Vacations: Breathers or stressors?

Vacations are supposed to be a break from everyday routines and tensions. But they can also create stress if you have thoughts like these:

1. "This is my only vacation this year so it has to be perfect."
2. "If anything goes wrong, I'll be miserable."
3. "I'm going to plan every minute so I don't miss a thing."

Just say "no" to pressure cooker vacations

The attitudes expressed above can lead to stress and upset during precious vacation time. Try these tips to help make your time-off better:

- **Take more than one each year.** Studies show that people who take a few short breaks — rather than one big vacation — enjoy more relaxation.[1]

- **Have realistic expectations.** It's your vacation but that doesn't mean it won't rain or you won't catch cold or have a headache. Don't expect perfection. Be adaptable.

- **See opportunities.** You planned to go river rafting but the water level is too low. How about Plan B? Consult the local visitors' bureau or go online to find another activity. Or take the day to "chill." Remember: You don't need to fill every minute.

- **Go with the flow.** Take time to appreciate your surroundings and unwind. It is, after all, your vacation. You can do whatever you choose. That alone makes it special.

Everyone needs a breather from time to time. Make yours count by taking the pressure off, relaxing and coming back rejuvenated!

[1]Nauert, Rick. More frequent, not long, vacations best for stress relief. Accessed May 2017.

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