

5 Reasons Why You Need a Vacation

Americans forfeit 226 million vacation days each year, according to CNN, by not using the vacation days they earned. In fact, all of that unused time off adds up to \$34.3 billion annually in lost vacation days.

The ironic part is that many people skip vacation days because they think that using all their rightfully earned vacation days will hurt their job somehow, yet what really ends up hurting them is missing out on crucial time away from work and other daily stressors.

So, for those of you with vacation plans for this summer, congratulations! You can stop reading now. However, if you currently have vacation days without any plans, here are five great reasons why you need to give yourself a break.

1. Stop shrinking your brain. According to the National Academy of Sciences, chronic stress can shrink your brain as well as contribute to feelings of irritability, depression and constantly feeling unfocused. However, annual vacations have been found to cut the risk of heart attack by 30 percent in men and 50 percent in women.

2. Get some rest. Vacation time helps to reset your body clock and promote healthy sleeping habits. This is because chronic stress can slowly eat away at your sleep time, leaving you unaware of just how much sleep you end up missing each night. Getting out of that rut and taking a breather helps you get used to a full night's restful sleep and resets your body clock to a healthy schedule.

3. Reignite your spark. Vacations promote creativity and confidence. Studies have shown that problem-solving and quick thinking are two attributes of seasoned travelers—not just

while traveling, but back home on the job. After you've "conquered" a foreign location or accomplished an adventure you've dreamed about, tackling those office woes will be all that much easier.

4. Connect in new ways. Conquer that "fear of missing out," and then learn how to connect in new and interesting ways. Though the fear of missing out is a real emotion, travelers are usually surprised to learn they feel more connected—in fresh and different ways—to fellow travelers and loved ones during vacation time.

5. Have fewer regrets. The late Paul Tsongas famously once said, "Nobody on his deathbed ever said, 'I wish I had spent more time at the office.'" Now is the time to live the life you love.

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