



The 4 day week: 12 months on

with new US and Canadian research

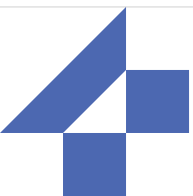
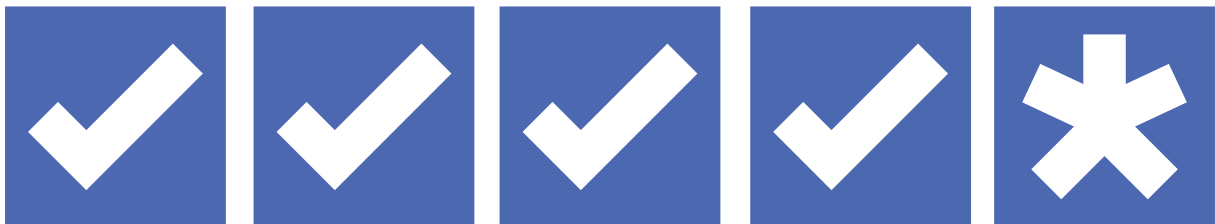
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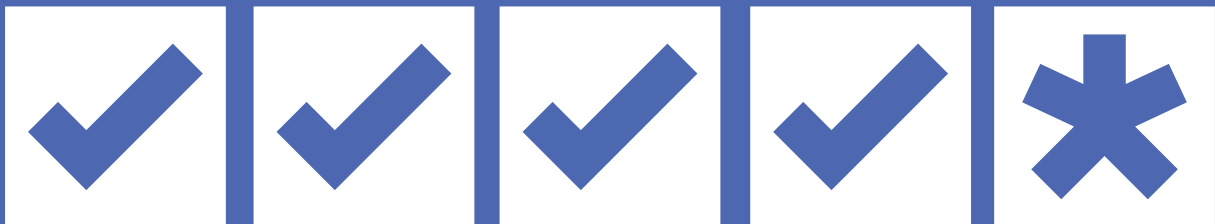


Introduction

This publication is the fourth installment in a series of research reports by 4 Day Week Global, which examine the feasibility and benefits of reduced work time. Not only does this edition gather evidence from a range of companies in the United States and Canada to demonstrate the impact of reduced work time on the North American market, but it provides insight into the longer term impact of the 4 day week beyond the trials' conclusion.

The research was carried out by Professor Juliet B. Schor, Professor Wen Fan and Guolin Gu of Boston College.

4 Day Week Global is a not-for-profit organisation which runs pilot programs, works with governments to form policy and facilitates research, such as this report.





One year on

4 Day Week Global's standard pilot program is six months long and until now, we've only been able to provide a short-term analysis of the impact reduced work time has. This new data compares employee experiences from baseline (pre-trial) to 12 months after their 4 day week launched, effectively doubling our previous comparison period.

Findings are positive across the board, with this new evidence helping to counter concerns that previous successes were down to novelty and couldn't be sustained long-term. Respondents are from organizations across the US, Canada, the UK and Ireland.

Key findings

Working hours

The average number of hours worked per week continued to fall beyond the six-month mark, bringing employees even closer to the target of 32 hours after one year.

Work intensity

People are continuing to work more efficiently as opposed to speeding up and cramming the same work into four days rather than five.

Burnout

While burnout levels increased slightly in the six months after the trial concluded, most of the improvement was sustained.

Physical and mental health

Self-rated physical and mental health scores increased from baseline to the end of the trial and continued improving over 12 months.

Life satisfaction

Life satisfaction remained stable with no significant change from endpoint to the 12-month mark.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction showed a slight regression after 12 months but remains higher than the baseline rating. This suggests the positive effects of a 4 day week on life satisfaction may be more deeply embedded in individuals' overall well-being than in job satisfaction alone.

Work-life balance

Participants reported an improvement in their ability to combine paid work with their social lives. Scores increased significantly from baseline to endpoint and continued to improve over the full 12 months.

Overall experience

The overall experience with the 4 day week remained highly positive, with an unchanged rating of 9/10.





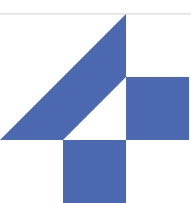
Key findings

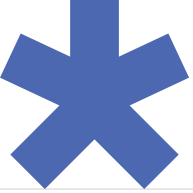
Figure 1

Variable	Measure	Baseline	Trial endpoint from six month baseline	12 months from baseline	N ¹	Endpoint vs 12 months ²
Work hours	Average number of hours worked per week	38.00	33.85	32.97	239	*
Work intensity	2 items: Working at very high speeds, working to tight deadlines, never to all the time (1-5)	3.35	3.36	3.28	379	*
Burnout	7 items: Exhaustion, frustration, "burnt out" from work, etc. never to always (1-5) over the past four weeks	2.77	2.25	2.30	379	*
Physical health	Self-rated, poor to excellent (1-5)	3.05	3.36	3.41	375	
Mental health	Self-rated, poor to excellent (1-5)	2.92	3.36	3.42	375	
Life satisfaction	Not satisfied at all to completely satisfied (0-10)	6.58	7.61	7.60	375	
Job satisfaction	Not satisfied at all to completely satisfied (0-10)	7.26	7.95	7.57	375	***
Work-life balance	Ability to combine paid work with social life: Very difficult to very easy (1-5)	2.93	3.86	3.97	375	*
Overall experience	Very bad to very good (0-10)	NA	9.05	8.87	419	Not significant, i.e. no change

¹ Respondents who answered all three surveys

² Paired-sample t tests for whether endpoint and 12 month values are significantly different: +p<0.1, *p<0.05, **<0.01, ***p<0.001





Consolidated US and Canadian results

Throughout 2022, 4 Day Week Global was recruiting companies in the United States and Canada to participate in various waves of its six-month pilot program. In total, 41 companies across the two countries self-selected to trial a 4 day week, commencing at different times of year. The following information details their collective experiences, giving insights into the impact of reduced work time over the course of six months. While some companies from this cohort are included in the earlier 12-month findings, this research uses a larger sample and provides more information over a shorter period.

Trial format

The design of 4 Day Week Global's pilot involved two months of preparation, with workshops, coaching, mentoring and peer support once the trials got underway.

The research consists of two parts:

- Administrative data from companies
- Survey data from employees.

For both types of data, a pre- and post-methodology approach was employed. In the pre-trial phase, companies completed an “onboarding” survey with basic details about themselves.

The employee surveys at baseline and endpoint included questions covering work experience, well-being, family and personal life, and energy use.

To participate in one of the programs, companies were not required to institute a particular type of 4 day week. They were able to join, so long as they maintained pay at 100% and gave employees a meaningful reduction in work time.





Consolidated US and Canadian results

Sample information

In total, 41 companies participated in these pilot programs which took place between February 2022 and April 2023 (fig 2).

The majority of companies were situated in the United States (32), with the remainder in Canada. The most common size of organization had between 11-25 employees (fig 3), with professional services and marketing, non-profit, and IT being the most represented industries (fig 4).

988 people took part in the trial and 630 people completed both the baseline and endpoint surveys, producing a response rate of 64%. Employee findings set out in this report rely on that sample.

Figure 2

Trial start date

Month trial began	Number of companies
Feb 2022	3
Apr 2022	14
Jun or Jul 2022	4
Aug or Sep 2022	3
Oct or Nov 2022	17

Figure 3

Company size

Employees	Number of companies	% of total
1-10	11	27%
11-25	20	49%
26-100	7	17%
101+	3	7%

Figure 4

Participant industries

Industry	Number of companies	% of total
Professional services and marketing	17	41%
Non-profit	8	20%
IT	6	15%
Construction	3	7%
Other	7	17%

Figure 5

Work practices

Employees	Number of companies	% of total
Fully remote	18	44%
Not fully remote	23	56%





Business outcomes

Company findings

On a scale of 1-10, from very negative to very positive, companies rated the overall impact of the trial an 8.7/10.¹

Companies rated the impact of the 4 day week to attract new employees an 8.7/10², with both productivity and performance scoring a 7.7/10³ on separate scales.

Revenue⁴ increased by 15% over the course of the trial, weighted in accordance with company size. Employees seriously considering leaving their jobs fell significantly, with 32% saying they were now less likely to leave.

As for plans post-trial⁵, no organization expressed a desire to return to five days. 89% of respondents are definitely or planning on continuing, with the remaining 11% leaning towards continuing their 4 day week.



Employee findings

Employees rated the trial a 9.1/10, with 95% wanting to continue their 4 day week.

Meanwhile, there was a big improvement in self-reported productivity, with a 57% increase in workers' current work ability compared to their lifetime best. Over half (51%) of people said they felt more in control of their schedules.

Almost all participants (95%) reduced their work time, with average hours falling by 5.3 per week from 40.1 to 35.6.



When asked how much additional pay they'd require in their next job to go back to five days, 32.8% of employees said 26-50% more, 12.2% would require more than 50%, and over one in ten (13.8%) said no amount of money would induce them to go back to five days.

¹ Based on 35 respondents

² Based on 21 respondents

³ Based on 35 respondents

⁴ Based on 20 respondents

⁵ Based on 35 respondents



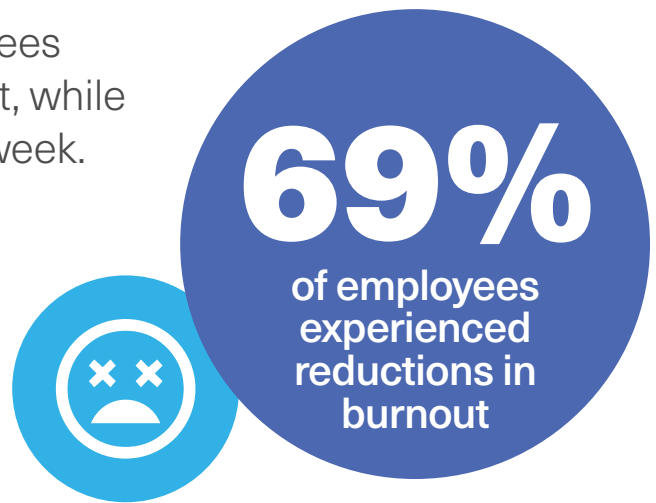


Health and well-being

Almost seven in ten (69%) employees experienced reductions in burnout, while 40% felt less stressed on a 4 day week.

59% reported a decline in negative emotions, with significant increases observed in people's physical and mental health. 45% felt less fatigued and 40% experienced fewer sleep problems.

Anxiety fell for 39% of the sample.



Work-life balance

Three in four (74%) employees were more satisfied with their time on a 4 day week.

Work-to-family and work-to-life conflict declined for six in ten people (61% and 60% respectively).

Overall life satisfaction rose by a whopping full point on a 0-10 scale.

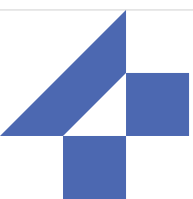


Environmental outcomes

Fewer people are commuting to work by car.

There was no 'travel rebound' identified, which is a common concern among critics, who assert people will increase their carbon footprint by spending their extra free time travelling.

42% of employees did more environmentally friendly activities during the trial, such as recycling, buying eco-friendly items and walking and cycling, rather than driving.





A note from the founders

We are delighted to bring you this latest report by 4 Day Week Global, which continues to explore the feasibility and benefits of reduced work time.

Not only do these findings expand our understanding of how the 4 day week works in the United States and Canada, by consolidating our participant outcomes from those countries, but we also get our first glimpse at how well it functions long-term. The 12-month insights are remarkably positive and contribute to building a robust body of evidence showcasing the enduring positive effects of reduced work time.

These results demonstrate the continued positive trends in business benefits, health and well-being gains, and environmental impacts, providing a strong foundation for the widespread adoption of a 4 day week. By building upon the research presented in this report, we aim to inspire more companies, governments, and individuals to make the transition.

We are grateful for the dedication of our world-class academic team in Boston College, Prof. Juliet Schor, Prof. Wen Fan, and Guolin Gu. Thanks also to our wonderful in-house team, Dr Dale Whelehan, Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, Hazel Gavigan, Gabriela Brasil, Karen Lowe, Jack Lockhart, Nasr Bitar and Rebecca Roberts. We couldn't do this without you all.



Charlotte Lockhart and Andrew Barnes

Co-founders – 4 Day Week Global

4 Day Week Global is a not-for-profit organisation which runs pilot programs, works with governments to form policy and conducts research, such as this report.

