



Thinking of Skipping Vacation? Don't!



Many of us have had our summer vacation plans canceled due to the pandemic. Perhaps you planned to visit family or take your annual beach vacation. Or maybe you were scheduled to celebrate a milestone with a big trip – a food and wine tour of France or an African safari. Whatever your thwarted plans entailed, you might be thinking of skipping a vacation altogether. It's easy to think, "I should keep working, so I can get more done," or "What's the point? I can't really go anywhere."

Several studies indicate that performance nose-dives when we work for extended periods without a break. In addition, **the benefits of taking a vacation are clear**: it results in improved productivity, lower stress, and better overall mental health. It also spurs greater creativity.

While your plans will likely look different than before, here are some guidelines to help you reap the benefits of vacation, wherever you go.

Get a change in scenery. Vacation doesn't need to entail extensive travel. The fun of it is going somewhere that is different from your daily life. This may be a short drive from home, an extended road trip, or an excursion to the other side of town.

Plan ahead. While a spontaneous getaway can be exciting, research shows that the stress of poorly planned vacations can eliminate the positive benefits of time off. In particular, planning

a month ahead and focusing on the details in advance, versus figuring things out while on vacation, has been shown to result in a better vacation experience with more positive outcomes.

Planning ahead also gives us something to look forward to, something that Gretchen Rubin, author of *The Happiness Project*, says not only makes us feel good but also adds an "atmosphere of growth" to our lives and makes us optimistic. Even if you're only going across town, you can still identify which days you're going to take off and plan what you're going to do in advance.

Identify the type of experience you want to have.

The ideal vacation is different for each of us. What is your idea of recreation? What allows you to recharge? What nourishes you? Knowing this will help inform potential destinations and activities.

Spend time outdoors. Research shows that spending time in nature benefits us both mentally and physically. Moreover, these benefits are reaped whether you are in a national park or an urban park, and with as little as two hours in nature per week. Being outside also provides **open space and more social distancing** (aside from the occasional crowded monuments or visitor centers).

Create memories. Vacations are also great opportunities to create lasting, positive memories. Several studies show that recalling happy memories can head off stress, anxiety, and depression – something that is much needed in our busy lives and even more so in current times and for years to come.

As easy as it might be to keep on working and skip a vacation, don't. Following the suggestions in this article can provide you with an experience that leaves you refreshed and re-energized, and you don't have to go very far to do it. So, get packing and go. **You'll be glad you did.**

Source: Harvard Business Review



New Year's Resolution Ideas for A Healthier Life in 2021

Many of these New Year's resolution ideas for health and wellness don't only benefit your health: they might benefit your wallet, your confidence, or your child's life! Choosing a resolution for your health can trickle into other areas of your life in a crazy-positive way!

Drink a gallon of water a day. Drinking enough water each day can help relieve headaches, boost your energy, relieve constipation, and can even help aid weight loss.

Experts recommend you "drink between half an ounce and an ounce of water for each pound you weigh, every day." For adults who are 150 pounds, this means that you would drink between 75 and 150 ounces every day, which is a lot. A gallon of water is 128 ounces.

Meal plan for your health. Meal planning is simply planning any number of your weekly meals ahead of time! It can help you with portion control, prevent you from eating out, and give you more opportunities for healthier choices for snacks like veggies and hummus or a piece of fruit.

Eat 1 or 2 vegetarian dinners per week. Vegetarians have lower rates of hypertension, cancer, and other diseases. But be careful, if you're eating veggie burgers and fries for your "vegetarian meal," you're not really benefiting your health.

Practice self-care every week. Self-care is becoming more and more important in our hectic world.

Bibiana Nertney says, "self-care tends to improve our immunity, increase positive thinking, and make us less susceptible to stress, depression, anxiety, and other emotional health issues."

Track your steps. Walking has amazing benefits and is a great addition to these healthy New Year's resolution ideas! Sitting too much is absolutely detrimental to our health.

When you track your steps, you develop an awareness of how much you actually move during the day and you can adjust accordingly. Studies say that you should walk 10,000 steps a day for health and weight loss.

Spend more time outside. There have been many studies that observe the correlation between nature and overall health. Nature has been proven to help with depression, exercise, and even creativity.

According to an article written for the Yale School of the Environment magazine, "(Nature) can lower blood pressure and stress hormone levels, reduce nervous system arousal, enhance immune system function, increase self-esteem, reduce anxiety, and improve mood."

Go to bed early, wake up early. Sleep is absolutely essential to our health and, when you turn in early and wake up early, it's incredibly beneficial. Studies show that people who go to bed earlier are happier, reduce their risk of diseases, and control their weight easier than those that don't.



Source: <https://wildsimplejoy.com>

Wondering How You'll Get Through a Pandemic Winter? Try These Tips to Stay Connected and Motivated!

It takes a little creativity, but we can start taking small steps to maintain and strengthen our relationships – with both personal and professional benefits.

Micro step 1: Start a Group Text With Friends.

Science shows there's power in consistent kinship, even if it's a simple daily "thinking of you" message. Remind your friends you care, and they'll remind you back.

Micro step 2: Schedule a Virtual Coffee Break with a Friend.

Social isolation can have powerful negative effects on your health, but spending time with others – even virtually – helps you stay connected.

Micro step 3: Ask Someone What They're Doing to Take Care of Themselves and Stay Connected to Loved Ones.

Social distancing can make us feel further apart, not just physically but emotionally. Bridge the distance with this simple question – you might learn something, or find you have something in common.

Micro step 4: Do One Thing Each Morning That Brings You Joy.

How you begin your day can set the tone for the rest of it – so make a conscious effort to do something that will start you off right.