



Let's Go, PTO



Working hard is important, but so is resting and relaxing, whether it's for an extra half-day or over a longer stint. Vacation is good for your mind, your body, and your productivity in a lot of ways:

Work-life balance: According to NordVPN, U.S. remote employees are logging an average of three more hours of work per day than before the pandemic began. Just because you're home more often doesn't mean your brain doesn't need a break. Taking some time off and putting work away will help avoid burnout.

Mental health: Stepping away from work allows you to decompress and focus on yourself. Even if you don't do anything that's conventionally thought of as a vacation, giving yourself a break from routine is great for your overall well-being.

Physical health: Taking time off can reduce your risk of developing metabolic syndrome (a group of related issues that includes high blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels.) These issues put you at higher risk for heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. Time away also decreases your body's production of cortisol, a hormone caused by stress that puts your body under strain.

Improved productivity: Once you're back from some time off, you might find yourself with new ideas and new motivation! Days off help you recharge and rest, which can help your focus in the long run.

Don't lose your PTO: Make sure you're taking advantage of the days off that are part of your overall total compensation package. If any days don't roll over, take them! That way you don't lose any.

Vacations are linked to better health outcomes, reduced stress, and overall higher life satisfaction, according to the [APA](#).

But what should you do with your time?

- Even short breaks can be incredibly beneficial. Take a half-day or a Friday off for a long weekend; you can staycation in your own home or travel somewhere nearby.
- Familiar vacation spots are great, but don't be afraid to try somewhere new! Changes of scenery can be good for your brain.
- Bank your PTO and take a dedicated, multi-day vacation at least once a year to give your body and mind a quality reset.
- It's crucial to have time where you're completely disconnected from work. Set your out-of-office emails and commit to not checking until you return.



Content by Lockton Dunning Benefits with info from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-23/working-from-home-in-covid-era-means-three-more-hours-on-the-job> and <https://hbr.org/2016/07/the-data-driven-case-for-vacation>