

# Back from the beach? You need a vacation

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Vacations play a critical role in maintaining our health. Time away from the stress of work and [home](#) lets us recharge mentally and could even improve our physical health.



When you get back from vacation, do you feel the same way you felt before you left? If so, there are things you can do to make it better. - Photos provided by thinkstock

But then we return to the piled up e-mail, bills and dirty laundry. In fact, many people report that rather than feeling better after a vacation, they feel just as bad as they did before they left.

"Nobody needs a vacation as much as a person who just had one," says Sheryl Terzini, a clinical nurse specialist with the LifeCheck Office of the Community Health Network.

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### 3 steps toward a stress-free vacation

Need a better game plan for your vacation? Dr. Edd Hanzelik, co-author of "Inner Game of Stress," offers a three-step process to minimize stress -- what he considers to be the inner game.

- » First, try to be aware of what you're feeling so you can make choices that reflect your desires.
- » Then, realize that you have the capacity to make your own choices.
- » Finally, trust in your feelings.

"A major part of enjoying your vacation is learning how to keep your stress maker in check," Hanzelik says.

Experts agree that an extra day can make the difference, whether you check e-mail from home, head to the office for a few hours or do the laundry. You may want to tell people you're returning later than you are, so you have this decompression time to yourself.

If you can, schedule a pleasurable task as well for that day, suggests Jeff Davidson, author of "[Simpler Living: A Back to Basics Guide To: Cleaning, Furnishing, Storing, Decluttering, Streamlining, Organizing](#)." It could be watching your favorite show or sipping a cup of tea on your porch.

Vacations often mean sleeping in a strange bed, eating different foods and occasionally experiencing time changes.

A 2009 TripAdvisor survey found that 56 percent of travelers feel disheartened at the close of a vacation. For 42 percent, their stress reached its pre-vacation level within a week of their return. Thirteen percent said it takes one day for the post-vacation blues to take hold.

Raquel Richardson -- owner of Silver Square, a [graphic design](#) and marketing firm -- knows the syndrome well. The parents of two young boys, she and her husband, Kaus, have even played "rock, paper, scissors" to determine which one gets to work late that first night back.

Now, however, the Noblesville family tries another tack to adjust. They return a day early from their vacation to give themselves a day to catch up. That first day, Richardson wakes up, sifts through her e-mail, works out and puts in the first load of laundry before anyone else wakes up.

Without that buffer of a day, "It was just too hard to get everything organized," said Richardson, 36.