

# 9 Reasons Getting Away for the Weekend Is Good for Your Mental Health

*A quick trip is less stressful than a long vacation and can boost your creativity.*

By [Ruben Castaneda](#), Staff Writer May 24, 2018, at 12:35 p.m.



**Weekend trips can be better for your mood than long vacations.**

If you'd like to take a vacation to get away from the stresses of work, [the nation's rancorous politics](#) or just to [catch up on your sleep](#) but aren't prepared to take a substantial amount of time off, you should still consider a brief getaway, experts say. A weekend trip can boost your mental and emotional health, says Jonathan Alpert, a psychotherapist in New York City and author of "Be Fearless: Change Your Life in 28 Days." In fact, short getaways, such as a trip to the beach or to the mountains over a long weekend, are in many ways preferable to longer vacations, he says. "From an emotional and well-being perspective, smaller vacations pack a bigger punch than longer ones," he says. "A small amount of planning and time away can reap large rewards."



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## **Many people plan weekend getaways for a wide array of reasons.**

The percentage of U.S. residents planning a weekend escape in 2018 is higher than it was in 2017, according to a nationwide survey by Enterprise Rent-A-Car of 1,015 people ages 25 and older. The survey was conducted in November 2017. Overall, 85 percent of survey respondents said they plan to escape on a weekend trip in 2018, up from 78 percent in 2017. Here are the top things survey respondents said they wanted to escape: stress, 43 percent; the news, 39 percent; the current political climate, 38 percent; and [social media](#), 24 percent. Whatever is causing you anxiety, a weekend getaway could help [tamp down your stress levels](#), experts say. Here are nine reasons weekend escapes can improve your mental and emotional health:



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### **They're relatively simple to plan.**

Organizing a brief getaway is easier to plan than a longer vacation. Shorter trips are also less expensive. Alpert says many of his clients [become stressed out](#) over planning and paying for a longer trip, whether it's to a domestic destination or one overseas. Organizing a longer trip entails taking a number of factors into account, such as the price of plane tickets, weather that could lead to delayed or canceled flights and lining up accommodations for more than a few days. "It's easier to plan and follow through on smaller breaks," Alpert says. That means less stress and anxiety.





### **You're less likely to be disappointed with a short getaway.**

People who go on lengthy vacations of a week or more tend to have high expectations and [feel pressure](#) to have an amazing and flawless trip, a vacation for the ages, Alpert says. "It rarely works out this way," he says. "By taking frequent smaller vacations, you lower the odds of being disappointed on your getaway and also have something to look forward to sooner rather than later."



**It's easier to disconnect during a weekend trip than during a longer vacation.**

If you're going away for a week or more, it may take you a day or two to [mentally disconnect from work emails and deadlines](#) and get into "vacation mode," Alpert says. "Whereas with short getaways, people know it's just a couple days, and they're more able to turn off work for a brief period, knowing they'll be able to check emails and deal with any work issues in a few days."



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## **Getting away from your significant other for a weekend can be good for your relationship.**

If you're part of a couple that's in a long-term relationship, getting away by yourself or with friends, without your partner, can be a great way to reboot the romance, says April Masini, who dispenses relationship counsel on her online "Ask April" advice forum at RelationshipAdviceForum.com. For example, if you're bickering or stuck in "remodel-the-kitchen" mode, with all your energy devoted to domestic tasks, taking a short trip can break the pattern, she says. "Working on the theory that absence makes the heart grow fonder, getting away for a short weekend vacay without your romantic partner is a great relationship booster," she says. "You get a chance to miss each other. You get a chance to explore your own interests." For example, if you're passionate about [your weekend pickup basketball or softball game](#), you could go away for a weekend to a sports camp with your buddies. "It gives you a chance to deepen your friendships beyond the relationship – this makes you a better person, and subsequently a better partner." Masini says.





**Going on a short trip with your significant other can bring you closer together.**

New, shared experiences that occur on short weekend getaways create bonds between couples that [strengthen relationships](#), Masini says. "Weekend getaways give you the opportunity to spice it up by getting out of your comfort zone," she says. "They can be a platform for new experiences that you undertake together. If you make a weekend bucket list, you can really expound on this dynamic." For example, you could volunteer during one weekend getaway and participate in a silent retreat during another. Working together to help others and getting in touch with your spiritual side will bring you and your partner closer together.



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**If you're unattached, a short trip gives you a chance to take stock of your life and meet new people.**

Some people will only participate in certain activities – like [going to a concert](#) – with a date or a significant other. But being unattached shouldn't stop you from going on weekend getaways by yourself, says Anita Gadhia-Smith, a psychotherapist who practices in suburban Maryland and the District of Columbia. "Time with yourself is essential to connect with the deeper parts of yourself, as well as a higher power in the universe," she says. "When we get out of our regular environment and routines and place ourselves in a new environment, we are able to truly reset and renew. We can take stock of our lives without any distractions and get a clear mental picture of where we are and where we want to go in our lives." Your world can open up when you're traveling alone. When you travel with a significant other or a friend, you keep your focus on him or her. When you're traveling alone, it's easier to [strike up a conversation with someone new](#), Gadhia-Smith says. Research suggests that talking to strangers is good for your sense of well-being.





### **Short trips help boost your creativity.**

A weekend getaway or short trip amplifies your creativity, Gadhia-Smith says. New sights and sounds stimulate different parts of your brain. Research suggests that traveling [boosts your brain's creativity](#). "While routine has its value, it can shut down creative energy," she says. "It's very important to break up our routines and wake up our brains. The element of surprise increases wonder and awe, which keeps us feeling alive."



### **You'll maximize your use of time.**

"Because your time is short on a weekend trip, you'll tend to pack in as much as possible, intensifying the experience," Gadhia-Smith says. "When you don't waste a moment of your time, you get a lot more out of your weekend. You're less likely to waste time on things that don't have value. You have the mindset that time is short, and you need to get the most out of your weekend you possibly can."



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### **You'll worry less during shorter trips.**

Near the end of a longer vacation, many people tend to worry about emails and assignments that have accumulated while they're away. "They start to anticipate all the work that awaits them, and it spoils the remainder of their time away," Alpert says. "By contrast, a small-cation is less time away from the office, so there's less stress."