

# Why is working 4 days a week harmful to health?

Working 4 days / week for the rest of the time to participate in leisure and care activities for the family. So why do researchers think this work schedule will be harmful to health?

Many people think that a week should only work 4 days. Suppose there is a **4-day / week work** plan, allowing workers to have more time to participate in leisure and care activities for the family. Thinking that I will have plenty of time to relax and rest on the beaches, many people want to encourage businesses to apply this kind of work plan.

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Science proves that: Working 4 days a week will be harmful to health. Photo source: haveeseen / Shutterstock.com Some experts believe that the **4-day / week** work schedule facilitates staff to have time to take care of children and support the elderly.

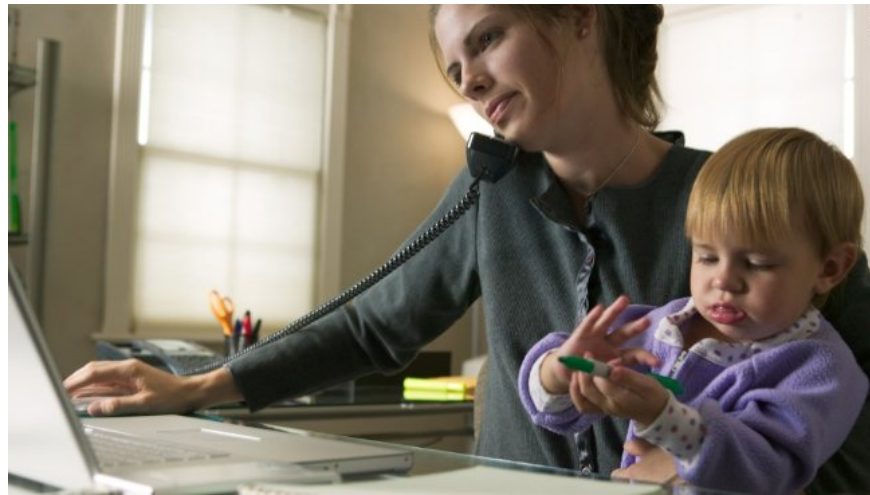
Proposals such as " *compressed* " schedules - workers will have to work longer hours in a day if they want to work fewer days a week - must achieve the production results. The result is a reduction in extra costs like not having to turn on the light when no one is working. In addition, saving the extra costs from reducing your total weekly travel time.

Many businesses have tested the 4-day / week work schedule including Amazon, Google, Deloitte and a variety of smaller companies. At the end of August, Amazon announced that they were experimenting with shorter working hours - 30 hours a week for self-selected employees, meaning they would receive only 75% of their wages. time.

Many pilot programs show promising results. According to the Human Resource Management Association, in 2015 only 31% of employees wanted to work on the " *compressed* " work week schedule, of which only 5% were employees of large companies.

The author of the study investigated the effects of carrying out the 4-day-week work schedule, saying: " *This is a big problem. I have studied the health effects of working around the time. All studies show clearly the potential risks that may occur, as well as the results of other risks caused when working requirements exceed a specific threshold. The studies I have done show that the danger is most pronounced when people work more than 12 hours a day or more than 60 hours a week .*

## Is that a good idea?



The idea of working 4 days a week is not a new idea. Labor experts have studied and endorsed this approach since the 1970s. For example, in 2008, researchers from **Brigham Young University** conducted a series of surveys on the viewpoint of assessment. of workers and community members about work schedule 4 days / week. Results showed that about 80% of employees support the implementation of this schedule.

Based on that positive result, the governor of **Utah** forced all state employees to work on schedule 4 days / week. State goals want to reduce energy costs, improve air quality, ensure that necessary services are available ( *eg waste collection* ), support recruitment and retention of state employees . However, in 2011 Utah changed and said: " *Never save materialize again .* "

Other research also developed and applied " *compressed* " work schedules. A 1989 study found that the " *compression* " schedule is directly related to the level of job satisfaction and employee satisfaction with their work schedules, and supervisors also report that The members are satisfied with the schedule of 4 days / week.

## Are there potential dangers?



Although there are many people who agree with the 4-day / week schedule, I don't think this schedule will bring benefits to employees or businesses. The basic problem of this idea is that any job needs to be done immediately, need to be completed in the same time period. Although there are many other wishes, we only have 24 hours a day.

A simple operation: 5 8-hour shifts equivalent to 4 10-hour shifts. That is true but the purpose of each work schedule is different. The danger is often overlooked, the health effects can occur as fatigue and stress accumulate more than a normal working day.

I did a study that showed: "*The risk of industrial accidents increases by 37% when workers have to work more than 12 hours a day and increase 61% for those who work" overtime "*. Working more than 60 hours a week can increase the risk of injury by 23%, so the number of hours worked during the increased schedule increases the risk of health . "

Recently, Dr. **Xiaoxi Yao** - a colleague of mine - who is currently located at Mayo General Hospital. I conducted another study about 32 years of work - information about hours to analyze the relationship between long-term working years and the risk of diagnosing a chronic disease in later life. this. Research shows that the risks increase significantly, especially in women.

Women often work more than 60 hours per week, equivalent to 12 hours a day, 3 times more likely to develop heart disease, cancer, arthritis and diabetes and lung cancer or asthma 2 times compared to women working 40 hours / week. Working a little more about 41 to 50 hours a week for many years may appear to be at risk for longer.

Studies show that not all working hours are the same. Research indicates that harm can occur at a given time. Working 4 days a week makes workers feel more tightly squeezed than usual. For workers who often work too hard, the burden of "*compressing work* " from 5 days to 4 days makes workers feel tired and exhausted.

**Is this tension worth it?**



In addition to health issues, employers and employees need to consider the 4-day "compression" effects based on the mental health, stress and fatigue of workers. dynamic.

Occupational psychologists realize that people will work ineffectively when they feel tired or stressed. In particular, more attention is needed for older people.

What's more, just "compressing" 5 10-hour workdays on a 40-hour work schedule can cause rigidity and time constraints for families and children. For example, if every day increases by 2 hours compared to the normal schedule - starting at 8-9 am and lasts until 4-5 pm, many overtime parents will lose their ability to interact with children because the "golden hour" of children is from 5pm to 7pm. Children hardly have much time at home and can only chat with siblings and parents before bedtime.

There are many ways to deal with everyday concerns and make life easier for workers and their families. Do not work too much. Don't stay at work for too long. Find a job with flexible working time.

Imagine having to work 4 days a week to scare me. I used to have a very difficult time working on a 5-day-a-week schedule. I always had to sit in front of a computer screen, staring at the email and taking notes.

So why not agree on a fixed schedule? You can take breaks every Friday for example. Or end the working week at noon on Friday like Jews to enjoy the weekend in the usual way? If necessary, each day may increase an extra hour of regular work schedule, Monday through Friday.

**Lonnie Golden** - a professor at Pennsylvania State University - Abington supports the application of the "Goldilocks" work week: it is not too long, nor too short but meets the labor use benefits in production and benefits. of workers in maintaining good and healthy health.

**Allard Dembe** , Professor of Public Health at Ohio State University

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