

Vacation Checklist

- [] *Plan vacations around the “seasonality” of your work.* Try scheduling longer trips for less busy periods of work and “long weekend vacations” when work is busier.
- [] *Plan different trips to meet different needs.* Family and extended family vacations are fun, but couples may also benefit from having a long weekend away just as a couple.
- [] *Intentionally minimize the unexpected.* Keep track of when your team and managing supervisor are planning their vacations. Talk to clients two weeks before you leave. Ask delegates to complete work that needs to be reviewed a week before you leave.
- [] *Block off pre and post “quiet” work days.* Avoid scheduling meetings and phone calls the day before you leave and the day you return to allow for the “unexpected” and for catch up time when you return.
- [] *Create a “what can wait” list.* A week before you go, create a list of things that you can wait to get done after vacation, versus tasks that must be completed before you go.
- [] *Pre-schedule “check in” times.* Set up meetings or calls to review the work you have delegated to others the second or third day of your return.
- [] *Decide how “connected” you want to be.* If you need to check email or voice messages, plan ahead around what’s least disruptive.
- [] *Carefully define emergencies.* Think ahead about what challenges could arise. Plan different scenarios to address them. Clearly define emergencies to avoid everything becoming one.
- [] *Avoid the “I’ll just get this one thing done” trap.* Better to work longer days before leaving than unnecessarily switching to work mode while on vacation. Or if some work time is necessary, consider totally disengaging from work for at least half of your vacation.
- [] *Keep track of what worked well.* Create a list you can refer back to of helpful ideas for planning your next vacation.

Note: If you have work, such as running a small business, where your workflow is highly unpredictable and you are not easily substituted for, a good place to start might be to just take a few “long weekend vacations.”

Potential Benefits:

- [] *New perspectives.* Stepping out of a routine or temporarily stepping away from a difficult situation often provides new and creative ideas for moving forward.
- [] *An opportunity for built in review time.* Is there a task a client or colleague needs to review? Getting it to them before you leave means it can be waiting for you upon your return.
- [] *Increased productivity.* The days before leaving and returning from vacation are often highly productive work times – tasks get completed due to increased purpose and focus.
- [] *Assessment of workflow.* Was leaving and returning from vacation particularly challenging? This may be a sign you need to “recalibrate” workflow - the pace and quantity of your work.
- [] *Assessment of delegation.* Did the work you asked others to complete get successfully accomplished when you were gone? If not, take time to address this when you return.