

## Take Back Your Weekend: 8 Tips to Help You Actually Relax

If on Monday mornings you are more tired than you were on Friday evenings, you're not alone. According to several surveys, the American weekend is rapidly disappearing and we're more stressed because of it. A Gallup poll cited by National Public Radio "found that a majority of Americans (55%) said they were more angry, stressed and worried...than they have been at most points during the decade. [O]ther Gallup studies found that Americans are consistently more likely to be stressed and worried than much of the world." And this was data from before the COVID pandemic. It's time to rethink relaxation. It's time to take back our weekends. Here are eight tips for getting more out of your time off.

**1. Rethink your week.** "Tackle chores and run errands during the week," says Katrina Onstad, author of *The Weekend Effect*. "Spend a few evenings paying bills, doing laundry, cleaning the bathroom, or mowing the lawn. However much you accomplish, stop working after Friday. This requires adjusting your standards and being OK with a little mess," she says.

**2. Invest in yourself.** "Make it a point every weekend to do something for you," suggests life coach Lisa Abramson. Writing for *medium.com*, she says "[m]any of us, and especially moms, tend to take care of others, before taking care of ourselves. But as they say on airplanes, it's important to put on your oxygen mask first. The more you take care of you, the better you're able to take care of your loved ones. It can also be helpful to ask yourself, 'What is one thing I can do to make my life easier this coming week?' and then implement that thing. Whether it's making a meal plan for the upcoming week, ordering groceries online instead of trekking to the store, or hiring someone to help clean your home, give yourself permission to make things easier and not feel the pressure to do everything yourself."

**3. Do a digital detox.** While we know that while social media keeps us connected to others, they are also a source of stress. If you cannot completely unplug from Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, or any of the other social media apps, at least discipline yourself



Create even one rejuvenating experience, such as taking your dog on a long walk without your phone.

to walk away from them for awhile on the weekend. We know that your smartphone can sap your energy when you are trying to recharge. If you can't bring yourself to turning it off, try leaving it in another room for a few hours.

**4. Prioritize fulfillment.** Apply the "PEP" formula — physical health, escapes and people — championed by Professional Organizer Julie Morgenstern. She believes you should "[t]ake care of your body through sleep, exercise, healthy meals, massage; recharge through hobbies, games, or other passions; and spend time with people who nourish you."

**5. Beat the Sunday Blues.** "People sometimes can't enjoy the weekend because their head is wrapped up in the work week that lies ahead," observes *Inc. Magazine* which knows a thing or two about business and work. "There are things you can do, such as preparing for Monday every Friday, that can help you beat those Sunday blues."

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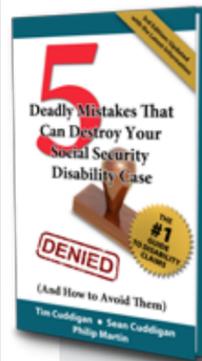
**6. Claim at least some free time.** If you must deal with a home or work project on a weekend, “create even one rejuvenating experience, such as taking your dog on a long walk without your phone,” says Onstad. “The more time you unplug, the better you’ll feel on Monday.”

**7. Step out of your comfort zone and change the scenery.** “Don’t let your weekends become a monotonous routine,” advises *Inc. Magazine*. “Challenge yourself with new physical or intellectual activities and make each weekend different from the last. Go someplace new within a few hours of home. We tend to overlook attractions that are within reach when we think about vacations... discover things just a drive away.”

**8. Focus on making new memories, rather than just rehashing the workweek.** “To make the most of quality time with friends and loved ones, make it a point to talk about work as little as possible,” suggests *NPR*. “[W]e should reframe our hangouts: stop viewing them as opportunities to catch up, but instead as opportunities to make new memories and learn things about the people you care about that you didn’t know before.”

So remember, the weekend is the time to take a break and recharge your mental batteries. No matter what you do on the weekend, get away from work, relax, and reclaim your weekend. We

promise you your Mondays will look brighter.



**“5 Deadly Mistakes That Can Destroy Your Social Security Disability Case” is the #1 guide to improving the odds of winning a disability case.**

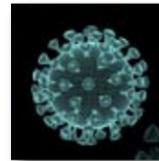
For a FREE copy for you or someone you care about call Cuddigan Law at 402.933.5318 or email us at [lawteam@cuddiganlaw.com](mailto:lawteam@cuddiganlaw.com)

### Can Covid-19 Long Haulers Qualify for Disability Benefits?

Long haulers are people who have not fully recovered from COVID-19 weeks or even months after first experiencing symptoms.

To qualify for Social Security disability benefits, you must demonstrate that your long COVID symptoms prevent you from sustaining full-time competitive employment on a consistent and reliable basis. Your condition must be expected to last and keep you out of work for at least 12 months.

Because long-haul COVID is not always a disability, to be awarded benefits a medical evaluation will be required to establish if your symptoms substantially limit a major life activity like employment. Establishing a record of debilitating long COVID symptoms over time will be the best evidence to support a disability claim, so share your symptom history with your doctor so he or she can document your symptoms in your medical records.



The pandemic has caused big delays for people waiting on disability application decisions. If you are planning to file for disability benefits for any impairment (including long COVID-19) that is preventing you from being able to sustain employment, our advice is to apply as early as you can. If you want a free evaluation of your disability case, call or email us at Cuddigan Law



### Comfort Food

From the kitchen of Janet Cuddigan

#### Zesty Green Bean Casserole

Your family is sure to enjoy this spicy variation on a Thanksgiving favorite.

- 2 cups chopped fresh green beans
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 1/8 teaspoon hot pepper sauce
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 (5 ounce) can sliced water chestnuts,
- 12 ounces shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 can French-fried onion rings

Steam beans over a pot of boiling water until tender but still firm. Rinse under cold water to cool. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In a large skillet over medium heat, melt butter and sauté onions. Add salt, soy sauce, hot pepper sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and mushroom soup; mix well. In a small casserole dish, layer half the beans, drained chestnuts, cheese, and soup mixture. Repeat layer. Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for about 30 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Top with onions and heat 10 minutes longer.

Adapted from allrecipes.com

### VA Pledges Better Response to Sexual Assault Victims



More Veterans who submit compensation claims based on sexual assaults during their military service are receiving benefits, the Department of Veteran Affairs says. Grant rates for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) related to sexual trauma have increased by about 22% since 2015. This year, the grant rate for conditions related to military sexual trauma (MST) is at 72%.

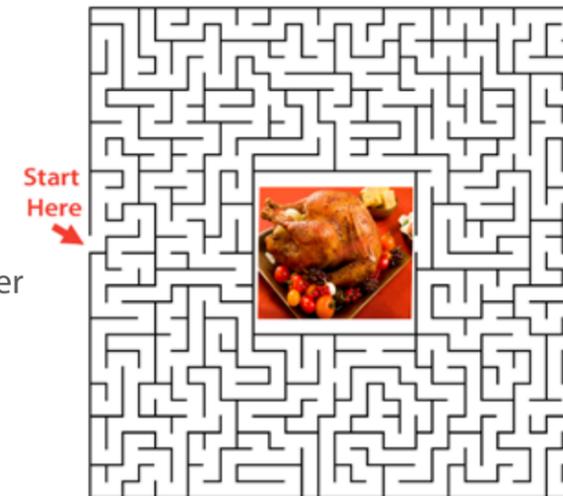
Processing claims for PTSD related to sexual trauma is particularly challenging because many sexual assaults are not reported when they happen. Additionally, because of the personal and sensitive nature of the MST stressors it is often difficult for the veteran to report or document the event when it occurs. As a result, evidence is often unavailable.

With support for change coming from the Pentagon the VA is making a more concerted effort to compensate veterans for incidents of MST. “We’re treating military sexual trauma claims with a special emphasis,” said acting Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy. “We are allowing only experienced, highly trained Veteran Service Representatives and Rating Veterans Service Representatives to process these claims, then we are giving them enhanced training and performing special focused quality reviews.”



### Thanksgiving Dinner Maze

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