

Four Days On, Three Days Off: The Future Canadian Workforce

Can you ever imagine the world with a three-day weekend? It might slow your work, but on the contrary, what if the world actually works better since people are “fully-charged”? Guaranteeing a three-day weekend by law for Canadian workers could increase productivity, leading to improved mental and physical health and more leisure time. First, I will inform you what the issues are right now with a two-day weekend law. Next, I will talk about how a three-day weekend will change Canadian workers’ quality of life such as more leisure time, physical and mental health, and increased productivity. Finally, we will discuss what we can do to advocate for and implement a three-day weekend law for Canadian workers.

First, let’s look at some current issues with a two-day weekend law. Currently, more than two-thirds of workers in Canada report symptoms of burnout and stress. As revealed in the 2021 American Psychological Association (APA) survey, 79% of workers reported work-related stress that might further lead to serious health complications like heart diseases, mental issues, and the inability to conceive. Burnout doesn’t just hurt workers; it hurts businesses, too. According to the University of California, fatigue reduces productivity, engagement, and even creativity. Burned-out employees miss an average of 31.4 workdays per year, which costs businesses billions in lost productivity. Stress impairs focus, decision-making, and problem-solving, leading to costly errors and lower efficiency. Beyond work, many Canadians have little personal time. A 2018 research found 60% of adults felt overwhelmed by their schedule—a trend that continued in 2023. Without time to recharge, people experience higher stress, declining mental health, and a lower quality of life. If ignored, this cycle could lead to full burnout and reduced functionality throughout daily life. Next, I will talk about how a three-day weekend will change Canadian workers’ lives such as allowing more leisure time, physical and mental health, and increased productivity. A three-day weekend gives workers more control over their time, allowing them to rest, spend time with family, and pursue hobbies. It has also been established that a shortened work week leads to reduced stress, increased job satisfaction, and enhanced well-being. Did you know that Andrew Barnes, CEO of Perpetual Guardian announced four day work weeks for his workers? The results were: higher productivity, better work-life balance, and happier employees. In fact, Henley Business School found that 78% of workers felt less stressed and more motivated after going on a four-day work pattern. Besides better leisure, a three-day weekend has some important benefits for physical and mental health: A trial in Valencia, Spain, showed that workers with extra time off developed healthier habits and reported lower stress. When employees have time to exercise, rest, and recharge, they also perform better on the job and take fewer sick days. Improved well-being leads to higher-quality work. A three-day weekend would ensure that productivity is forthcoming because well-rested employees seldom make mistakes or get distracted while working. Most studies indicate shorter workweeks, which boost innovation and strengthen an economy by reducing costs besides improving workplace efficiencies.

Iceland and Sweden have proved that shorter workweeks make workers happier, healthier, and more productive. A three-day weekend reduces stress, firms up health, and firms up family relationships. In 2021, 70% of workers in one survey said a shorter workweek would reduce stress and cut sick days, a win-win for employees and companies alike. It is not just about an extra day off; it is about fairness, sustainability, and a better quality of life. More than 80% of workers want a four-day workweek, but outdated policies hold progress back. We now know this two-day weekend

is outdated and leads to worn out workers. It is a three-day weekend that people need to create better health for themselves, better families, and a productive economy. It's time to stir the conversation that leads to new policies that say, "The future of work isn't about working more; it's about living better.".