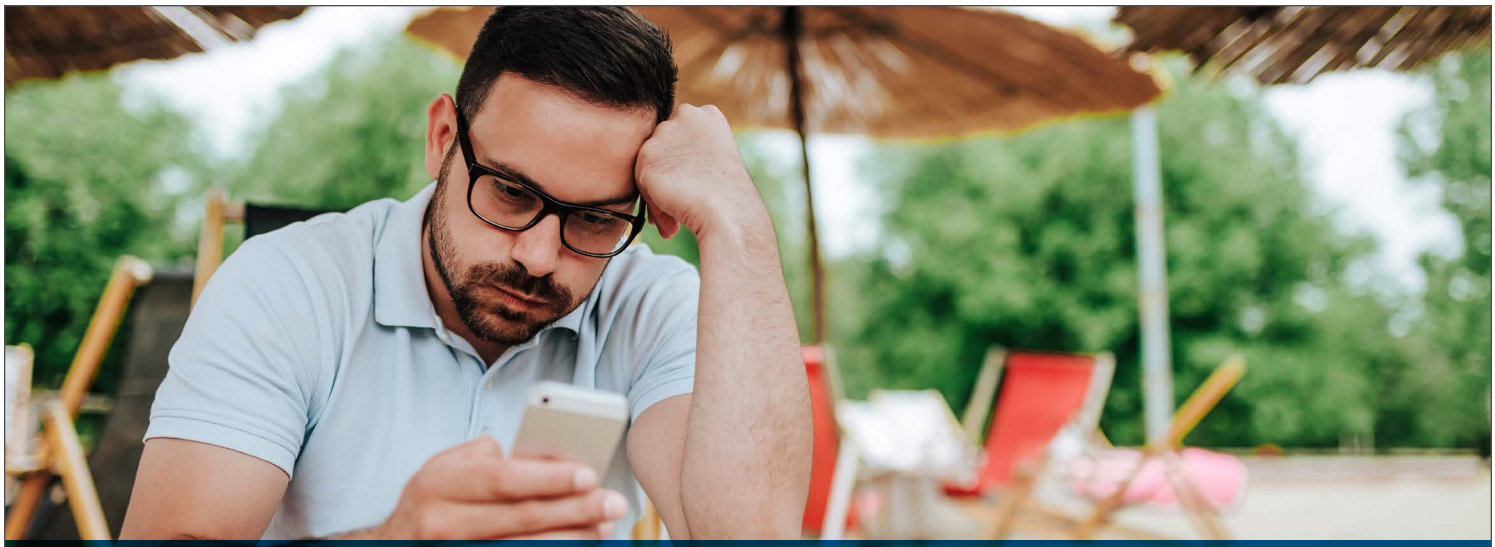

Someone needs some real R&R

5 tips for stress-free time off

From personal days to vacation, stress-free time off is vital for R&R. Planning ahead can help ensure that you make the most of it, without leaving anything on the table. To get the time off you need, and keep it stress-free, follow these five helpful tips:

1. **Understand your time off.** Knowing what you have, and how much, is the first step to maximize your time away. Review information in your organization's handbook, contact your HR representative, or follow your school calendar to learn what's available to you.
2. **Plan your year.** Consider the following categories:
   - **Emergencies:** Start by choosing an amount of time that will cover personal sickness, family emergencies, and any other situation that may arise.
   - **Appointments:** Think about annual health exams, personal-care, and appointments for children and family. You should be able to book these far in advance.
   - **Observed holidays:** Pairing time off with an observed holiday can stretch your vacation days even further.
   - **Vacation:** After mapping out time off for the items above, designate what's left to real R&R! Just be sure to confirm if your vacation time rolls over, or if you lose it.
3. **Block your calendar and book your activities.** Set deadlines for appointments, vacations, or other activities. It will keep you organized, and help your plans run smoothly.
4. **Prepare to unplug.** Simply let your team know when you will be unavailable, ask someone to be your contact person, and set your phone and email messages to say when you will respond.
5. **Let go of guilt.** Relax your mind, lower your stress, and give yourself a chance to recharge. You deserve it!

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