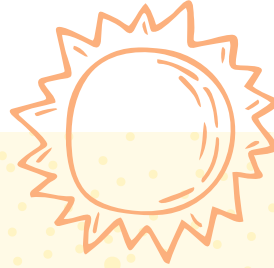




Take a break!



For the vast majority of us it's been nearly a year since we packed our sun cream and a good book and headed to the airport in search of some sunshine and switch-off time. With the prospect of overseas travel still looking a little shady, many will be pondering what to do with the holiday time that has been quietly stacking up during repeated lockdowns.

The key is to plan for a break: we don't yet know if a change of scenery will be possible, but there is no denying we all need to take some time to recharge, reboot, reset and relax; and that's something that can happen anywhere but at your desk. Need more persuasion? Read on to see the multiple benefits to taking some time out.

1. Your office space is not the place for inspiration The work environment is hardly the place to generate new ideas, approaches and problem-solving techniques. You can't be creative or get inspiration when you are under pressure, so a change of scene, be that away or just out of the office, can work wonders. You might not switch off completely but when you relax, creativity may blossom. Your mind will start asking questions you never thought of up until now and you'll have a clearer mind because you're no longer tired.



2. Leave your comfort zone Taking a break is a challenge because you'll be moving outside your comfort zone – the to-do-lists prior to leaving the office, handovers etc. But flip this and it's a great opportunity to delegate and a chance to see how the team performs without you!

3. Your health benefits enormously –You'll feel better, sleep well and your mood will be lifted. Your stress and anxiety will lower and in turn, heart function and blood pressure if previously raised will start to return to normal levels.

4. Give your brain a break Most workers suffer from 'brain flooding', where information in the form of emails, phone messages and other documentation keeps pouring in. Brains are like sponges; they can only take so much. On holiday, new routines and a change of pace can strengthen neural connections and stimulate mental activity. Plus, you'll be at the top of your game when you return back to work thanks to the establishment of emotional stability and mental relaxation; your brain will be buzzing and you'll be on a motivational high!

5. Keep yourself and your colleagues happy Ernst & Young did an interesting survey which found that those who took more holiday time were consistently performing better at work and reported greater job satisfaction. So, forget the old work ethic that longer hours mean higher productivity and take a break instead.



NUTRITION TIPS FROM ELAINE

Water

Water is such a good all-rounder for our health! Here are some ideas to make a glass of water a bit more interesting:

For clearer skin – cucumber, lemon and fresh mint

Bloated stomach – cucumber, lemon and fresh ginger

Weight loss – cucumber and grapefruit

Metabolism booster – apple and cinnamon

Eat more veggies!

How vegetables can help on a daily basis:

Asparagus – reduces inflammation

Broccoli – strengthens the immune system

Carrots – improves appearance of skin, hair & nails

Cucumbers – great for hydration

Kale – high in calcium and contains more calcium than milk

Lettuce – cleans the digestive tract and is high in fibre



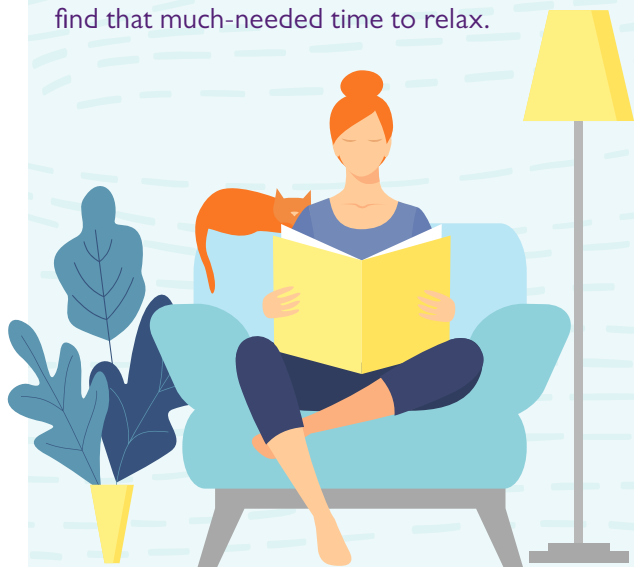
As the pressure begins to subside by Andy Holter

Last week we reflected upon the changes brought about by our young people returning to school and the start of the Prime Minister's road map to recovery from the pandemic.

This week we look at the pressures of work and how they might begin to subside after prolonged periods of increased funeral numbers and demands on our services here within CPJ Field.

As funeral professionals, the past six weeks have presented us with various challenges, including increased demand like no other, funeral numbers exceeding expectation, first calls higher than ever seen before, and demand on our services greater than we have ever experienced in our many years within the profession. The mental and physical pressures can be immense, the exhaustion unprecedented and stress levels way beyond what we are normally be used to managing.

Good news! Whilst we may not be quite at the point of feeling it just yet, the pressure of the pandemic is beginning to subside and finally the numbers of Covid-related deaths are falling. The infection rate is lower than last September and the light at the end of the tunnel grows increasingly brighter. The time for rest is fast approaching where we can breathe a much-needed breath of fresh air, recharge our batteries and find that much-needed time to relax.



What then is to follow?

With any sustained periods of stress or pressure follows extreme levels of tiredness, both mentally and physically. As such, we should be very mindful of the sudden reduction in calls, appointments or visits to our funeral homes: this sudden change in circumstances could easily lead to a degree of demoralisation, which in turn may affect our behaviours and attitudes. To liken this to a sports car, with the engine running at top speed and then suddenly thrust into the lowest gear, the car will suddenly shudder and respond very sluggishly until returning to its normal performance. Much the same could be said for us having experienced these very busy, unprecedented times.

So how do we prepare for the coming weeks?

- Be prepared for changes, acknowledge them and take time for ourselves to adjust
- Be prepared to talk to our friends, colleagues, or line managers about how we feel and share our experiences
- Be prepared to feel exhausted and consider taking that much needed holiday to recuperate
- Look in the CPJ Field Wellbeing Hub for support and guidance if you need any encouragement
- Consider walking or cycling to work, to get those feel-good endorphins moving around the body
- Try some healthy eating or start a new exercise plan following the lifting of lockdown restrictions
- Find a new hobby and get those creative skills flowing
- Or find that much-needed personal time or family time, and turn off all technology for 48 hours... no phone, no email, and no social media.

Check out the CPJ Book club this month – it's a belter of a book!



CPJ Book club

Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a while – including you!