

## **SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?**

### **Comparing leisure behaviors, thoughts and feelings during holiday travel and at home**

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#### **Abstract**

The tourism industry thrives on the notion that holiday travel improves subjective wellbeing. However, scientific evidence that holiday travel is more beneficial than spending free time at home is lacking. This study investigates whether workers actually behave, think and feel differently during travel than during leisure time spent at home. We followed 24 workers during free evenings after work, a free weekend at home and a free weekend of domestic travel. Within-person differences were investigated between these three occasions in behavior (sleep time, time engaging in physical, social, passive, household, work-related activities), cognition (rumination, mental fatigue) and emotions (pleasure, wellbeing). During travel, employees slept more, engaged more in physical and social activities and less in obligatory activities than during free evenings after work. Wellbeing was higher and ruminative thinking lower during travel than during free evenings after work. Differences between holiday travel and free weekends at home were small. These results show that employees behave differently, ruminate less and feel better during traveling than during evenings after work at home. Physical distance from home and work is related to engagement in resource-providing rather than resource-consuming activities and seems to translate into mental distance from everyday worries.

**Keywords:** wellbeing, health, recovery, stress, environmental sustainability