

# PROJECT:TIME OFF

## How To Plan Your Time & Boost Your Happiness

[In-depth research](#) proves that Americans who take time to plan how they will use their vacation time in the year ahead are happier than those who do not. They are happier with their health and well-being, their financial situation, their marriage and even their overall mood. [Research](#) also shows that simply having something to look forward to – like a vacation – improves your happiness. But nearly half of American households fail to take the simple step of planning their time off.

Here's how to avoid that mistake – and boost your happiness in the process.

- 1.** First, confirm your paid time off benefits. Don't take someone else's word for it: some benefits may have changed from last year (many organizations offer additional days based on your years of service) so confirm what you have available by asking your manager or HR director.
- 2.** Review your calendar for the year. It's important to see when you could actually take a vacation. Consider:
  - **Holidays during the year.** If your office is closed for a holiday, could you add an extra day off and turn a one-day holiday into four-day weekend vacation?
  - **Workloads and coworkers.** Are you thinking of getting away during a particularly busy season at work? Are you considering time off when a member of your team will already be out on vacation? Start thinking now about how to ensure shared responsibilities are covered – and consider how to sync up with your coworkers on handling vacation during the year.
  - **Family events and other important dates.** When will your kids have time off from school? Are there other events – like weddings, family reunions, or birthdays – that you should include in planning your time off?
- 3.** Now, the fun part: where your dreams and goals come in. What are you going to cross off your bucket list this year? Where have you been wanting to travel? What are you dying to try? You don't necessarily need to know what you'll do with every day during a vacation – just plan the days off now. Getting it on the calendar is what matters most.
- 4.** Talk with your boss and colleagues about your plans to take time off. But don't be anxious: nearly all senior business leaders believe vacation time benefits their employees – and the company.
- 5.** Think about how you're going to share your experience with your colleagues when you're back at work – nearly three in ten (28%) people don't. You will benefit from your time off, and your coworkers can, too, by taking a vacation themselves!

**Get excited. You're using your hard-earned time off this year – and you deserve it!**