

Let it Go: Mental Breaks After Work Improve Sleep

April 23, 2018

Summary: Participating in fun activities following a day filled with negative behavior of colleagues at work could help you sleep better, a new study reports.

Source: American Psychological Association.

If you've had a bad day at work thanks to rude colleagues, doing something fun and relaxing after you punch out could net you a better night's sleep.

That was the key finding of research that appears in the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*.

“Sleep quality is crucial because sleep plays a major role in how employees perform and behave at work,” said lead author Caitlin Demsky, PhD, of Oakland University. “In our fast-paced, competitive professional world, it is more important than ever that workers are in the best condition to succeed, and getting a good night's sleep is key to that.”

Demsky and her co-authors surveyed 699 employees of the U.S. Forest Service. Participants were asked to rate the level of rude behavior they experienced in the workplace, how often they had negative thoughts about work, whether they have insomnia symptoms and how much they were able to detach from work and relax. Researchers also asked about the number of children under 18 living at home, hours worked per week, and frequency of alcoholic drinks as these have previously been linked with sleep issues.

Experiencing rude or negative behavior at work, such as being judged or verbally abused, was linked with more symptoms of insomnia, including waking up multiple times during the night. But people who were able to

detach and do something relaxing to recover after work — such as yoga, listening to music or going for a walk – slept better.



Repeated negative thoughts about work may also be linked to several health problems, including cardiovascular diseases, increased blood pressure and fatigue, according to the authors. NeuroscienceNews.com image is in the public domain.

“Incivility in the workplace takes a toll on sleep quality,” said Demsky. “It does so in part by making people repeatedly think about their negative work experiences. Those who can take mental breaks from this fare better and do not lose as much sleep as those who are less capable of letting go.”

Repeated negative thoughts about work may also be linked to several health problems, including cardiovascular diseases, increased blood pressure and fatigue, according to the authors.

Demsky suggests that managers can be role models for employees after work by not sending work-related messages outside of business hours, for example.

The authors also suggested that employers encourage programs aimed at

reducing workplace incivility, such as “Civility, Respect, Engagement in the Workforce,” launched by the Veterans Health Administration to promote positive and respectful communication among co-workers. The program seeks to change work cultures with resources that focus on the benefits of civility at the office.

About this neuroscience research article

Source: Michael Shulman – [American Psychological Association](#)

Publisher: Organized by [NeuroscienceNews.com](#).

Image Source: NeuroscienceNews.com image is in the public domain.

Original Research: [Abstract](#) for “Shrugging it off: Does psychological detachment from work mediate the relationship between workplace aggression and work-family conflict?” by Demsky, Caitlin A.; Ellis, Allison M.; & Fritz, Charlotte in *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*.

Published April 3 2018.

doi:[10.1037/a0035448](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035448)

Cite This NeuroscienceNews.com Article

- **MLA**
- **APA**
- **Chicago**

American Psychological Association “Let it Go: Mental Breaks After Work Improve Sleep.” NeuroscienceNews. NeuroscienceNews, 23 April 2018. <<http://neurosciencenews.com/work-mental-break-sleep-8864/>>.

Abstract

Shrugging it off: Does psychological detachment from work mediate the relationship between workplace aggression and work-family conflict?

The current study investigates workplace aggression and psychological detachment from work as possible antecedents of work-family conflict. We

draw upon Conservation of Resources theory and the Effort-Recovery Model to argue that employees who fail to psychologically detach from stressful events in the workplace experience a relative lack of resources that is negatively associated with functioning in the nonwork domain. Further, we extend prior research on antecedents of work-family conflict by examining workplace aggression, a prevalent workplace stressor. Utilizing multisource data (i.e., employee, significant other, and coworker reports), our findings indicate that self-reported psychological detachment mediates the relationship between coworker-reported workplace aggression and both self- and significant other-reported work-family conflict. Findings from the current study speak to the value of combining perspectives from research on recovery from work stress and the work-family interface, and point toward implications for research and practice.

Feel free to share this American Psychological Association.