



# How to get the most from your holidays

1 December 2023

I don't think it needs to be said (but I will reiterate it anyway), that this has been one hell of a year for most people. In fact, the last four years have taken their toll on almost everyone. December and January tend to be the time most people in the Southern Hemisphere take their main holiday of the year, so this is a good time to consider how you can relax and tune out from the crazy world we live in today. Even if you do not take your long annual vacation at this time, you most probably will be getting some time off, so it is a good time to recover from the year that has been.

## 1. Take a break from the news

Everyday we are bombarded by the news. We wake up in the morning and the radio and TV tell us what is happening in the world. We drive to work and there are notices everywhere about the state of the world. We get to work, and someone will be talking about world events. For the most part these are challenging events and even traumatic to many. We are constantly bombarded with horrible information. It never stops. And it gets to us eventually. It adds to our tiredness and stress. So, the first thing you want to do on your holiday is tune out as much of the news as possible. Give yourself a break from it. If something happens that you urgently need to know about, someone will tell you. So, try and shut off as much of the news as possible.

## 2. Add more variety to your life

Variety is good for our brains and our mood. It helps us secrete more dopamine, the feel-good hormone, and if we are doing new activities, we can be learning new skills. Variety means you do activities or spend time with people you don't

normally do. On your holiday try out new things. Go to places you have never been before. Meet people you usually don't meet. The change of scenery and new activities can do wonders for your state of mind as well as enlarge your experience.

### 3. Don't overschedule activities

During the workday most of us have our schedules full and we are very much run by the clock. On holiday you don't want to have such a regimented experience. You want things a bit more casual and fun. If you want to stay longer with some people or at some event, make sure you can. If you want to try out an activity for a second time, then do it. You are not studying for an exam or following a timetable. This is your time to relax.

### 4. Go to new environments

A change in scenery can do a lot to make you feel relaxed and renewed. Even if you are away on holiday don't just go to the same beach every day. Go to different venues. Enjoy new experiences. If you are staying at home that is even more true. You can be at home and have day outings. Get onto the internet and chat to friends and find some really interesting places to go to. If you like adventure maybe you want a day Ziplining or rock climbing. If you like arts and culture maybe going to a few museums or art galleries would be an interesting experience.

### 5. Don't compare your holiday to others.

One of the worst things we do as human beings, is we compare ourselves, or compare our lives to other people. Don't do it. Every single person is different. Every single person is on a different life journey and at a different stage in their life journey. Comparing yourself to others has no value for anyone. You are not ahead of or behind others. You most probably are where you need to be. Focus on enjoying your time doing whatever it is that you are doing. Remind yourself that you will never get this moment, this hour, this day again. Enjoy being fully present.

## 6. Spend time with others

If you are an introvert and you feel “peopled out”, you may want to spend the entire holidays on your own. Try and not do that. If you need a few days downtime, then have that. However, we are all social beings and too much alone time is not good. You will enjoy your holiday more and make holiday memories if you spend time with others. Just make sure you are spending it with people you enjoy being with and who are good to you.

I have heard people, when they come back from holidays in the new year, complain that they actually now need a holiday to recover from the holiday. This can happen, but don't let it. You want to start the new year fresh, because it is certainly going to bring its challenges with it. You want to feel you have enjoyed your time off and not had to worry much. That means you want to do things you enjoy, and don't get yourself into debt trying to keep up with others. Ensure that you really do have a great time on holiday this year. Ensure it is within your budget. And ensure you spend it with people who make you feel good about yourself. After the last few years', we all need to have a good time and we all need a good holiday.