

Out of Office: How to Take a Great Vacation



In today's deadline driven world, even the most dedicated employee needs time to recharge. A [Deloitte survey](#) found that 77% of professionals have experienced burnout—making unplugging more than just a luxury.

Summer is the perfect opportunity to press pause and return to work with renewed energy and perspective. Yet the key is to take a vacation that actually feels like one. Travel can be great for your well-being, but you don't want to come back from a vacation feeling more stressed than before you left.

Around 68% of Canadian and American employees admit to [continuing work-related activities](#) during their vacations. It seems that for many, unplugging from their work responsibilities can often be a stressful nightmare. Despite the potential drawbacks, [studies show](#) that taking a vacation has huge benefits and can increase your chances of getting a promotion.

Whether you're planning a week at the cottage, an overseas adventure, or just some well-earned downtime, here are 6 ways to make your break count—and avoid bringing work along for the ride.

Plan Ahead – Personally and Professionally

The world of finance is typically swamped with deadlines and month-end cycles, so be sure to book time off during quieter times. If needed, do extra work before your trip so you don't feel overwhelmed when you get home. Communicate early with your team, delegate responsibilities and set up contingency plans. Decide as to whether or not

you'll be reachable (ideally you won't). Put your email on auto-respond, delegate email management, and clarify what really constitutes an emergency.

Plan out the logistics before you leave. Reserve flights outside of rush hour so you don't get caught in traffic. Try to eliminate layovers. Be sure you and your travel companions are clear on everyone's vacation expectations and agree on how they're going to spend their time. You don't want to get into an argument with your partner or spouse once you're on vacation!

Take Time to Truly Recharge

Whether you're lying on a beach, touring or hiking a mountain, engage in activities that promote rest, connection, and reflection. Taking time off can improve your mental and physical health so do yourself a favour and give yourself a break. Put away the electronics. It's not enough to just mentally leave the office, you have to leave it physically as well. If you get anxious about the number of emails waiting for you when you get back, check emails only once every 3-4 days and only reply to messages that can be answered with a simple response.

Remember – tuning out external noise helps you reconnect with your true self leading you to a happier place.

Make Sure Your Vacation Goals are Achievable

Making plans is great but you don't want to over plan either. Having too much to do can take some of the fun out of a vacation and can actually add to stress levels. Before leaving, create a "loose" itinerary dividing your list into "must see" and "would like to see" places. This helps you maximize your time without feeling constrained by a clock.

Start every morning with a time out to contemplate what you'd like to do that day to help mitigate stress later on. A good rule of thumb is to plan a half-day of activities every day and consider any restaurants of interest in advance so you don't end up searching for one from your hotel room.

Consider a Staycation

Ongoing economic uncertainty means more families are needing to tighten their belt. If done right, staycations can be just as fun as more traditional vacations. Consider your budget including all the other summer essentials. Clarify your expectations and get family buy-in. Visit local attractions – but go in "off hours" when venues might be less crowded. Shake things up a bit. Eat different foods. Go to nearby communities you perhaps have never visited before.

During a staycation, be sure to stay away from regular household chores and activities. The lure can be strong, but you're looking for an escape from your "normal" life.

Remember that memorable vacations don't depend on lavish budgets, but more often centre around meaningful moments that will be remembered for a lifetime.

Use the Time to Kickstart Healthy Routines

Rather than think of a vacation as an escape from your real life, think of it as a way to improve your everyday. Now is the time to start healthy habits you might not be as motivated to do in your day-to-day life. Healthy routines are more likely to be transferred to your regular life if they start in a happy, conducive environment.

Look into taking an “experience” vacation such as a yoga retreat or cooking classes. Once you return home, keep up your new habits for at least 10 days to give them a greater chance of sticking around.

Prepare for the “Post Vacation” Blues

The days after a great vacation can be a bit of a downer for most people. Reality will kick in and life will return to normal. To combat this, come back a little early to settle in to your new routine or take a day or two off before heading back to work. Being stressed the moment you get back is counter-productive to all the gains you made on vacation, so be sure to allow enough time to ease into your normal routine. Decorate your home with new souvenirs to try and hang on to the vacation mindset as long as possible.

A well-planned vacation isn't just good for your well-being—it's good for your career, your team, and your company's bottom line. Stepping away with confidence shows strong leadership, sets the tone for a healthy work culture and helps you return with a fresh perspective and renewed focus. So this summer, give yourself permission to disconnect. You've earned it—and your team (and your future self) will thank you for it.