

[IMAGE]

Working Through Sickness: A Health & Wellness Disaster

By Editorial Staff

If your sick days keep adding up – not the ones you're taking to rest and get better, but the ones you keep hoarding while you continue to come to work every day, even when you're under the weather – you're not alone. In fact, far from it. An estimated 90 percent of Americans attend work sick for various reasons, including having too much work on their plates, feeling pressure from their employer to show up, and sometimes, not having enough sick days to take in the first place. Findings come from [a survey](#) of nearly 3,000 U.S. workers.

Now here's why our quest to "work through sickness" goes wrong. First, when you're sick, your body is telling you it needs to rest, take a break, recover. Fighting through it with another long day in the office won't help, and will probably make things worse. Second, if you bring your cold, cough, runny nose, etc., to work with you, one or more of your co-workers may leave the office having inherited the same symptoms – from you. In fact, a study published in *Economics & Human Biology* suggests a 1 percent increase in employment equates to a nearly 20 percent uptick in flu-related doctor visits.

There's also the "burnout factor" that links work with sickness, and working through sickness with even more sickness. We all need a break from the daily grind, and that grind is often our work routine. Sick days, vacation days, accrued time off – whatever your employer calls it, you need to take it occasionally for your health, wellness and sanity. That's particularly true when you're sick, of course, but it's also important to get away from work when you're not sick - or eventually, you'll likely become sick because of stress, reduced immunity, and sheer odds. After all, if you're not taking care of yourself, chances are some of your co-workers aren't taking care of themselves, either. That's a lose-lose for everyone's health and wellness.

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