



Glynis Barber

HOLIDAY FOR HEALTH

Our holistic columnist reveals how a summer vacation can help boost your wellbeing

I absolutely love holidays. I mean, what's not to like?

You travel to different places, experience different cultures, or just lounge on a beach without a care in the world. At least, that's the idea, but it doesn't always pan out that way.

Often, we feel a bit guilty about taking a holiday – it's time away from work, or a family that relies on us, and means spending money so that we can feel a bit indulgent. But guilt doesn't do any of us any favours and a relaxing holiday is worth every penny. Why? Because taking a break away from your regular life and surroundings is good for you.

A holiday is one of the best ways to relieve stress and, chances are, you'll be more productive and enthusiastic when you return to work. It can even substantially alleviate depression. Of course, the holiday needs to be relaxing or fun for the benefits to take hold. It's also a great way for families to spend time

together in this busy world and to really give each other some meaningful minutes.

Immersing ourselves in different cultures widens our perspective and educates us on aspects of our world we probably didn't know about. It also fosters creative thinking and opens the possibility of seeing things in a different way. We're all different, however – while I love to relax on a beach, others may find bathing boring and prefer an activity holiday or one with lots of sightseeing. Go for the holiday that will bring you the most pleasure. It's the enjoyment of it that will help you reap the most benefits.

A holiday is a great time to catch up on sleep, read lots of books or do whatever it is you don't have much time for when at home. This fosters good health and happiness, probably the two most precious things in life and which money can't buy. The relieving of stress, now in epidemic proportions around the world, with anxiety and depression its frequent side effects, makes the holiday pay for itself many times over. Stress plays a major role in your immune system and affects blood pressure, cholesterol, blood sugar levels and brain chemistry, to name a few issues.

Even though too much sun is to be avoided, spending a little time directly in the sunlight, before it gets too hot, is a chance to get the all-important vitamin D and in the best possible way – directly through your skin. Vitamin D is absolutely vital for good health. If you plan your holiday well and do what you love, you can ensure that it will be as relaxing and enjoyable as it possibly can.



HOW TO HAVE A HEALTHY TRIP

1. Start taking 4-8mg of astaxanthin a couple of weeks before you travel and keep taking it throughout your trip. Besides giving your immune system a boost, it's also a powerful UVB absorber and will help protect your skin from the sun's rays, as well as protecting you from the increased radiation exposure while flying.
2. If resources allow, invest in regular holidays to help keep stress at bay and increase happiness. It's good to have something to look forward to as well.
3. Being abroad is a great opportunity to try different foods. Variety really is the spice of life and trying new foods is good for us all. Eating lots of salads during a summer holiday is a way of consuming seasonal vegetables and increasing our phytonutrient intake.
4. Small amounts of exercise on a holiday can mean coming back lighter than when you left. Walking or running on the beach, swimming or surfing, sailing or hiking holidays give us a chance to do activities we don't normally do.
5. Try going somewhere new rather than continually returning to the same place. As well as relaxing holidays, there are some amazing natural or historical sites around the world that will fill you with wonder and awe.

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