

The Wellness Exchange



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Post Vacation Blues Minimizing Your Vacation Stress

You have been waiting for that vacation for months. High expectations and excitement go into planning every phase of your perfect vacation. Your vacation date arrives and everything seems to be going as planned. But a day or two before your vacation is over, you start feeling this nagging pull, the realization that you will have to go back to life as it was before the vacation, before the months of excitement leading up to the vacation. Returning home from your vacation brings the reality that life is returning to your normal routine. Then it hits, the “Post Vacation Blues.”

Feeling blue after a vacation is not unusual. On vacation, we typically get enough sleep, take it as slow or as fast as we want, and usually do the things that we enjoy. When returning home, we suddenly have to switch gears from our free flowing vacation and take on the more structured responsibilities of work, family, and home; a tough transition for anyone.

While feeling let down after vacation is not uncommon, it can be minimized. Whether you spend your vacation on an exotic island or lounging by the backyard pool, here are some tips for fending off those pesky post-vacation blues:

Remember to relax – Choose vacation activities that will make you feel refreshed and renewed, not exhaust you. Beating the blues will be twice as difficult if your vacation wipes you out.

Be creative with your vacation time – Rather than take a two-week vacation, take several long weekends and plan interesting activities. This way you will always have something to look forward to.

Schedule transition time – Try returning home on a Friday, so you have a couple of days to prepare for the work week; it can help ease the transition to your duties.

Use your vacation as a catalyst for change – If you dread the thought of returning to work, make the decision to go back refreshed and ready to make some productive changes, such as improving your delegating skills, practicing better time management or organizing your work space.

Plan to do something fun after your trip – Go out to dinner with friends or take the kids to the zoo. Rather than dreading going home, you’ll have a pleasant activity to anticipate.

Accentuate the positive – Upon returning to the challenges of daily living go over your photos and souvenirs to relive enjoyable moments from your trip. You may also find it helpful to remind yourself of the things you like most about your life and environment including your community and friends, as well as the comforts and securities of home.

No Vacation On The Horizon?

Bring some of the simple vacation pleasures you enjoy into your everyday life!

#1: “SIGHTSEEING”

Head for the hills, beach, forest, or desert. Stroll hands free with a fanny-pack. Explore textures, sounds, sights, and smells.

#2: “GET PAMPERED”

Get a free make-over in a department store, try a pedicure, reflexology, reiki, or a new hairstyle.

#3: “EVENING ACTIVITIES”

Gather friends monthly to try new restaurants, movies, concerts, or sporting events. Or pack PJ’s and a toothbrush for an old-fashioned “sleepover” at a friend’s house.


#4: “TRY NEW, HEALTHY THINGS”

Take a heart-healthy cooking class, pool aerobics, snorkeling, scuba, tai chi, or yoga class. Meditate, write in a journal, or paint a room a fresh, new color.

#5: “ROMANTIC GETAWAY”

You might not need to ‘go’ anywhere! Swap baby-sitting weekends with friends and order dinner in. Or book an overnight at a nearby bed & breakfast.

#6: “MEET NEW PEOPLE”

Volunteer, join a book discussion group. Smile at strangers every day. (Keep trying. Somebody’ll smile back.) 

Remember, vacations are essential. Taking time off from work reduces stress, improves emotional well being, and boosts productivity levels. However, if your “Post Vacation Blues” continue for a prolonged period of time, you may want to consult with a professional counselor.

It's Summer!

Make Sun Safety a Priority

More than 1 million new cases of skin cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year. And, although, sun exposure is said to be the most important factor in the cause of skin cancers, about 70 percent of American adults do not use sun-protection measures.



Prevention

- Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Seek shade
- Cover up
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher
- Cover your head with a wide-brimmed hat, shading your face, ears, and neck.
- Wear sunglasses with 99% to 100% UV absorption
- Follow these practices to protect your skin even on cloudy or overcast days.
- Avoid other sources of UV light.

Choosing a Sunscreen

- Find the right SPF
- Choose SPF 15 or higher
 - Higher does not equal more coverage

- UVA and UVB protection
- Choose a lotion that notes UVA/UVB or "broad spectrum" protection

- Decide if you are going to use Water-resistant or Waterproof lotion

Sunscreen Application

- Shake well
- Apply at least 30 minutes prior to going outdoors
- Apply generously
- Don't forget your ears, back, shoulders, and the back of your knees and legs
- Re-apply at least every 2 hours
- Be aware of the expiration date on the bottle

Protecting Kids

Never use sunscreen on children under 6 months of age

Cover up infants when exposed to sun

Always apply sunscreen when exposed to sun, even when your children are playing in the backyard

Use waterproof sunscreen when around water or swimming

Reapply after prolonged swimming or sweating

Treating a Burn

- Immediate self-care is aimed at stopping the UV radiation
- Relief of the discomfort becomes important

Try the following recommendations if you or someone you know experience sunburn.

- Medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen are useful
- For mild sunburn, cool compresses with equal parts of milk and water
- Use and aloe based lotion
- Cool (not ice cold) baths
- Avoid lotions that contain topical anesthetic medications because you could become sensitized and then allergic to that medicine
- Stay out of the sun while you are sunburned

Terms You Should Know

UVA Rays: The longest ultraviolet light which penetrate the skin more deeply, are associated with wrinkling, leathery, sagging, and other effects of photoaging on the skin. They also exacerbate the effects of UVB rays.

UVB Rays: Shorter ultraviolet rays which are the culprit behind sunburn. They are regarded as having more of a cancer causing effect than UVA rays.

SPF: Sun Protection Factor is a measure of a sunscreen's ability to prevent UV rays from damaging the skin.

Sunscreen: A chemical product that actually absorbs the ultraviolet radiation, thus reducing the amount of radiation that penetrates the skin.

Sunblock: A physical agent that blocks both UVA and UVB rays from the skin.

Water Resistant: The FDA considers a product to be water-resistant if it maintains its SPF rating for at least 40 minutes of water exposure.

Waterproof: The FDA considers a product to be waterproof if it maintains its SPF rating for more than 80 minutes of water exposure.

PABA: Para-aminobenzoic acid was the first true sunscreen to be generally available. It is not used much in sunscreen formulations now because it frequently caused allergic reactions.

Additional Resources

www.aad.org

www.skincancer.org

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/skincancer.html

www.cancer.gov

www.thecancer.org

www.kidshealth.org