

welcome to reality  
back to work



## A Guide to Overcoming Post-Vacation Anxiety

*Tips to remind us that we don't need to pay a "penalty" after a vacation*

It's a scenario most investment clients know too well: after a refreshing vacation, you return to your desk only to be met with a pile of emails, missed calls, and urgent to-dos. The sinking feeling is palpable, and the desire to be anywhere but work is overwhelming. This is post-vacation anxiety, and it's more common than one might think.

A staggering 87% of the American workforce admits to feeling anxiety or stress when reentering their professional world after a break. Yet, vacations are meant to rejuvenate us, not lead us into a spiral of stress. The good news? This anxiety can be managed, and even prevented, with the right strategies.

### Why is Post-Vacation Anxiety Prevalent?

**Work Pile-up:** Many fear the mountain of tasks awaiting their return.

**Shift in Environment:** Moving from a leisure environment back to a structured, high-demand workplace can be jarring.

**Perceived Expectations:** There's often a belief that one needs to jump straight back in, operating at 100% from the get-go.

### Combatting Post-Vacation Anxiety

**Gradual Transition:** If possible, don't schedule your return to work immediately after your vacation ends. Allow yourself a buffer day to acclimate to your normal environment.

**Set Clear Boundaries:** Before you leave, inform colleagues and clients about your absence. Set up out-of-office notifications and be clear about when you'll be checking messages – if at all.

**Prioritize Tasks:** On your first day back, take an hour to organize your tasks. Determine what needs immediate attention and what can wait.

**Ask for Help:** Delegate where possible and remember, you don't have to tackle everything alone.

**Mindful Practices:** Engage in mindfulness exercises, deep breathing, or short breaks to manage moments of overwhelm. These practices can anchor you and provide much-needed mental clarity.

**Reflect on Your Vacation:** Instead of immediately diving into work, spend a few minutes recalling pleasant vacation memories. This can ease the transition and put you in a positive mindset.

**Schedule Regular Breaks:** Instead of waiting for your next vacation to unwind, schedule short breaks throughout your workweek. This ensures you are regularly recharged.

### Changing the Narrative

The corporate world, with its emphasis on constant productivity, might lead us to believe that post-vacation anxiety is a necessary evil – a price we must pay for taking time off. However, this perspective is not only harmful but also counterproductive.

Vacations are essential. They boost creativity, improve mental well-being, and make us more productive in the long run. It's crucial to remind ourselves that we don't need to pay a "penalty" in the form of stress for enjoying some time off.

### **Relish Your Vacation**

As the saying goes, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. While vacations are a cherished break from the grind, they shouldn't become the precursor to heightened anxiety.

By adopting some proactive strategies and shifting our mindset, we can ensure that our return to work is smooth, and the benefits of our time off aren't swiftly overshadowed by stress.

Remember, pleasure doesn't warrant punishment, and it's high time we relish our vacations guilt-free.