

# Attorney Health & Wellness: Why Lawyers Should Take A Wellness Retreat

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If you work as hard as most attorneys, you've probably never heard of a wellness retreat, let alone gone on one. Well, after reading this post, you will know exactly what a wellness retreat is and why you absolutely need one.

As notorious workaholics, attorneys spend their days, and even nights, working to help others with their legal needs. Down time often gets overlooked in favor of more billable hours. But ignoring your physical and mental wellness can lead to illness, chronic depression, and career dissatisfaction.

Depression is a major problem within the legal industry, with lawyers ranking as the most frequently depressed occupational group in the United States. Attorneys are three times more likely to suffer from depression than non-lawyers and the profession ranks fifth in incidents of suicide by occupations. These statistics are disturbing, but they demonstrate the importance of lawyers unplugging for their own wellness.

## What is a Wellness Retreat?

The point of a wellness retreat is to escape from the stresses and responsibilities of day-to-day life, letting the mind and body quiet down and rejuvenate. It's a much-needed break from reality to slow down and relax.

There are numerous types of wellness retreats to choose from, and they each offer their own set of activities, including:

- Yoga
- Meditation
- Detox
- Spiritual-based
- Self-discovery techniques
- Company retreats
- Couple's retreats

However, along with the activities offered, wellness retreats purposely integrate free time. Particularly within the practice of law, time equates to money, so lawyers often use available free time to “finish this one last thing” or “squeeze out one more billable hour.” Even when not working, we live in a society where social media often usurps our free time, leaving little opportunity to truly connect with ourselves.

Recognizing the importance of decompressing, wellness retreats value free time and builds it into the schedule so attendees have an opportunity to decompress and reflect on lessons learned during the retreat.

## **Wellness Retreat vs. Vacation**

You may be wondering how a wellness retreat differs from your typical vacation. There is a difference though. Let's say you spend a week lounging on the beach, or you take a trip filled with amazing sightseeing tours. Did you feel recharged and refreshed when you returned to everyday life, or did you feel more tired than when you left and in need of another week off?

The purpose of a wellness retreat is to leave you feeling rejuvenated, recharged, and even improved by the experiences and lessons learned. It is designed to engage you in activities that release stress and address repressed feelings that may be negatively affecting you in your daily life.

## **Why Attorneys Need a Wellness Retreat**

If you find to agree with any of these phrases, you are probably past due for a wellness retreat:

- I feel tired all the time.
- Work stresses me out.
- I no longer enjoy my career.
- I feel trapped in my life.
- I need to get in shape and develop healthier habits.
- I just experienced major trauma in my life.

The stress that comes with the practice of law can be debilitating if not properly treated. Add in the other challenges of life, and you have the perfect recipe for depression. It's no surprise that attorneys deal with extensive stress within their lives, but let's look at some of the reasons these feelings persist within the legal profession.

- The practice of law is steeped in negativity. Clients generally come to attorneys for help with a negative situation. In handling these situations, lawyers must constantly consider the negative possibilities in order to prevent them from occurring. While this level of pessimism may be positive in the practice of law, it can be unhealthy for an attorney's personal well-being.
- Attorneys must answer to a lot of people. From law firm leaders to clients and the court, they are routinely expected to meet other's expectations. When faced with this level of responsibility, some lawyers feel as though they have the weight of the world on their shoulders, which can negatively affect mental wellness.
- The adversarial nature of legal practice can also lead to mental and emotional challenges. It's a profession that involves constant conflict, with opposing sides pitted against one another. While some attorneys thrive in this type of environment, others find these conflicts difficult to continuously handle on a daily basis.
- Every attorney must deal with a loss at one time or another. If these defeats are not handled in a healthy manner, they can make lawyers feel personally deficient or incapable. With a lack of wellness, a single loss can have lasting effects.

It's especially important for law firm leaders to consider the value of wellness retreats. When you refuse to take time away from the office, you

may craft a law firm culture where firm members feel uncomfortable taking needed time off. Attorney wellness benefits the entire firm, resulting in higher productivity, improved morale, and greater retention.

## **Book a Wellness Retreat Now**

Taking time to focus on your own wellbeing is one of the best things you can do for yourself. A wellness retreat can be a great vehicle for reenergizing, with benefits such as:

- More energy
- New insight into your purpose in life
- Release of mental and emotional blockages
- A needed break from the bad habits of everyday life
- Reconnection with your inner feelings
- Jumpstart of habits that promote physical health

Now, I am not guaranteeing that a wellness retreat visit will eliminate the stress from your life, but it can put you in touch with your inner self, so you go back to your legal clients with a healthier mindset and a recharged perspective.

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### **About Erika Winston:**

*Erika Winston is a freelance writer with a passion for law. Through her business, Personal Touch Edits, she helps legal professionals deliver effective written messages. Erika is a regular contributor to [TimeSolv](#) and a variety of other publications.*