results led the researchers to speculate that slowing down participants' typing by asking them to use only one hand, allowed more time for internal word search, resulting in a larger variety of words. Fast typists may have simply written the first word that came to mind.

"This is the first study to show that when you interfere with people's typing, their writing can get better," said Professor Evan F. Risko, Canada Research Chair in Embodied and Embedded Cognition and senior author of the study. "We're not saying that students should write their term papers with one hand, but our results show that going fast can have its drawbacks. This is important to consider as writing tools

continue to emerge that let us get our thoughts onto the proverbial page faster and faster."

The researchers suggest that speed could affect writing quality regardless of the tools, whether they are text-to-speech programs, computers or a pen and paper, but future research is required to confirm this idea. In addition, the researchers note in the paper that previous research has demonstrated that slowing down typing too much could impair writing. Their one-handed typing condition only slowed [writing](#) to about the speed of handwriting. Hence, the hunt-and-peck method might not be the solution.

The paper appears in the *British Journal of Psychology*, and involves three experiments with undergraduate students. Participants in the study wrote essays describing a memorable school day for them, an event that had a positive effect on them, and that asked them defend their position on a ban on cellular telephones in high schools.

**More information:** *British Journal of Psychology*,  
[onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10 ... 1111/bjop.12177/full](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bjop.12177/full)

Provided by University of Waterloo

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