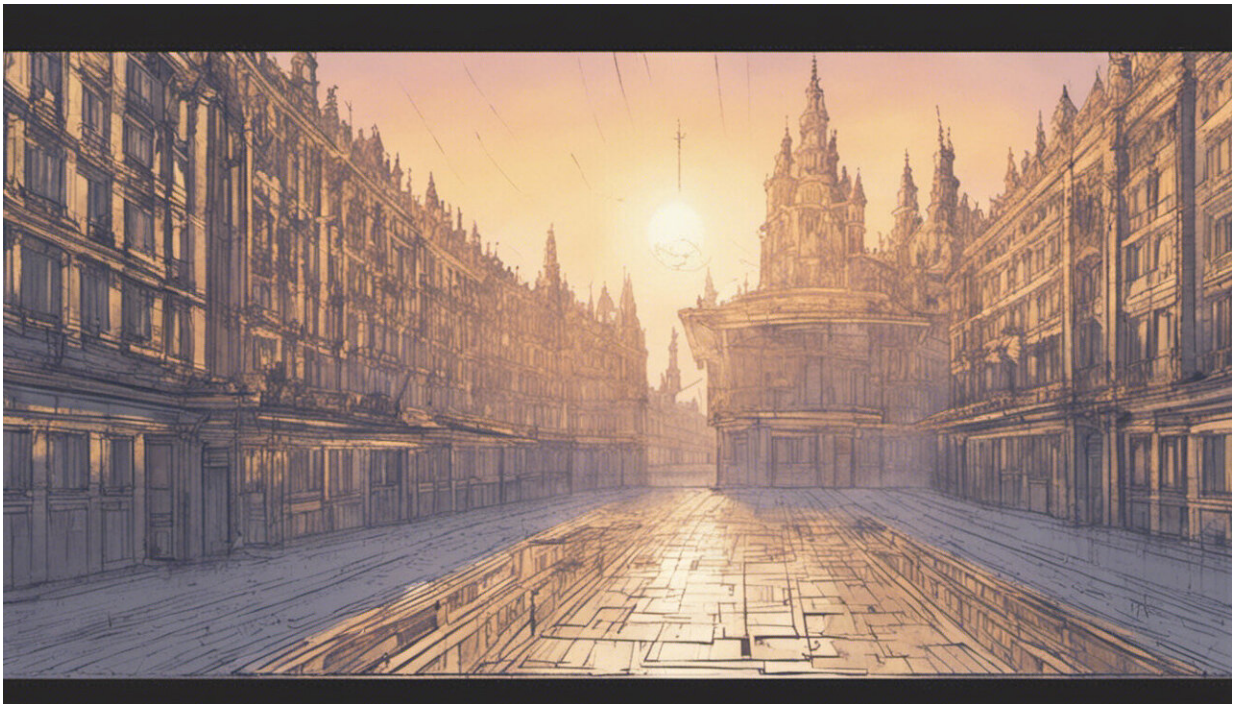# Do you take all your annual holiday leave? You'll likely live longer if you do

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

Did you skip your summer holiday, or didn't take enough time off during the festive season? You might want to rethink your plans for the rest of the year and 2019. Getting away from work and other commitments could be the key to a longer life.

A study that began in the 1970s to determine the benefits of going on [holiday](#) has found that at least 3 weeks of annual leave will likely help you live longer. The researchers highlighted a [healthy diet](#) and regular exercise were still no substitute for time off when it came to relieving stress. They found that patients who took fewer than 3 weeks of holiday a year were a third more likely to die young than those who took more.

The findings were recently presented at the European Society of Cardiology Congress in Munich, the world's largest and most influential cardiovascular event contributing to global awareness of the latest clinical trials and breakthrough discoveries. They will soon be published in the *Journal of Nutrition, Health & Aging*.

Don't cut your holidays short—your health may depend on it

"If you know someone who doesn't take vacations and works long hours, he or she may be at risk of cardiovascular disease," Dr. Timo Strandberg, study co-author and professor at the University of Helsinki's Department of Medicine, told 'Newsweek'. "Shorter vacations and longer working hours are associated with harmful health effects, even mortality. Cause and effect cannot be established, however, and controlled trials are difficult to perform."

Over the course of 40 years, the research team assessed the health data of 1,222 middle-aged male executives who were born between 1919 and 1934. Every study participant had at least one risk factor for [cardiovascular disease](#), such as smoking, obesity, [high blood pressure](#) or cholesterol.

The men were almost equally divided into a control group and an [intervention](#) group. Those in the intervention group were instructed to

take part in physical activity, follow a healthy diet, achieve a healthy weight and stop smoking. The control group wasn't given any directions or guidelines at all. The researchers gathered data on the two groups' work, sleep and holiday time.

In the intervention group, those who took shorter holidays had a higher risk of death. Men who took 3 weeks or fewer of leave yearly were 37 % more likely to die earlier than those who took more than 3 weeks off of work. In the control group, holiday time wasn't linked to early deaths.

Speaking to the UK's *Daily Mail*, Dr. Strandberg said: "The harm caused by the intensive lifestyle regime was concentrated in a subgroup of men with shorter yearly [vacation](#) time. … In our study, men with shorter vacations worked more and slept less than those who took longer vacations." He added: "This stressful lifestyle may have overruled any benefit of the intervention. We think the intervention itself may also have had an adverse psychological effect on these men by adding stress to their lives."

Isn't it time to put in that request for a few days or weeks off?

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