



NYU

Work
Life

Take Your Vacation—for Health's Sake

With more of the population receiving vaccinations and an ease in travel restrictions, taking a vacation feels like a welcome relief after a difficult year. Scheduling a break from work also has important benefits for your personal health and productivity. And if you supervise others, encouraging your team to take their paid time off can benefit them, you, and your department.

What the Research Says About Taking Vacation

[Taking vacation can improve mood, well-being, and sleep quality; these positive effects can linger for as long as 5 weeks after returning to work.](#)

[Over time, failing to take sufficient mental breaks from work can result in poor well-being, burnout, and mental strain.](#)

[Even a short weekend break can significantly reduce work stress and improve overall life satisfaction.](#)

Get Ready

Here are a few things everyone can do to ensure that team members feel comfortable leaving their work to take some much-needed time off:

- If possible, schedule vacation time after a major deadline, so work deliverables aren't hanging over you while you're trying to rest. If it's not possible, start strategizing as early as possible how to temporarily reassign tasks to ensure a project stays on track. Do this as early as possible so team members can make arrangements if necessary.
- Be flexible. Remember that a well-rested team member is a happy and more productive team member.

- Send an email reminding the entire team of the days you will be out of office, as well as an update on who will be assuming additional responsibilities if necessary.
- Schedule days off in a group calendar, so everyone in a department is aware when people are unavailable.
- Turn on GMail Vacation Responder or use Outlook Automatic Out of Office to remind email contacts that you'll be out of the office, and whom they can contact in your absence.
- Block out the time in your calendar as "busy" to alert contacts that you're not available on the days you're out.
- Before you leave the office, send yourself a summary email with the subject line "Note to Self." In it, include a status note on each of your ongoing projects, as well as any items that will need attention when you return. When you get back to work, open this instant to-do list first.
- Truly disconnect. Don't read email.
- Soften your reentry by scheduling any key meetings - including staff meetings and project updates - for the days *after* your return.