Abstract
Implementation intentions: Control of fear despite cognitive load. The cognitive consequences of forming implementation intentions in controlling fear were addressed in the present study. Participants with an intense fear of spiders evaluated pictures of spiders, pleasant pictures, and neutral pictures under cognitive load. Regulatory control was measured by participants self-report ratings of the pictures on the Self-Assessment Manikins Scales. Only participants given implementation intentions reported weaker negative emotional responses to the pictures of spiders as compared to participants given a goal intention and to no-goal control participants. Thus, emotional control by implementation intentions was shown not to tax a persons cognitive resources, attesting to the automatic nature of this self-regulation strategy.