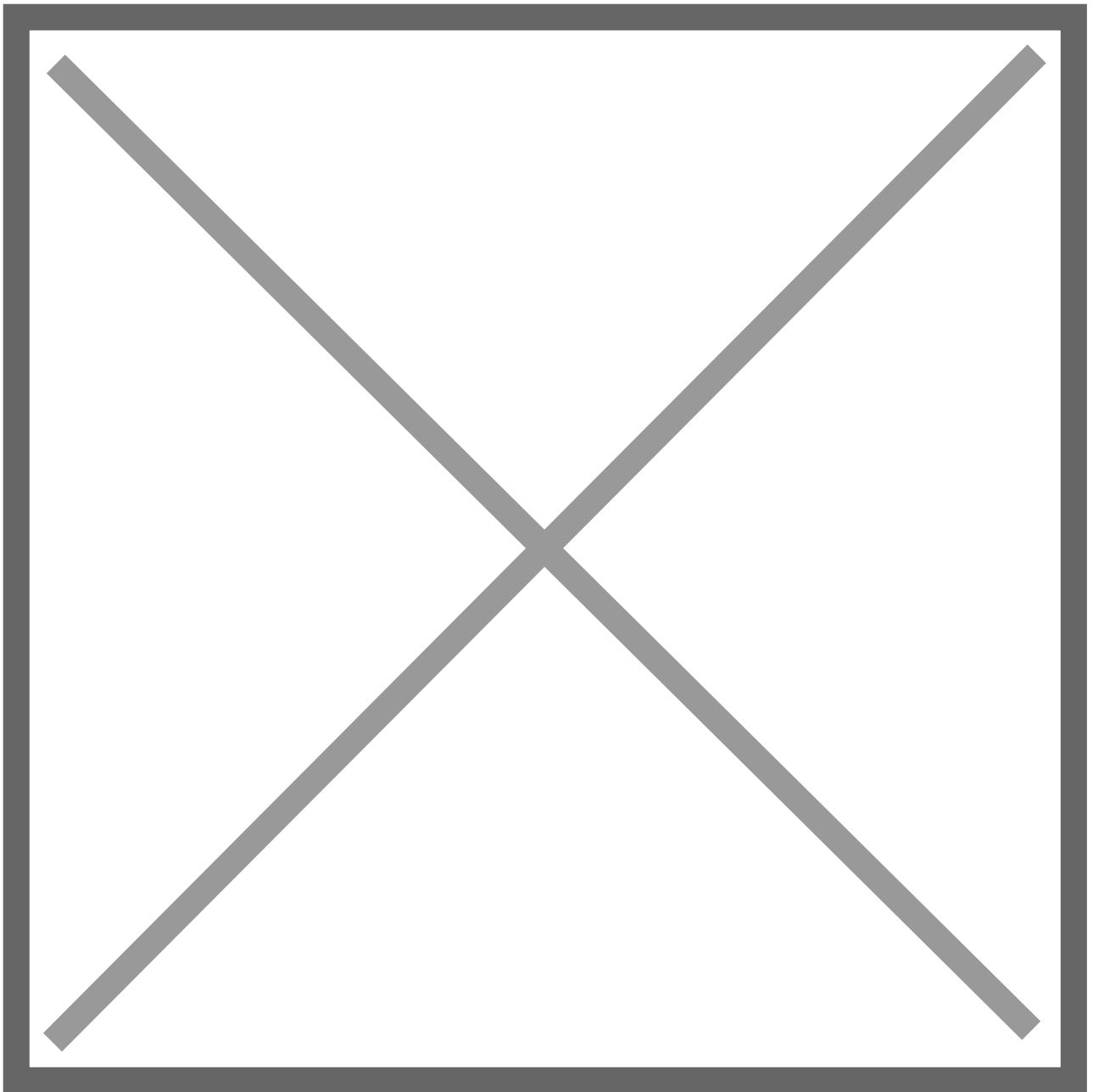


3 Realistic Vacations for Families of Busy Attorneys





A recent survey by global recruiting firm Robert Walters lists attorneys as *the hardest working professional*. The implication is clear isn't it? Attorneys work a little *too* hard.

You know it.

So does every other attorney in the industry. So does every other attorney in the industry. You protect your clients. From abuses in power, unfair agreements and neglected promises. You hold people and organizations accountable.

It's a busy and often thankless job.

Why busy attorneys need vacations

Attorneys routinely work 50 to 80 hours per week.

Business Insider shared the [story](#) of a corporate attorney whose day *starts at 7am but ends at... 3:45am*.

It's sobering.

The effect on the health and well-being of attorneys is disastrous. Researchers share alarming [statistics](#) on the effect overwork has on their [mental](#) and [physical](#) health.

A Johns Hopkins University [study](#) found attorneys are 3.6 times more likely to experience depression than other professions. When they don't have time to recharge the consequences [bleed into their performance](#) at work. The constant stress leads to [cognitive decline](#).

Research shows your [mortality is linked](#) to your vacation time.

It's not like this information is new to attorneys. You've probably heard it all before. So why do attorneys work so hard?

A vacation isn't always doable for attorneys

Attorneys are often caught between two terrible options. Work long, hard hours or lose your job.

- **Solo attorneys** work *constantly* to keep their bills and employees paid. For the first few years it's a fight to keep the doors open and the lights on.
- **BigLaw associates** run themselves into the ground to meet their quota. If they fail to meet their billable targets they know they'll be fired.
- **Boutique attorneys are fixers.** Their clients come to them for help when there's a looming deadline, significant threat or crisis to handle. These clients are desperate for a resolution to their problems.

These are legitimate reasons to work hard but you still need a vacation.

What's the solution?

Introducing the alternative, and more realistic vacations

Let's face it.

You won't be able to take an extended vacation whenever you want. But that's no reason to sacrifice your family relationships.

You have options.

Option #1: The staycation

The staycation is the best of both worlds. You get the one-on-one time you and your family crave. But you're also available if your firm needs you.

You take a day trip and you participate in leisure activities that are close to home and don't require overnight accommodations. A few good examples of staycation activities could be:

- Trips to water and amusement parks
- Skydiving, rock climbing, skiing, snowboarding and other outdoor sports
- Sports games (e.g. baseball, basketball, hockey, etc.)
- Concerts, conventions and gaming events
- Mini food and restaurant tours, dinner parties and informal get-togethers

A staycation keeps you close to home. Use it when your family knows/expects that you may be called away unexpectedly.

Option #2: The semi-vacation

You need downtime.

Your family and friends need some one-on-one time. But things are up in the air at work. You're not dealing with a major crisis at the moment but your situation may change quickly.

Use the semi-vacation.

Here's how it works. You negotiate a set amount of time with your firm. You divide your vacation time by creating hours of availability each day. You break your vacation time up into manageable pieces.

Day 1: You're available from 8am to noon. You're off for the rest of the day.

Day 2: You're off.

Day 3: You're available from 7am to 11am. You're off for the rest of the day.

This enables you to carve out some much needed family time in the midst of a low-level crisis or moderate workload.

Your firm needs to be open to it. If you own your business and you're able to take some time off problem solved. If you're working for a firm, you may need to frame your request properly.

Jan,

I wanted to discuss my vacation time with you. I'd like to go on vacation from May 1st - 15th. It's a slow period for us but things may ramp up later. I'd like to try vacationing on a part-time basis.

I could work 7 days out of my vacation for four hours each day.

Can we make this work?

This works well *if your firm is open to your terms* and it's a great way to comprise. You and your family get the time together you need, the firm is prepared in the event of a surge in client work.

Option #3: Extended vacation with ROWE

In a Results Only Work Environment (ROWE) employees are paid for results (output) rather than the number of hours worked.

It's perfect for solo/small law firms

Most attorneys are salaried employees. If hitting billable hours is the goal, it's something you can do when you're away from the office. Repetitive or routine tasks can be handled remotely. Need to appear in court? Pop in when you need to, then leave.

This gives you the ability to carve out a significant amount of family time.

It also means extended/unlimited vacations are possible. This works well for firms that are focused on billable hours as a goal. But it's *excellent* for firms that rely on

alternative fee arrangements (AFAs).

What if you're still part of BigLaw?

Ask about remote work. BigLaw is finally beginning to [embrace the remote](#) and flexjob trend. Get a list of the do's and don'ts. Meet your billable targets each week, then delegate, automate or outsource your non-billable work as much as possible.

Remote work + less non-billable work = **more free time**

Your vacation time - it's tied to your mortality

You work hard.

Overwork has a disastrous effect on your mental and physical health. It leads to an inevitable decline in your cognitive abilities.

Overwork = *defeat*.

You and your family need vacations, but our ideal scenario isn't always realistic. Alternative vacations give you the creative solutions you need to carve out more family time, even if you're busy.

