

Here's What Happened When Thousands of Workers Tried a Four-Day Workweek in the Biggest Trial Yet

The largest trial ever conducted of a four-day workweek found that the schedule had a positive and noticeable impact on employee well-being.

The global study was published on Monday in the journal *Nature Human Behaviour* and led by Boston College researchers Wen Fan and Juliet Schor. The researchers found that four-day workweeks, where employees work 32 hours a week instead of the traditional 40 hours with no reduction in pay, markedly improved employee health. Workers reported feeling happier, healthier, and higher-performing.

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For example, nearly 70% of employees reported less burnout, over 40% said their mental health improved, and 38% experienced better sleep.

"Beyond maintaining productivity, people just feel so much better," Schor told *CNBC* about the study findings on Thursday. "They feel on top of their work and their life, and they're not stressed out."

The researchers followed 2,896 employees on a four-day workweek for six months, spanning 141 companies in the U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand. A control

group of 300 employees on a standard five-day workweek was used to compare.

Two weeks before the four-day workweek began, employees were asked questions like, “How would you rate your mental health?” and then they were asked again after six months on a four-day workweek schedule. The control group was asked the same questions in the same timeframe, but without starting a shorter workweek.

Fan, an associate professor of sociology at Boston College, was initially worried that worker well-being would “worsen” because employees would feel pressure to be more productive on a schedule with a reduced number of days. But the findings showed that worker stress levels fell. After six months, employees working four days a week instead of five reported an improved ability to complete their work and decreased fatigue. The control group, meanwhile, did not report any significant changes.

“The results indicate that income-preserving four-day workweeks are an effective organizational intervention for enhancing workers’ well-being,” the researchers wrote in the study.

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Companies are opting to stick to the four-day workweek once they try it. The researchers stated that over 90% of the companies in the experiment kept the four-day work week after the six-month trial period.

Schor wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* last month that on the employer side, organizations that piloted a four-day workweek found it noticeably improved their bottom line, with revenue increasing and resignations decreasing.

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Over 245 global businesses and nonprofit organizations have trialed a four-day workweek over the past three years, reaching 8,700 employees around the world, Schor noted.

One major company that utilizes a four-day workweek is crowdfunding platform Kickstarter, which started its shortened workweek as a pilot program in 2021. Kickstarter CEO Everette Taylor told investor Kevin O'Leary last year that employees are "very productive" within the four-day week structure.

"I love the fact that the people at our company have [other] interests," Taylor said.

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