

The 7 wonders of the 'holiday'

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I recently booked a holiday to Ibiza, how typical of a 20 something year old snowflake who wants to escape the reality of adult life? Ever since then I've been harassing my co-workers with excited chat of my holiday that only I find interesting.

It then got me thinking of how much even the prospect of a holiday improves your mood, motivation, and psyche both in a work context and your personal life. For example, since booking my holiday I've found myself much more focused and in a better mood at work as well as going to the gym 5 days a week in the hope of being less jiggy in a bikini!!!

I then started reading about the benefits of taking holiday time from work and discovered a

staggering 33% of UK workers didn't use all their annual leave in 2017, losing an average of four days each, with a further 69% of Brits not taking a two-week holiday. When I first read this I was shocked and thought to myself 'oh my god how can these people not take all their holiday allowance?! That's absolute lunacy!!' but when I cast my mind back to when I first joined MediaCom in 2015, I was part of that percentage losing holiday days and I've still never taken a 2-week holiday. I'd also bet many of us are guilty of not taking holidays throughout the year and have the end of year panic of having to take 10 days off, 3 weeks before Christmas.

But holidays are important! It may be an obvious one but it can be easy to forget in the face of a heavy workload, meaning a holiday is just another task on the to-do list. Research has found that after taking a vacation workers are less tense and stressed, they are more likely to be in a good mood and to have higher levels of energy offering numerous physical and mental benefits.

I've trailed through much research and many articles and collated what I'd like to call – the 7 wonders of the 'holiday':

1. Self-explanatory but they reduce stress.

I do believe stress can help people get work done under pressure, but with experts noting that 80% of workers are stressed at work along with the well-known adverse effects continued stress can have on your mental and physical wellbeing we must be conscious to not let ourselves get too stressed. Studies have shown that taking a holiday helps keep good health intact and prevents burnout.

2. You might come back all creative like.

A change of pace allows people to see their everyday world differently and through a different perspective opposed to the 9-5 version of yourself. People experience clearer thinking as well as increased creativity after disconnecting from their work environment for a sustained period. You may see a cool campaign (like the one Pringles did in 2015, trolling partygoers in Ibiza) in your temporary foreign residency that may inspire thinking for your own clients when you return to work.

3. (One for the millennials) They stabilise that emotional side of you.

Too much time at the office, whether it be working long hours or refusing to take a holiday (madness!), can leave you feeling frustrated and on the slippery slope to becoming burnt out. Having teetered on this slope myself a couple of months back I think it's really important to get away to recharge your batteries so you can come back to work with a fresh and renewed sense of why you love the job you do so you can generate the best work you can.

4. Makes confidence soar.

Many researchers have noted that people return from a holiday with renewed sense of self. They're refreshed, and tend to approach work with more vigour, opting to tackle them with gusto rather than settling for easy solutions.

5. You'll return as a smarty pants.

The human body requires downtime; when people ignore its natural cycle of alertness and fatigue (which I've learned come in 90 minute periods), they're dismissing the body's need to reboot. Small breaks are good, but longer getaways allow you to fully recharge, which improves mental alertness. As well as being immersed in a new culture to add to your repertoire of knowledge.

6. They're good for your immune system?!

While it seems to be the case that everyone returns from holiday with a cold, it's been proven that continual, or chronic, stress can gravely compromise bodily functionality. The genetic material in cells can become disrupted under too much stress and not function to optimal levels to maintain a healthy body. Getting away and being stress free will allow your body time to recover and recharge itself. As someone with the weakest immune system there is, this seems too good to be true...

7. You might be inspired in new ways.

Exploring a new area might be just what you need, to break away from your usual hobby and discover something different, whether it be learning a new style of cooking or discovering a new genre of music you didn't know you liked. You never know where inspiration will come from, but it surely won't be found while you're engaged in the same environment and seeing the same faces for years without a holiday.

So there we have it, even though we all enjoy a holiday, I think it's important not to overlook the positive impact a holiday can have on your life.

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