




The Florida Bar Out-of-State Division

State-to-State

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Summer 2024

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- OOSD sets ambitious goals for 2024-25
 - 1944 Beach Boulevard, LLC decision: Until a fix is in, cross your t's and dot your i's to avoid losing your clients' secured position
 - Connect and grow: Out-of-state attorneys encouraged to join Counsel to Counsel program
 - Let's get social! Look for the OOSD on social media

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North Plaza of the Ohio Judicial Center

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Overlooking the Scioto River in downtown Columbus, Ohio, the Thomas J. Moyer Ohio Judicial Center has been home to the Supreme Court of Ohio since 2004. Opened in 1933 as the Ohio Departments Building, this beautiful Art Deco building is an excellent example of civic architecture during the period between the world wars.

Source: Wikipedia Commons

The vital role of vacations in enhancing lawyer well-being and productivity

by G. C. Murray II, Dulles, Virginia

I think it's important for people to realize that stress is inevitable and constant, but negative consequences, such as burnout, don't have to be. If you prioritize rest and self-care on a consistent basis, you can effectively offset the negative impact of stress on your life and functioning.¹

— Tressa Stiles, Psy.D.



G. C. MURRAY II

In the high-pressure environment of the legal profession, lawyers often find themselves grappling with burnout, reduced productivity, and mental health challenges. The demands of the job can take a significant toll, making it crucial for legal professionals to find effective ways to manage stress and maintain their well-being. One powerful yet frequently overlooked solution is taking regular vacations. This edition of *The Evolving Esquire* delves into the importance of vacations for lawyers, supported by scientific research, and highlights their benefits.

Vacations are a potent antidote to stress and a boon for mental health. Research underscores the positive impact of taking time off. Reduction in Stress Levels: A study by de Bloom et al. (2011) revealed that 60% of employees experienced substantial improvements in their health and

well-being during and after vacations.² The break from daily routines and pressures allows the mind and body to recover, leading to reduced stress levels.

Even brief vacations, lasting only four or five days, have been shown to enhance well-being and reduce stress significantly, with benefits persisting up to 45 days post-vacation (Blank et al., 2018).³ These short breaks provide a necessary respite, helping lawyers return to work rejuvenated and more focused.

The American Bar Association's Model Rules of Professional Conduct emphasize the duty of competence (Rule 1.1) and diligence (Rule 1.3) in serving clients. Ensuring competence and preparedness means lawyers must be in optimal mental and physical health to provide high-quality legal services. Taking regular vacations supports this obligation by preventing burnout, reducing stress, and enhancing overall well-being. By prioritizing mental health through vacations, lawyers can be their best selves, ensuring they meet their professional responsibilities and deliver

the highest standard of service to their clients.

Taking regular vacations is not only beneficial for mental health but also enhances productivity in several ways. Vacations help mitigate both absenteeism (missing work) and presenteeism (being present but not fully productive due to mental strain). Research by Bubonya et al. (2016) indicates that employees who take vacations are less likely to experience these issues, leading to better overall performance.⁴ Fritz & Sonnentag (2006) found that regular vacations lead to better task performance and lower burnout levels. By stepping away from the demanding work environment, lawyers can recharge and return with renewed energy and clarity, enhancing their ability to handle complex legal matters.⁵

While long vacations (over 14 days) offer significant improvements in health and well-being, their benefits can fade quickly once work resumes. However, regular, shorter vacations can provide sustained well-being over

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Mission of the Out-of-State Division

The purpose of the Out-of-State Division of The Florida Bar is to provide an organization for all Florida Bar members who reside outside of the state of Florida. The division focuses not on any specific practice area, but rather on the common interests and needs of out-of-state Florida Bar members as a whole. The division works toward the goal of ensuring equitable treatment for in-state and out-of-state Florida Bar members. This is accomplished through education, legislative, and administrative review; the production and update of a website for division members and the public at large; and the publication of a newsletter sent to the division's membership.

EVOLVING ESQUIRE

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time. According to de Bloom et al. (2013), the positive effects of long vacations diminish rapidly upon returning to work. Therefore, incorporating shorter, more frequent vacations into one's schedule might be more effective for maintaining long-term well-being. These regular breaks help lawyers manage the ongoing demands of their careers without reaching a point of burnout.⁶

Vacations contribute significantly to personal growth, self-fulfillment, and overall quality of life, which in turn positively affects work performance and satisfaction. Randle et al. (2019) highlight that vacations allow individuals to engage in activities that foster personal growth and self-fulfillment. This break from professional responsibilities enables lawyers to pursue hobbies, spend time with loved ones, and engage in reflective practices, all of which contribute to a higher quality of life. The rejuvenation and renewed perspective gained from vacations enhance work satisfaction, making legal professionals more motivated and engaged in their work. This, in turn, leads to higher levels of performance and productivity.

Despite the clear benefits, many lawyers hesitate to take vacations, often citing reasons such as heavy workloads, client demands, or financial concerns. The most common argument I hear from my coached lawyers is "I can't afford to take time off." While financial considerations

are valid, the cost of burnout and decreased productivity can be far higher. Investing in your well-being through regular vacations can lead to better performance and higher earnings in the long run. Effective time management and communication can mitigate this concern. Inform clients in advance, delegate tasks, and set clear boundaries. Clients will appreciate your dedication to providing high-quality service, which includes taking care of your own health.

Hopefully, you've found the rationale for taking a vacation, but to ensure its benefits, I must explain how vacations work. Splitting time between work and vacation erodes the concept of a proper break. On more than one occasion, I have been guilty of performing hours of work while on vacation. The worst part is that it wasn't even time-sensitive work. All of it could have waited until I returned. A real vacation means fully disconnecting from work to allow complete mental and physical rejuvenation. This uninterrupted time off is essential for reaping the full benefits of a vacation.

For those who find it challenging to take extended time off, consider these low-threshold vacation ideas:

- Weekend getaways: Short trips over the weekend can provide a quick and effective mental reset without requiring significant time away from work.
- Staycations: Enjoy a vacation at home by exploring local attractions, indulging in hobbies, or simply relaxing without the pressures of daily routines.

- Wellness retreats: Participate in wellness retreats focused on relaxation, meditation, and self-care. These can be short yet profoundly rejuvenating.

For lawyers, regular vacations are not merely a luxury but a necessity for maintaining mental health, reducing stress, and enhancing productivity. By prioritizing time off, legal professionals can ensure sustained well-being and optimal performance in their demanding careers. Embracing the benefits of vacations can lead to a more balanced and fulfilling professional life, ultimately contributing to long-term success in the legal field.

Endnotes

1 Text interview with Tressa Stiles, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist, Happy Healing Counseling, LLC (July 18, 2024).

2 de Bloom, J., Geurts, S. A. E., Sonnentag, S., Taris, T., de Weerth, C., & Kompier, M. A. J. (2011). How does a vacation from work affect employee health and well-being? *J. HEALTH PSYCHOL.*, 26(12), 1606–1622. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08870446.2010.546860>.

3 Blank, C., Gatterer, K., Leichtfried, V., Pollhammer, D., Mair-Raggautz, M., Duschek, S., Humpeler, E., & Schobersberger, W. (2018). Short Vacation Improves Stress-Level and Well-Being in German-Speaking Middle-Managers—A Randomized Controlled Trial. *INT. J. ENVIRON. RES. PUB. HEALTH*, 15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15010130>.

4 Bubonya, M., Cobb-Clark, D., & Wooden, M. (2016). Mental Health and Productivity at Work: Does What You Do Matter?. *LAB. PERS. ECON. Electronic J.* <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2766100>.

5 Fritz, C., & Sonnentag, S. (2006). Recovery, well-being, and performance-related outcomes: the role of workload and vacation experiences. *J. APPLIED PSYCH.*, 91 4, 936–45. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.4.936>.

6 Bloom, J., Geurts, S., & Kompier, M. (2012). Vacation (after-) effects on employee health and well-being, and the role of vacation activities, experiences and sleep. *J. HAPPINESS STUD.*, 14, 613– 633. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-012-9345-3>.



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