

THE GEO-SAMPLER

geotechnics
geotechnical and
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Welcome to the summer vacation edition of the GeoSampler. You know, the issue that's filled with the same joy you remember from the last day of school and the childlike imagination of those long, lazy days that went on forever. Well, it may not actually be filled with those things, but it takes a moment to celebrate the most wonderful time of the year. Summer vacation. Turns out, it's not just for perfecting your belly flop technique anymore. Summer vacation is now scientifically proven to be good for your health.

SUMMER VACATION: GOOD AND GOOD FOR YOU.

Lounging in the sun, reading one paperback after another. Exploring a winding path that invites you higher and higher up the mountain. Sipping an umbrella-laden cocktail by the pool. True, all three activities pose threats – from UV rays, altitude or alcohol – but may be just what the doctor ordered to help you relax, refresh and reinvigorate your thinking.

Turns out, we simply don't take enough vacation, reporting on average, 14 days per year (which is up from 12 days in 2005). In fact, Americans work more than anyone else in the world, including 100 hours more than the notoriously industrious people of Japan, the same people who coined the phrase *karoshi*, or being worked to death.

Why do we work, work, work so much? In some workplaces, long hours and overwork is a badge of honor. Some colleagues even "compete" for the title of having 'less of a life.' Still other workers believe that in this era of downsizing and recession fears, they can ensure job security by remaining permanently affixed to their desk chairs. Even CEOs worry that if everything runs smoothly while they're fly fishing in Montana, they may not be as valuable to their company as they should be.

For whatever reason, our society has reached what author Joe Robinson terms a 'vacation deficit disorder.' As a result, we're more tired and less productive. Our relationships are suffering, from those with our colleagues and our bosses to our personal ties with spouses and children. And we're seeing long-term effects on our health, from increased rates of depression to all the high-risk effects of exposing our bodies to constant stress: high blood pressure, heart disease and even death.

So, how can we fight the war on burnout? Take a vacation. And make sure it's a real vacation. Sure a long weekend here and there is fun, but they do not deliver the same stress-reduction benefits as vacations that last one to two weeks, research shows. Additionally, according to Business Week, experts agree that a key ingredient in peak performance is a drastic change of venue coupled with shutting down for extended periods of time.

"Making yourself available 24/7 does not create peak performance," says psychiatrist Edward Hallowell, an instructor at Harvard Medical School. "Recreating the boundaries that technology has eroded does."

Unplugging is perhaps the biggest issue facing workers during the summer of 2008. Remember when laptops and hand-held devices promised to be the great liberators? Well, they've become wireless shackles that keep us mentally connected to work, bosses, clients, office politics and deadlines – all things your body needs a break from. In fact, one major hotel chain is offering a summer vacation 'detox' program for executives who need a break from their technology, offering to lock up workaholics' BlackBerries and some physicians are actually writing prescriptions for – believe it or not – vacations.

So go on vacation. Do it with joy. Do it without guilt. Do it without email. And do it soon. All of us at Geotechnics wish you a happy vacation and look forward to seeing you afterwards. Which, by the way, is good, since a NASA scientist has proven that vacationers experience an 82% increase in job performance upon return from their holiday.



**"Never accept a drink
from a urologist."
—Anonymous**



WORD

Police were called to a day care where a 3-yr-old was resisting a rest.

Did you hear about the guy whose whole left side was cut off? He's all right now.

The roundest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference.

To write with a broken pencil is pointless.

When fish are in schools, they sometimes take debate.

The short fortune teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.

The dead batteries were given out free of charge.

A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.

A will is a dead giveaway.

Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.

In a democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism, it's your Count that votes

A chicken crossing the road: poultry in motion.

The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine was fully recovered.

A grenade fell onto a kitchen floor in France resulted in Linoleum Blown apart.

A calendar's days are numbered

Those who get too big for their britches will be exposed in the end.

When you've seen one shopping center, you've seen a mall.

When she saw her first strands of gray hair, she thought she'd dye.

Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.

Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.

Acupuncture: a jab well done.



HOW TO TAKE A VACATION.

1. Prepare.

Yes, book a hotel and flights. Or take out a second mortgage if you're planning to drive. But spend a few moments with coworkers, bosses and clients to make sure everything's ready for your departure.



2. Unpack before you pack.

Before shutting your suitcase, take a second look and remove all the technology you can. Same with worries about your boss, that deadline and the general state of things.

3. Get away.

New environments help increase our creativity.

4. Take a deep breath.

Try not to leave directly from the office on Friday.

Give yourself a moment to relax, pack and enjoy those precious moments of anticipation.



5. Schedule it.

If you can arrange your vacation around a slow time at work, then you can truly get away and enjoy the moment.

6. Do what you love.

A real vacation is one spent with whatever gives you joy - whether it's hiking, camping, shopping, fishing or sipping umbrella drinks by the pool.



7. Wander.

Whether it's through the mountains of Tibet, the sidewalks of Manhattan or a hotel gift shop, relearn how to explore and discover, for no other purpose.

8. Linger with a friend over dinner.



9. Play.

Reconnect with your inner child.

10. Return with joy.

Be sure to give yourself enough time for re-entry. Tell everyone what a great time you had and start planning the next one.