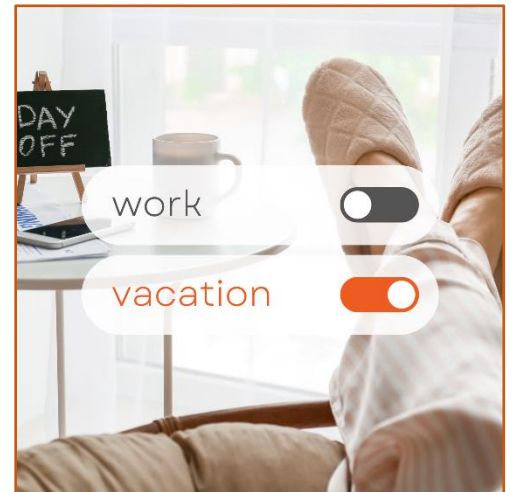


## Recharge and Thrive: The Power of Taking Time Off

Being present while at our workplace, taking pride in the work we do, and being the best employees, we can be is something we all strive for. To be the best version of ourselves, it is important to care for ourselves, and sometimes that means needing a break. Taking time off from work can help to increase our physical health, mental well-being, creativity, and productivity. **Five key reasons** have been identified as to why we should consider using our hard-earned PTO and giving ourselves a break from our busy schedule to enjoy some rest and relaxation.

1. The effects of working long hours without a break day after day can manifest themselves in several ways. These can include a lowered immune system and mental and physical health changes which can include muscle and joint pain, decreased joy and interest in activities, or increased fatigue, worrying, sadness and irritability. Taking time off can reduce stress and prevent burnout, helping us continue to perform in a way we can be proud of. By taking time off, we can recharge our batteries, regain that lost energy, decrease feelings of fatigue, lower our cortisol levels, and improve our mood.
2. Utilizing our PTO can help to boost our creativity and innovation. When we feel like we are constantly working on the same tasks, or do not have a chance to enjoy the fruits of our labor, we may start to feel stuck. When this happens, we often begin to lose our motivation or inspiration which hampers our creative process. When we take time to care for ourselves away from the workplace, we can find motivation and inspiration by seeking out new experiences, perspectives, and ideas. This can help to stimulate our brains, spark our imaginations, and get our creative juices flowing once again.
3. Sometimes we get stuck in the thought that our workplace would not survive without us. Thinking about taking a break can lead to feelings of guilt for potentially adding to the workload of others. Overall, spending time away from work can improve our performance, productivity, and output. Feeling burnt-out can make us less efficient, which can lead to a decrease in focus or concentration, increased errors, and poorer work performance. By taking time off, we can refresh our mind, enhance our memory, and even increase our attention spans. This can help us achieve more of what we want in less time and with better quality.
4. Taking time off can strengthen our relationships and social skills. Working too much can isolate us from our family, friends, our community, and affect our communication and empathy skills. By taking time off, we can spend quality time with our loved ones, reconnect with our social network and develop our emotional intelligence.



5. When all we do is focus on work, our lives become work, and our relationships can suffer. Working for the sake of working can result in losing sight of our values, passions, and purpose. By taking time off, we can pursue our hobbies, learn new skills, volunteer for a cause, travel to unfamiliar places and spend time with the people we love. Taking a break from the daily grind can enrich our life and internal happiness by doing the things that fill us with joy.

We need to change the way we think about both our time off and us. Taking a break is not a luxury, or a sign of weakness but a necessity and a sign of strength in valuing our personal and professional growth. So do not hesitate to plan the next vacation or take a day off when you need it. You will thank yourself later.

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