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Time to take off

It's time for executives to start planning the next round of holidays, **Cara Jenkin reports**



MANAGERS need to lock themselves and their staff into holiday leave for the year ahead to take care of business.

Leadership development organisation The Executive Connection says taking a break can be the best thing hardworking Australians can do to set themselves up for success.

A Galaxy poll commissioned by CareerOne last August found 88 per cent of workers had put in more than their standard hours in the first six months of the year, with the likelihood of doing overtime increasing the more workers are paid.

TEC chairman Jerry Kleeman says working too hard for too long can have serious negative impacts on mental

and physical health. "It's common to become irritable, fatigued, stressed and depressed after a long period of responding to high-pressure situations

and physical health. "It's common to become irritable, fatigued, stressed and depressed after a long period of responding to high-pressure situations like the multitude of decisions that need to be made in a workday," he says.

"All managers should encourage their employees to take time off ... and they should certainly heed their own advice.

"A great way to do it is to

get together at the beginning of the year and schedule in each other's diaries when you plan to take a holiday, so your colleagues and manager can hold you accountable.

"Their support and commitment in the endeavour can help you get excited and finish work feeling comfortable and positive, rather than dreading your return."

Having a schedule also can help workers plan for when

their colleagues will be absent, when workplace productivity may be reduced as well as when the workforce is able to work at capacity.

Kleeman says a break can help workers maintain overall health, reducing the number of sick days when staff are forced to stay away from the office at short notice and leave their projects or teams in limbo.

"Some of the most creative ideas come when you stop thinking about them," he says.

"It's the way us humans are wired. We need the opportunity to switch off, to come back firing on all cylinders."

This means better time efficiency and productivity, as performance levels and alertness are increased among the staff.