Temporal control of responding under mixed fixed-interval schedules of reinforcement.

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After initial training under an FI 1-min schedule, 6 male rats responded under 2-component mixed FI schedules of food reinforcement. The shorter FI of the mixed schedule was 1 min throughout the experiment; the longer FI was varied from 2 to 8 min over experimental conditions. The longer interval was imposed randomly after one-fourth of the 1-min intervals; at least 1 1-min interval followed each long interval. Results suggest that response strength is dynamic under FI schedules: The large number of responses emitted during occasional long intervals may weaken response strength temporarily, resulting in depressed response rate and lengthened postreinforcement pause in the following short interval.