

Your body keeps two hidden clocks, and one may quietly control far more than sleep

May 7 2026, by Sayan Tribedi



Higher bodily awareness and balanced time perspective linked to better sleep and digestion. Image generated by AI for illustrative purposes

The body's internal rhythms and our perception of time are deeply linked, shaping everything from sleep to overall health. Discover how

sensing your inner self and balancing your past, present, and future could unlock better well-being.

What if the rumble in your stomach and the tick of the clock have something in common? It might sound far-fetched, but psychologists have found that how keenly we feel our internal bodily signals and how we view past, present, and future can reinforce each other—with real effects on sleep and health. In fact, each volunteer [in a study](#) of 152 adults filled out standard surveys about body awareness and time perspective, plus simple self-ratings of sleep and digestion. Those most aware of their bodies and with a balanced time outlook reported the healthiest sleep and digestion.

The study is published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*.

Listening to your body's signals

Interoception is the fancy term for tuning into your body's internal buzz—feeling your heartbeat, noticing your breath, or even sensing hunger pangs. As researchers note, it's "the conscious perception ... of internal bodily cues, including ... heartbeat, hunger, and visceral sensations."

Being tuned in like this isn't trivial: it shapes how we [regulate emotions](#) and stress. In fact, higher interoceptive awareness is linked with better emotional balance and well-being, while anxiety, trauma or chronic stress can blur those signals.

Your mental timeline

Our outlook on time matters, too. The mental balance of your past, present, and future is called your time perspective. An individual with a

good mentality would provide positivity in regard to the past, satisfaction in relation to the present moment, and hope for the future.

Research indicates that individuals with this mentality tend to be [resilient](#) and content with their lives, as opposed to those who get preoccupied with regrets or concerns for the future, who end up being stressed and unhappy.

When body awareness meets time perspective

To see if these two came together, the researchers asked 152 people about both topics and about their sleep and digestion. The results were striking. Those more aware of their bodies tended to have a more balanced time perspective—and they reported the best sleep quality and digestion.

"Individuals with [higher interoceptive awareness](#) reported more adaptive somatic functioning," the authors report. In other words, people in tune with their bodies got the best rest and smooth digestion.

Notably, the healthier blend of past, present, and future also partially mediated the relationship. According to statistical analyses, having an optimal time perspective (particularly not being overly past-oriented) explains part of the variance in better sleep quality and intestinal well-being among body-aware individuals.

According to one of their results, "the data support a neurocognitive model of embodied consciousness, wherein interoceptive awareness interacts with time perspective to help maintain psychological and physiological equilibrium." As the authors argue, "These two phenomena are closely interconnected, interacting and functioning as interdependent regulatory systems."

What it means for well-being

What lesson can we learn from this? One concept suggests that simple habits related to the mind and body could enhance each other's benefits.

Yoga and mindfulness activities that help you become aware of your breath or heartbeat could strengthen interoception, while reappraising negative thoughts from the past could fine-tune time perspective. These practices may help you break the cycle of stress while improving sleep, digestion and mood.

According to the researchers, "mindfulness and time-oriented" therapies may also be tested to strengthen "embodied self-awareness and temporal balance."

Naturally, being a snapshot study, it cannot establish a cause-and-effect relationship. However, it opens a door.

Future research (brain scans, longitudinal studies, controlled trials) can explore how brain networks, such as the insula, interact with the body and mind.

This study offers initial empirical evidence for a feedback loop linking time and the body, making conscious experience spatially and temporally anchored. They found that body posture relates to time that occurs on a horizontal axis. In simpler terms, it implies that being aware of your body and balancing how you look at time could be the key to sleeping better, better digestion and overall better resilience.

More information: Olga Klamut et al, Bridging interoception and time perspective: toward an embodied model of consciousness, *Frontiers in Psychology* (2026). [DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1725236](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1725236)

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