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Dividing up your holidays into several periods can help prevent post-holiday syndrome

Psychologists estimate that 35 percent of Spanish workers between 25 and 40 will have to face the syndrome this year. Tiredness, lack of appetite and concentration, irritability, anxiety, sadness and couldn't-care-less attitude are just some of the symptoms of this illness, caused by the end of holidays. Millions of people will leave their working places and start their holidays in the next weeks. The daily routine will be part of the past and resting days, pictures at the seashore and summer memories will be back to stay – at least for some weeks.

Experts estimate that 35 per cent of Spanish workers between the ages of 25 and 40 will have to face the "post-holiday syndrome" when they get back to routine: a general feeling of discomfort caused by the person's inability to adapt to work after finishing holidays.

Humbelina Robles Ortega, a researcher of the department of Personality, Assessment and Psychological Treatment of the University of Granada (Universidad de Granada), warns that getting back to routine can cause both physical and psychological symptoms. "Usually, when the post-holiday syndrome causes physical symptoms, it is nothing but the physical expression of psychological unease", she states. Tiredness, lack of appetite and concentration, drowsiness or sleeplessness, abnormally rapid heartbeat and muscular ache are just some of the physical symptoms of this illness. The psychological symptoms include irritability, anxiety, sadness, couldn't-care-less attitude and a deep feeling of emptiness.

According to professor Robles Ortega's advice, a good way of preventing this illness is to divide the holidays up into several periods, instead of taking the full period in one go: "If our holidays last one month and our employer allows us to do so, we could take fifteen days first and another fifteen days later on. This will prevent anxiety and we will be under the impression of a longer holiday period. Moreover, changes in habits won't be so radical and permanent and, therefore, re-starting work won't be so traumatic".

Apart from this, the UGR researcher recommends "to establish a period of re-adaptation" to work from holidays, for which "the best decision" is to get back home a few days earlier than to work. "Along these two or three days we should get back to our everyday habits or give up those adopted during holidays, such as going to bed later than usual or having some siesta sleep after lunch". The aim of this gradual return to daily life is "to prevent the re-start of work from being so traumatic".

Robles also recommends "not to attach too much importance" to this illness and to face the moment of getting back to work "as a new period full of other satisfying moments". The UGR researcher advises to plan trips and other pleasant activities all through the year, instead of doing so only in summer time. This way, she says, we will prevent "the feeling that work does not come with good moments", a feeling that is the main cause of post-holiday syndrome.

Source: Universidad de Granada

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