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Survey

Wasted weekends: Britons urged to reclaim 'Me Time'

Theodore Koumelis - 14 October 2015, 10:32

Research reveals two thirds of Britons waste their weekends on menial tasks. SuperBreak and career-coach Denise Taylor share top tips on how to unlock 'me time'.



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Research released by **SuperBreak** reveals two thirds of Britons are wasting their weekends as an opportunity to enjoy hard-earned 'me time', as the holiday company urges the UK to reclaim their valuable free time.

Life admin and household chores consume weekends for 61 per cent of us. A further sixth (16 per cent) simply fail to plan ahead and find themselves at a loose end when leaving the office on Friday. And it's not just our weekends that seem to be slipping us by; the research, which involved more than 1,000 members of the public nationwide, found that more than a quarter (27 per cent) regularly forgo even their lunch break as an opportunity to recharge and look after number one.

Now SuperBreak is encouraging hard working Britons to cut free from their usual weekend routine and book a much-needed short break.

The study, commissioned this summer, suggests taking regular short breaks actually offers more benefit in terms of wellbeing than one longer annual holiday. 41 per cent of respondents stated they feel more refreshed taking multiple shorter breaks, compared to 25 per cent who prefer to work uninterrupted for longer periods in order to take their traditional fortnight's break.

In fact, the long summer holiday has the potential to make us feel more stressed on our return, with nearly a third suffering from post-holiday blues and feeling under pressure to catch up. Good news for those who may have been sad to see summer end as there is plenty of opportunity to unlock the holiday spirit in shorter bursts throughout the year.

To help the public make the weekend work harder for them, SuperBreak has partnered with psychologist and award-winning career coach, **Denise Taylor**, to provide tips on how to inject more free time more regularly into their routine. Denise said: "The power of a short break, even if only for one night, should not be underestimated in its ability to top up our wellness levels. The importance of recharging regularly is often overlooked in today's 24 hour society and is proven to improve our productivity overall."

"What's more, having a regular break to look forward to, has a real impact on beating stress, plus with less time out naturally there is less to handover and catch up on which can be off-putting for some. There's also less stress in seeking to have the perfect holiday. A once-a-year holiday leads to high expectations; we can be more relaxed when we travel every few months, with no chance of the excitement of trying somewhere new wearing off."

Denise shares her top tips:

1. Re-charge more often to improve health. Don't let your last holiday become a distant memory. Regular short breaks provide something to keep looking forward to and the change of scene is shown to have a positive benefit on mental health. A Japanese study has found that people who go on holiday regularly tend to have a healthier life style. As the benefits of a holiday quickly disappear, regular holidays help to 'top up' our wellness levels on an ongoing basis.

2. Commit to beating stress. Research has found that health and well-being decrease in the last week before departure of a long holiday due to the rising level of workload before going away. The start of a two week holiday can also lead to health issues with high blood pressure, poor sleep, poor mood and migraines. The change from working at top speed through to chill out time can send our bodies into a spin. With a short-break this is less so, so try it and you may find the whole experience more relaxing.

3. Seek out the best prices. Generally we spend two months' salary on a typical long holiday. Naturally with a short break the financial cost is less, you can easily manage with hand luggage and can be more open to last minute deals.



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4. Book the next one before you go. Avoid the holiday blues by booking your next break before you go. Summer may be over but autumn and winter city breaks can be a wonderful way to keep the misery of long dark nights at bay. Having the next holiday to look forward to can get us through the low periods where we feel overworked and undervalued.

5. Make holidays a seamless part of your work routine. Too often within a few hours of a big holiday we feel like we have never been away, too much work has piled up, and our inbox is full of emails. A short break means there is less to come back to and helps to keep the holiday feeling for longer.

Jacque Fisher at SuperBreak commented: "We know taking time out isn't easy, but the research shows just how beneficial a regular chance to recharge and refresh can be. A study we commissioned last year revealed 50 per cent of holidaymakers were no longer planning to jet off on the traditional two week holiday, and are instead hoping to getaway on up to five shorter breaks, in part due to the difficulty of getting longer periods off work and higher costs attached to long holidays. Coined the 5:2 travel trend, we are seeing this emerge now with a desire to see more destinations and a growing sense of wanderlust further driving the urge to try to reclaim weekends."

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