

87% of American Workers Stay on the Clock After Hours, Study Finds

More than four in 10 would spend at least \$500 to disconnect for a week, while nature and distance from cities help workers unplug.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- For most American workers, the workday does not end when they leave the office or close their laptop. Emails, messages, unfinished tasks, and the pressure to remain available are extending work into evenings, weekends, and time meant for rest.



Discover Africa Safaris research finds 38% experience stress or anxiety from constant connectivity, while 39% say losing internet access is necessary to fully disconnect.

A [new survey from Discover Africa Safaris](#) finds that 87% of working U.S. adults complete work-related tasks outside their standard hours. Thirty-eight percent spend more than one extra hour working each day, including 16% who spend more than three additional hours on work.

The survey of 1,000 U.S. adults who were currently employed or had worked within the past 12 months examined after-hours work, constant connectivity, burnout, workplace attitudes toward time off, and what people need to fully disconnect.

The results show that many workers are looking for greater control over their time. Some are willing to spend hundreds or thousands of dollars for an uninterrupted break, while others say disconnecting requires physical distance, limited technology, and time surrounded by nature.

Key Takeaways

- 87% work outside their standard hours
- 38% spend more than one additional hour per day on work-related tasks

- 16% spend more than three additional hours working each day
- 38% experience stress or anxiety because of constant connectivity
- 37% feel mentally exhausted or burned out from staying connected
- 42% would spend at least \$500 to fully disconnect for five to seven days
- 25% would spend \$1,000 or more for a week of uninterrupted time away
- 39% say having no internet or Wi-Fi is necessary to fully disconnect
- 34% say they need to be somewhere without cell service
- 27% say being surrounded by nature or wildlife is essential to unplugging

The Workday Continues After Workers Clock Out

Only 13% of American workers completely avoid work outside their standard hours.

Nearly half, 47%, continue working for at least one hour after leaving the office or completing their scheduled workday. Thirty-one percent spend between one and three additional hours working, while 16% continue for more than three hours.

Generation Z was the most likely to work beyond standard hours. Half of Generation Z workers spend at least one additional hour on work-related tasks, compared with older generations.

Baby Boomers were the most likely to fully clock out. Twenty-one percent said they avoid working outside their standard schedule.

Digital tools and flexible working arrangements allow employees to decide when and where they complete tasks, but they can also make it harder to determine where work ends and personal time begins.

For some workers, that flexibility is helpful.

- 18% say after-hours connectivity makes them feel more informed or in control
- 16% say it makes them feel more productive or motivated
- 21% feel neutral or unaffected by staying connected

Others experience a greater emotional cost. Thirty-eight percent report stress or anxiety, 37%

feel mentally exhausted, and 35% feel overwhelmed by constant access to work and digital communication.

Workers Want Flexibility Without Constant Availability

The ability to work from different locations or at different times can give employees more control over their schedules.

The challenge begins when flexibility becomes an expectation of continuous availability.

Workers may finish assignments after dinner, respond to emails before bed, or check workplace messages during weekends and holidays. Each task may appear minor on its own, but together they can prevent employees from experiencing meaningful time away.

More than half of workers, 54%, say they remain connected to protect their professional reputation. Nearly one-quarter, 23%, push through burnout because doing so feels safer than stepping away.

By comparison, 32% say taking time off is the safest way to avoid personal or professional burnout.

The data shows that workers do not necessarily want to abandon flexible schedules. They want the freedom to complete work when it suits them without feeling that they must remain reachable at all times.

Internet Access Is the Hardest Connection to Give Up

Disconnecting from work does not always mean disconnecting from every part of digital life.

When asked what would be hardest to give up for one week, 25% selected personal internet access. Another 20% chose work communication, while 20% said contact with friends and family would be the most difficult connection to lose.

Workers want distance from professional demands without necessarily losing the ability to speak with loved ones, access entertainment, or stay informed.

That creates a more flexible definition of disconnection. For some people, unplugging means leaving work email behind while retaining access to personal messages. For others, it requires removing internet and phone access entirely.

Many travelers are looking for experiences that allow them to step away from daily responsibilities without becoming completely isolated. Remote natural settings can provide distance from the normal work environment while selected connectivity remains available when

needed.

Taking Time Off Can Create New Workplace Pressure

Time away from work does not always provide a clean break.

Only 29% of workers say their employers actively support and encourage them to take time off. Another 34% report no clear workplace response in either direction.

For some employees, the consequences become apparent when they return.

- 21% return to a heavier workload after taking time away
- 18% experience subtle workplace pressure after taking a break
- 19% take time off despite potential professional consequences

Only 19% said they had been able to disconnect for at least one full week without consequences during the past year.

Shorter breaks were more common. Fourteen percent had disconnected for a few hours, 13% for up to one full day, and 19% for one or two days.

Nine percent said they had not been able to disconnect at all without experiencing consequences.

Workplace support can determine whether a vacation functions as genuine recovery or simply postpones responsibilities until the employee returns.

Complete Disconnection Is Important but Not Equally Accessible

More than one in five workers, 21%, say completely unplugging is essential for their mental health, even when it carries professional or personal risks.

Another 19% believe fully disconnecting is possible when an employer provides the right support.

Cost and access remain barriers. Fifteen percent say they cannot afford the required time or expense, while 7% believe meaningful disconnection is primarily available to people with greater financial resources.

Another 10% believe anyone can disconnect when they make it a priority, while 9% say they currently feel no need to completely unplug.

Workers with paid time off, financial flexibility, and supportive employers may find it easier to take extended breaks. Freelancers, gig workers, self-employed people, and employees without paid leave may lose income whenever they step away.

For these workers, the challenge is not simply deciding to unplug. It is creating enough time, money, and professional security to do so without introducing a different source of stress.

What Americans Need to Fully Unplug

For many Americans, disconnecting requires more than leaving their normal workplace.

Thirty-nine percent say having no internet or Wi-Fi is necessary to fully disconnect. Thirty-four percent need to be somewhere without cell service, while 31% say they must lose access to work email or messaging.

- 30% need to be unreachable by their employer
- 27% need to know their finances can absorb the cost of the break
- 27% need to be surrounded by nature or wildlife
- 24% need physical distance from cities or crowds

Generation Z placed particularly high value on natural surroundings. Thirty-two percent said nature or wildlife is essential to unplugging, while 30% need to be physically removed from cities or crowds.

Financial security was also a greater concern for younger workers. Thirty-one percent of Generation Z said they need confidence in their finances before they can relax, compared with 16% of Baby Boomers.

A change of scenery can create a clearer psychological boundary between work and personal life. Natural environments, unfamiliar routines, and physical distance from daily responsibilities can reduce the cues that encourage people to check messages or resume work.

Workers Are Willing to Invest in Meaningful Time Away

Many Americans see disconnection as something worth including in their travel budgets.

Forty-two percent say they would spend at least \$500 to fully disconnect for five to seven days.

One-quarter would spend \$1,000 or more.

- 16% would spend between \$250 and \$500
- 17% would spend between \$500 and \$1,000
- 12% would spend between \$1,000 and \$2,500
- 13% would spend more than \$2,500
- 5% would spend more than \$5,000

Twenty-six percent do not currently plan to spend money specifically on disconnecting, while 19% would keep their budget below \$250.

The range shows that meaningful rest is not tied to a single type of trip or price point. Some workers prefer a short, affordable change of routine. Others view an immersive journey as an opportunity to create enough physical and mental distance to fully reset.

At higher budgets, travelers may seek remote destinations, longer stays, guided experiences, and opportunities to spend time in natural environments that feel far removed from their normal routines.

Nature Creates Distance From the Always-On Routine

More than one-quarter of workers, 27%, say nature or wildlife is an essential part of fully disconnecting.

Natural environments replace familiar work cues with new experiences. Instead of moving between meetings, notifications, and household responsibilities, travelers can focus on landscapes, wildlife, physical activity, and time with the people around them.

Another 24% say physical distance from cities and crowds helps them unplug.

African safari experiences can combine these elements by placing travelers in remote natural settings, often with structured days built around game drives, walking safaris, wildlife viewing, and shared meals.

Travelers may still have access to Wi-Fi at selected lodges, but the change in environment creates a more deliberate relationship with technology. Connectivity becomes something they choose to use rather than something surrounding them throughout the day.

For workers accustomed to constant notifications and after-hours tasks, that shift can make time away feel substantially different from simply staying home and turning off a laptop.

Disconnection Looks Different for Every Worker

There is no single definition of a successful break.

Some people need to be entirely unreachable. Others want to retain enough connectivity to contact friends and family. Some can recharge over a weekend, while others need a full week or longer before they stop thinking about work.

The common priority is control.

Workers want to decide when they are available, when they respond, and when their attention belongs to something outside their jobs.

Employers can support that control by communicating clearly about time-off expectations, planning workload coverage, and avoiding unnecessary contact while employees are away.

Travelers can support it by choosing experiences that create meaningful distance from their everyday environment and establishing boundaries before they leave.

As work becomes increasingly digital and flexible, rest must become more intentional. For many Americans, fully disconnecting now requires planning, financial preparation, and a destination that makes the normal work routine feel genuinely far away.

View the full study here:

<https://www.discoverafrica.com/blog/work-disconnection-time-off-trends/>

About

[Discover Africa Safaris](#) is a leading safari specialist that helps travelers design tailor-made African safari experiences across Southern and East Africa. The company works with vetted lodges and expert guides to create immersive, restorative journeys in some of the world's most breathtaking natural environments. In a world where disconnecting has become increasingly difficult, Discover Africa Safari's travel experiences offer travelers an opportunity to step away from constant connectivity, spend time in nature, and return to daily life feeling recharged.

Taylor Jay

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