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How To Relax On Busy Weekends

By [SAM SANDERS \(/PEOPLE/SAM-SANDERS\)](/PEOPLE/SAM-SANDERS/) • JAN 25, 2020

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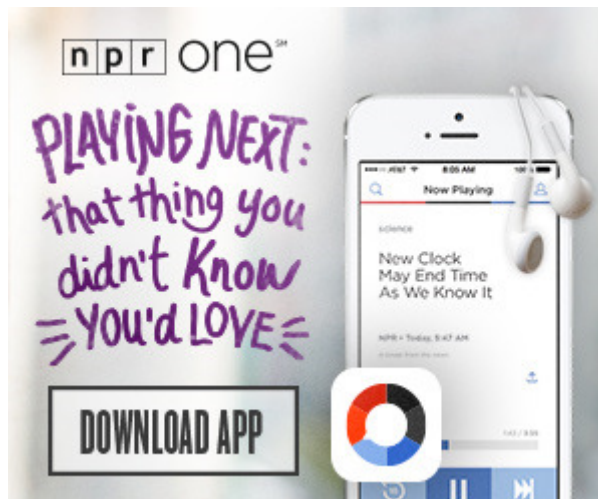


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MICHEL MARTIN, HOST:



Weekends are supposed to be time off - well, let's just say for most people. But often, they get filled up with to-do lists, chores, errands and sometimes work we should have gotten done during the week. That means by the time Monday rolls around, you can feel exhausted before the week has even started. The team at NPR's Life Kit podcast is here to help. Sam Sanders made it his mission to help one listener learn how to relax.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

SAM SANDERS: Here we are in Redondo Beach. Come on. Oh, my god.

That's me in Southern California with my dog, Zora, who just didn't want to walk too much that morning.

SANDERS: Hi. I'm Sam.

CHLOE SCHOFIELD: Hi.

SANDERS: This is Zora.

SCHOFIELD: I'm, like, going to the dog instead of the person. That's like...

SANDERS: That is Chloe Schofield. Chloe has a job that can be very, very stressful.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

SCHOFIELD: I'm a special education teacher in a middle school.

SANDERS: Chloe told me she is usually in the office by 5 a.m., and sometimes she doesn't leave until 8 p.m. She usually takes her work computer home on weekends as well. Her hours are so crazy, in fact, when I met up with Chloe, she was just recovering from being sick.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

SCHOFIELD: I was out, like, Monday through Thursday this week. It was...

SANDERS: Poor thing. Was it a cold or what?

SCHOFIELD: It was, like, pneumonia.

SANDERS: Clearly it was time for an intervention, so we began by unplugging - putting that phone on airplane mode. And I had Chloe tell herself something.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

SCHOFIELD: This weekend is a two-day vacation.

SANDERS: Say it more forcefully.

SCHOFIELD: OK. This weekend is a two-day vacation.

SANDERS: This idea - thinking of your weekend like a vacation - it actually comes from research.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

CASSIE MOGILNER HOLMES: We find that those who simply went into the weekend treating it like a vacation were happier on Monday.

SANDERS: Cassie Mogilner Holmes is an associate professor of marketing and behavioral decision-making at UCLA's Anderson School of Management, and she ran this study.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

HOLMES: So when you think about yourself on vacation, what you think about is, like, (exhaling) just sort of being. It's like...

SANDERS: Yeah.

HOLMES: ...Finally taking a breath.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

SCHOFIELD: It's like dog heaven.

SANDERS: Yeah - like, literally dog heaven.

SCHOFIELD: Literally dog heaven.

SANDERS: I don't know about you, but a dog beach is my version of a great vacation. I took Chloe to Huntington Dog Beach on a very, very special day.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

SCHOFIELD: There are costumes. Is this a Halloween thing?

SANDERS: Wait. What?

Corgi beach day - more than a thousand corgis on that beach. And because it was October, they were in Halloween costumes. You might be thinking, I don't have time for corgi beach day. I've got errands to run. I've got chores to do on the weekends. Holmes says that stress is called time pressure, and it's actually easy to get rid of.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

HOLMES: There's also neat research by some of my colleagues where they show that inducing a sense of awe, which often comes from getting outside into nature, maybe going to an amazing performance - you know, something that expands your mind - that sense of awe also reduces sense of time pressure and time strain because it gives you that sense of expansiveness.

SANDERS: Giving Chloe a sense that there really is enough time to relax and get everything done, which is why our final stop on our stress-free weekend was having a meetup with her friends at Barnsdall Park in Los Angeles. Her friends brought tacos. I brought some wine and cheese. All of us brought games.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

SANDERS: I brought giant Connect Four. Y'all brought...

SCHOFIELD: What is it called - boing ball?

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Longball.

SCHOFIELD: Bong ball.

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Longball.

SCHOFIELD: Longball.

SANDERS: And the goal of this hangout was to not talk about work - to just have fun.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

UNIDENTIFIED GROUP: (Cheering).

SANDERS: It worked. We all hung out for close to three hours in the park. After that, I let Chloe go, sent her on her way. And about a month later, I called her back to check in.

(SOUNDBITE OF ARCHIVED NPR BROADCAST)

HOLMES: I just leave my computer at work. Like, I'm not bringing it home. I'm not, like, responding to anything. I haven't downloaded the Outlook app on my phone in, like, a month and a half.

SANDERS: Wow.

HOLMES: So that is positive.

SANDERS: I'm proud of you.

HOLMES: Thank you.

SANDERS: It's not that hard, y'all. You can do it, too. Sam Sanders, NPR News.

MARTIN: For more tips on how to have a stress-free weekend, check out NPR's Life Kit podcast at npr.org/lifekit. Transcript provided by NPR, Copyright NPR.

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