

Sunday lost to workday blues

By Joseph Barratt
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Many of us don't enjoy our one day t
we're worried about our jobs. Photo /

If you're feeling a bit down today, you're not alone - more people are suffering Sunday blues as they think about going back to work. Kiwi experts have backed UK research showing 26 per cent of workers have their weekends ruined by the thought of Monday mornings.

Teresa Ash, from **Signature Psychologies** in Auckland, said people didn't have enough time to recharge their batteries and low moods were particularly common on Sunday afternoons and evenings. "On Saturday you are doing your chores and tasks so you only have Sunday to relax, but instead you spend half the day thinking about going back into work the next day." "Our balance is out, we need simpler lives."

The UK research, by mental health charity **Mind**, revealed work had a negative affect on sleep patterns and caused high rates of illness and low morale. **Waikato University** expert in organisational psychology **Professor Michael O'Driscoll** was not surprised by the findings. "Workplace demands are increasing. Increased competition between companies filters down to individuals." **David Lowe**, of the **Employers and Manufacturers Association**, said some businesses noticed increased absenteeism on Mondays and Fridays. But he urged people to be upfront with their boss - rather than fake illness. "Bosses deal with it according to the situation. If they say to their boss, 'I just couldn't face coming in today,' the company works out where to go from there. "If someone is saying they are unwell and have a stomach bug on a consistent string of Mondays it will be noticed."

Matthew Beattie, chief executive of workplace behavioural healthcare company **Instep**, urged bosses to think more about staff wellbeing. He said bringing a new employee up to the standard of someone who had moved on after being burnt out could take a year and cost three to five times the former worker's salary. "It makes sense to take care of them to make sure they don't leave in the first place." Beattie said his company had less referrals after the summer holiday period when most people had plenty of time off.

Weekend worrier

Combining a full-time job in marketing with study in the evenings doesn't leave Johan Westhuizn a great deal of spare time. The Auckland resident, who travels around New Zealand and overseas with his job, says his work-life balance can get one-sided. "I feel the Sunday blues sometimes, weekends just go so quickly," he said. "I try to keep busy with sports during the day and church in the evening. It helps keep your mind going." He says reading a book on Sundays is great to keep your mind off work but admits "another day off would be great".