



The Importance of

Taking Vacation

to De-stress and Recharge

—Brain and Behavior Research Foundation

Research shows that Americans work more than people in any country in the industrialized world. We take **less vacation**, work **longer days** and **retire later** in life. All of these factors combined provide for a perfect “stress” storm.

According to the American Institute of Stress:

- **40%** of workers reported their job was very or extremely stressful
- **29%** of workers felt quite a bit or extremely stressed at work
- **25%** view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives

The correlation between stress, and physical, and mental health is well known. We know that stress is a strong contributor to high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke, decreased immune defenses, stomach and sleep problems.



Mentally, stress not only causes a person to become more irritable, depressed, and anxious, but it can also affect memory which can result in someone making poorer decisions. Stress can also lead to conditions such as depression and anxiety disorders.

Some people think that only people with mental illnesses

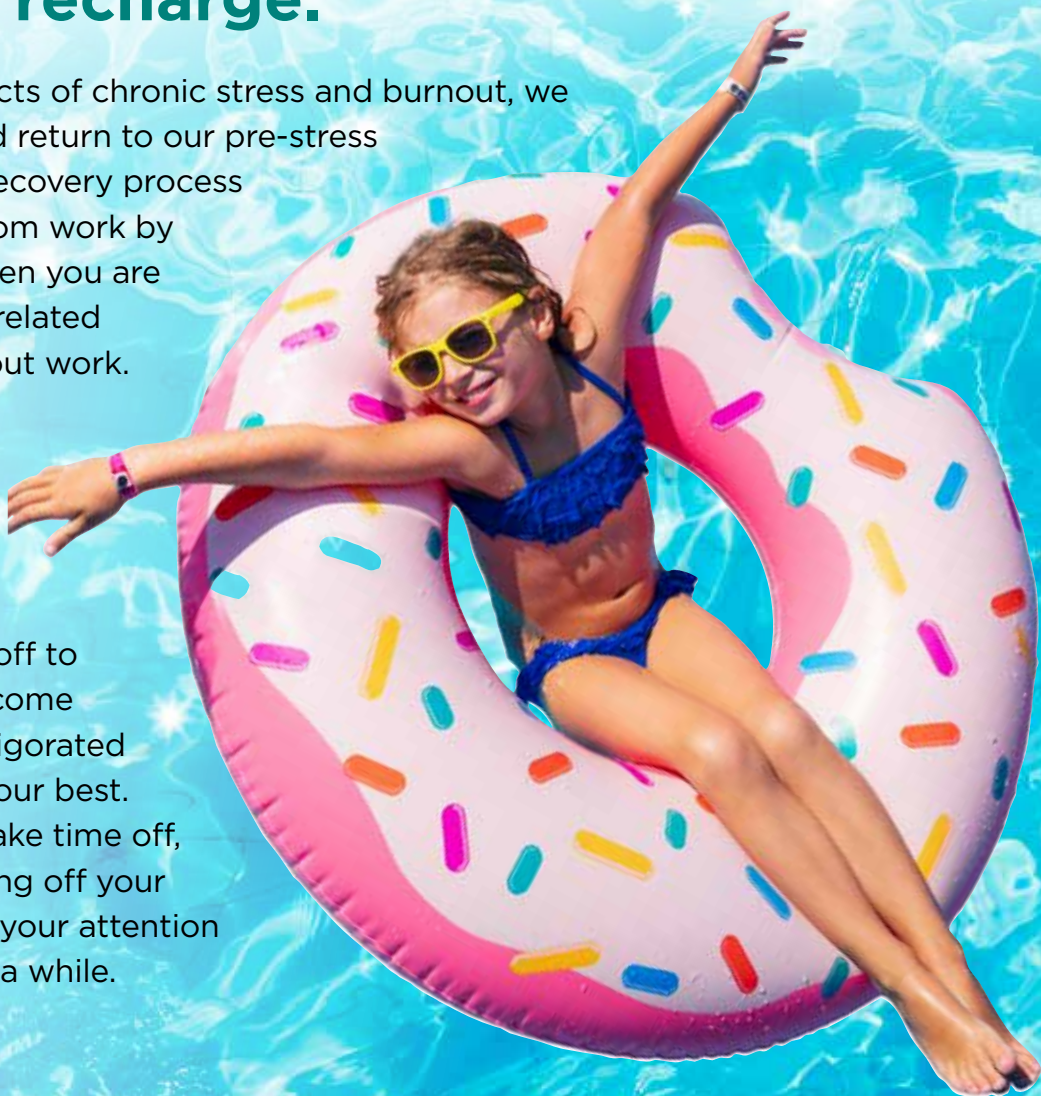
have to pay attention to their mental health. But the truth is that your emotions, thoughts, and attitudes affect your energy, productivity, and overall health. Good mental health strengthens your ability to cope with everyday hassles and more serious crises and challenges. Good mental health is essential to creating the life you want.

So what
is one
thing a
person
can do to
de-stress?

Take time to recharge.

To avoid the negative effects of chronic stress and burnout, we need time to replenish and return to our pre-stress level of functioning. This recovery process requires “switching off” from work by having periods of time when you are neither engaging in work-related activities, nor thinking about work. It is critical that you disconnect from time to time, in a way that fits your needs and preferences.

When possible, take time off to relax and unwind, so you come back to work feeling reinvigorated and ready to perform at your best. When you're not able to take time off, get a quick boost by turning off your smartphone and focusing your attention on non-work activities for a while.





3
Improved
Productivity

4
Better
Sleep

2
Vacations
Can Cut Your
Risk for Heart
Attack

1
Stress
Reduction

A number of studies have shown that taking time away from the job can have both physical and psychological health benefits. If it has been a while since your last vacation, or even if it hasn't, here are four science-based reasons to use your days and consider booking your next vacation ASAP.

1. **Stress Reduction.** A study released last year by the American Psychological Association concluded that vacations work to reduce stress by removing people from the activities and environments that they associate with stress and anxiety.

2. **Vacations Can Cut Your Risk for Heart Attack.** Taking an opportunity to de-stress and spend time with loved ones can lower the risk of heart attack.

3. **Improved Productivity.** Employees need time to mentally recharge in order to stay sharp and engaged on the job.

4. **Better Sleep.** Restless nights and disrupted sleep are common complaints—often stemming from the fact that we simply have too much on our minds. Researchers say that vacations can help interrupt the habits that disrupt sleep, like working late into the night or watching a backlit screen before bed.

And here are just a few mental health benefits of taking a vacation:

- **Vacation Makes You Feel Good:** When you are doing something that makes you happy your brain gives you a boost of dopamine, the hormone, and neurotransmitter that makes you feel good.
- **Vacations Make You Happier With Life:** The more active you are with your leisure time—and the more control you have over your free time—the more likely you are to be satisfied with your life overall.
- **Decreased Burnout:** Workers who take regular time to relax are less likely to experience burnout, making them more creative and productive than their overworked, under-rested counterparts.

The bottom line is, taking time away from the stresses of work and daily life can improve our health, motivation, relationships, job performance, and perspective and give us the break we need to return to our lives and jobs refreshed and better able to handle whatever arises in our daily work life.

