

Vacation Check List

Pre-Trip Prep

- 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 couples-weekend away.
- Intentionally minimize the unexpected.* Coordinate upcoming work and vacations with your team to help everyone turn off work on vacation. Set expectations with clients a few weeks before you leave.
- Utilize built in review time.* Is there a task a client or colleague needs to review? Give it to them before you leave so it can be waiting for you upon your return.
- Block off pre- and post-trip “quiet” workdays.* Avoid scheduling meetings/phone calls the day before you leave to address final issues and the day you return to catch up or manage the unexpected.
- Create a “what can wait” list.* A week before you go, create a list of what can be done after vacation, versus must be completed before you go. Use this to eliminate the “I’ll get that one thing done” while on vacation temptation.
- Schedule post-vacation “check in” times.* Set up meetings or calls to review the work you have delegated to others for the second or third day of your return.
- Decide how “connected” you want to be.* If you can’t fully disconnect, consider limiting emails or calls to the least disruptive part of the day. Strongly consider mapping out a few days to fully disconnect.
- Carefully define emergencies to avoid every situation becoming one.* Think ahead about what challenges could arise and plan possible scenarios for how to address them.
- Small steps to start.* If your workflow feels highly unpredictable and/or it’s hard for others to provide backup, maybe start by taking a few long weekends to practice fully disconnecting from work.

Post-Trip Review

- Increased productivity.* Due to increased purpose and focus, sometimes just before leaving for vacation, a variety of tasks get completed more quickly. Did this happen to you?
- New perspectives.* Stepping away from work and your usual routines sometimes provides new and creative ideas going forward. Did any new ideas surface for you?
- Assess workflow.* Was leaving and returning from vacation particularly challenging? This may be a sign you need to “recalibrate” workflow – change the pace and quantity of the work you do.
- Assess delegation.* Was the work you asked others to complete successfully accomplished while you were gone? If not, take time to address this when you return.
- Keep track of what worked.* To maximize positive outcomes and minimize the stress, consider creating a list of ideas you can refer back to for planning your next vacation.