

A Day of Rest: 12 Scientific Reasons It Works

By Rhett Power, 1 January 2017

Most major religions call for a day of rest. It's been getting harder and harder to take that day [fully with people chained](#) to their devices and constantly online. Now science supports this claim about the power of a day of rest. Here are 12 scientific reasons a regular rest time every week, whenever you [choose to make it](#) happen, really works:

Physical Transformation:

1. Time out reduces stress.

The [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) (NIOSH) reports in a CDC publication that stress levels at work are higher than ever and that "health care expenditures are nearly 50% greater for workers who report high levels of stress." Stress creates havoc with our physical and emotional health. "A growing body of evidence shows that "[...skipping breaks can lead to stress and exhaustion.](#)"

2. Time out gives you a chance to move.

We've all seen the studies on the impact of a lot of sitting time on many aspects of health: "Research has linked sitting for long periods of time with a number of health concerns, including obesity and metabolic syndrome -- a cluster of conditions that includes increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist and abnormal cholesterol levels. Too much sitting also seems to increase the risk of death from cardiovascular disease and cancer." Sitting extends beyond TV time to include all time at a screen, time at work, in the car, visiting with friends...in short, the kinds of things that fill the day for most

of us.

3. Completely divesting from your work on a regular basis reduces inflammation and the risk of heart disease.

Most occupations these days are sedentary. Modifiable risk factors for heart disease and general inflammation are uncontrolled diabetes, physical inactivity, overweight or obesity and uncontrolled stress or anger. We already know that work is stressful. In addition, [studies show](#) that time sitting, as most of us do at work, [influences inflammatory markers](#) even absent elevated blood glucose, obesity or heart disease. Each one hour increase in sitting time associates with an 18% increased cardiovascular disease mortality risk.

4. Getting away from work boosts your immune system.

[Chronic stress](#) also depresses your immune system. Conversely adequate sleep and exercise are two of four essentials of boosting your immune system. Take advantage of your weekends for extended R&R.

5. Speaking of sleep, you'll do it better during time out of work.

Time off [helps sleep-disrupting habits](#) like checking your cell phone before bed.

6. Your active time off adds years to your life.

[Results of studies](#) suggest that a higher amount of daily total sitting time associates with all-cause mortality, particularly among inactive adults.



Mental and Emotional Transformation:

7. Taking regular time away from work restores mental energy.

You [probably know that just](#) from your own experience. Science supports your intuition! Studies show "that people who do not know how to detach from work during their off time experience increased exhaustion over the course of one year and are less resilient in the face of stressful work conditions."

8. When you take out time for yourself, you're more creative.

Are [you the creative](#) type? You need time out! "Thinking is one of the crucial benefits of stepping back. Just as quality time off fuels energetic resources on the job, reflective time is critical to producing solutions and creative breakthroughs."

9. You're also more productive when you take time out from work.

Data from the OECD shows that [working more hours means](#) less productivity. The most productive countries are Germany and France--each mandating more than 30 days of vacation. Workers in the U.S., with no law requiring paid time off, are the third most productive (and only about 25% of Americans take their full allotment of vacation time).

10. You'll focus better at work if you take your weekly rejuvenation time.

A 2008 [University of Illinois study shows](#) that all work and no play dramatically reduces focus as well as

productivity. Conversely, regular [time off work improves](#) it. Be sure you opt for "restorative" breaks.

11. Your day off improve short-term memory.

Do you laugh [knowingly at all those jokes](#) about seniors forgetting what they were going to do or where they put their keys? Did you think it was just a sign of aging? Could be that you're just not managing your time out during the week properly. Separate from work, enjoy life, and as many studies show, you will probably remember where those keys are.

12. With regular time away from work, you might even love your job again!

Consultants all tell us that "[Finding time to chill and unwind will help you enjoy both work and play more.](#)" In a recent Harvard Business Review article, the first recommendation for restoring passion about work is to "call a time-out." It works, according to many testimonies.

So there we have it! 12 scientifically based reasons to respect the wisdom of those ancient [customs and take regular](#) time away from work every week. When you care for your physical, mental and emotional health, you more likely to be successful in you professional and personal pursuits.

