

CELEBRATE SUMMER

Contributed by Mandy Enright, MS, RDN, RYT

Memorial Day Weekend welcomes the unofficial start to summer. With warmer weather and longer days ahead, it's time to celebrate! Here are some ways to maximize all things summer in the upcoming months.

Get Outside!

Sunshine is a natural mood booster thanks to its role in increasing vitamin D levels. Whether you work at home or in an office, there are plenty of opportunities to get outside during the work week.

During Your Workday:

- Take breaks during the day to get outdoors – short walks or simply stepping outside for a few moments can clear the mind, shift your mood, and boost productivity.
- Take advantage of outdoor tables and greenspace to set up your workspace outside.
- Put on headphones or earbuds to take your calls and meetings for a walk.
- Schedule walking meetings or book outdoor meetings for a change of scenery.

Before/After Work and Weekends:

- If you love a cup of coffee or tea in the morning, take it outside to sip and enjoy.
- Take a pre-work walk to set your intention for the day or walk after work to reset.
- Enjoy time outside taking a hike, enjoying local parks, going for a bike ride, or simply relaxing at the beach or pool (if you're lucky to have access to either).
- Pack a healthy picnic and enjoy a meal outside with family or friends.
- Dine *al fresco* at home or local eateries.

Enjoy Seasonal Summer Produce

Summer is loaded with a bounty of fresh seasonal produce. Whether you choose to enjoy raw or grilled, grow your own, or shop the farmers market, make sure to include a selection of fruits and veggies at all meals and snacks. Keep enjoying your favorites, but this summer make it a goal to try a new fruit or veggie each week. You never know what favorites you'll find from simply trying something new! Keep an eye out for these summer staples:

- Berries, including blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries
- Stone fruits, such as apricots, peaches, plums, nectarines, mangos, and cherries
- Melons, including cantaloupe, honeydew, and watermelon
- Fresh figs including black mission, adriatic ("white figs"), and calimyrna
- Tomatoes, including plum, heirloom, and beefsteak
- Corn
- Eggplant
- Cucumbers, zucchini, and yellow squash
- Leafy greens, including butter lettuce, endive, spinach, and romaine
- Peas, string beans, and sugar snap peas
- Peppers including bell peppers, jalapeños, habaneros, and long hots



Use Your Vacation Days

Vacation Days are given to you for a reason – to enjoy time off! Too often too many vacation days are left on the table at the end of the year. Remember that “vacation days” don’t have to involve travel. They can simply be a day without work or usual daily responsibilities. Time off is key to our mental and physical health. And vacations can increase our productivity because we’re in a different headspace upon return. Here are some suggestions for using those vacation days:

- Take that vacation you’ve been talking about to that destination on your bucket list.
- Enjoy a staycation at home.
- Take a long 3-5 day weekend.
- Take half-days instead of full days off.
- Take the day off to treat yourself to a spa day, visit a museum, take the family to a local theme park, or simply do nothing.

How to Disconnect and Not Stress While on Vacation

For many people, the hardest part of taking a vacation is preparing to be away and effectively disconnecting so you can relax and enjoy your time away. Communication is key with your team about roles, responsibilities, and even your accessibility while you’re away. Make sure you know who is covering what in your absence so there are no surprises, and determine what can wait until you are back in the office. Here are a few tips to help you digitally disconnect while on vacation:

- Turn on auto-replies to let people know you are out of the office and the timeframe you will be away.
- Designate one email check-in slot daily or every other day for no more than 15-30 minutes:
 - o RESPOND to those that need immediate attention.
 - o FLAG those that can wait.
 - o DELETE the nonsense.
- Communicate your availability and expectations to let your manager, team, and clients know WHEN and HOW you will be available. If you are traveling somewhere where cell service or Wi-Fi may be limited, let people know that there may be a delay in response.
- Request colleagues CALL you with urgent matters instead of emails or texts – they will think twice if they need to pick up the phone.

Have a Great Summer!

It may be the cliché yearbook send-off, but everyone truly deserves to have a fantastic summer no matter what you choose to do and how you spend your time. 😊



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