

Sabbatical is as awesome as you think it will be.

The Top Ten tips, so far:

(User modified, feel free to add to or change tips!)

1. Do not check email before 4 p.m. Do not have it "on in the background." If you DO check it before 4 p.m. for your own sick or silly reasons, don't reply right away, because you clearly need to get used to the idea that you are not a slave to the clock and you are not at anyone's beck and call. Make certain to leave your internet connection off entirely on weekends. No one needs to get ahold of you that badly, because *you're on sabbatical*. If they think they need an immediate reply from you, they are wrong, because *you're on sabbatical*.

2. Aim for one project you want to complete the most. Other projects are gravy. On this system, you'll end up with a lot of gravy. Mmmm. (You'll probably get about half of what you imagine/intend done, and that's great!)

3. Take the first summer to revel and ruminate -- you'll REALLY feel like you're on sabbatical when everyone else heads back to school in August. That's when you realize you have a new job for awhile, and still plenty of time to do it. Sleep like your life depends on it, read fiction, and rediscover lunch. (Hint: it's that meal in the middle of the day.) Sleeping, eating, watching TV, staring into space, reading fiction, playing computer games, and NOT talking to your loved one(s) about school are all good for you!

4. Cut the cord. Staying away from campus (but not your friends) is healthy, and means that if/when you DO decide to come around, it feels like something to look forward to (for you AND for everyone else!). Ideally, we will not see you on campus at all during sabbatical. Not at all. Go away. (True story: A coworker challenged me to donate money to a political cause I despise every time I come to campus. I did it once, then found it easy to stay away for seven months straight.)

5. This should go without saying, but in case it doesn't, sabbatical is not the time for service. No committee needs you that badly, no student needs you as an academic advisor more than anyone else alive, and no inter-political broohaha is so important it should occupy your precious, precious sabbatical time. You can obsess about campus gossip when you come back to full-time teaching. (But see #6.)

6. Prepare for sabbatical by being a good citizen and tying up the loose ends of your service commitments. Make it clear, early in the semester before you leave, that your chair needs to reassign your advisees, that your committees must replace you, that the Senate needs to approve

an interim member to sub for you. If you don't do this ahead of time, it will be less convenient for your coworkers, but even then, they can handle it. You needn't, because *you're on sabbatical*.

7. Prepare for re-entry by talking to colleagues who've had to re-enter, before. Aim for writing deadlines at least a month in advance of teaching, and don't count on productive writing in the month's run-up to school. Do NOT prepare for re-entry by taking on service and advising again in the spring of your sabbatical! This is a waste of precious, precious sabbatical time. The fact that you've had months of it is no reason to waste what's left.

8. Travel. Even small trips are a luxury after the six years you've just had. If you do no travel at all on the grounds that you can't afford it on a reduced sabbatical salary, remind yourself that if you die in the next seven years, you'll NEVER have another sabbatical.

9. Family should not be expected to understand what sabbatical is and why you can't spend most of it on them. Anyone who telecommutes can affirm that it is assumed you do not work while at home. This is mistaken, but you will likely be unsuccessful in correcting that impression. Instead of trying that, you may wish to simply clarify to relations with increased demands that you are doing whole new sorts of work you've never done before, and will be expected to report success to the Provost when you return, so must pursue said success in light of the expectations of your employers.

10. The best tip a friend of Kate Norlock's got, while unemployed, was to get out of bed at a reasonably early hour, shower, shave and dress as though he had somewhere to go. He found this made him much more interested in using his time productively. Although she can't claim daily showers herself, Kate will affirm, if you ask her, that heading for her research bright and early on a daily basis was the source of the good life. Afternoons were better for tea, cookies and emails. Have a schedule, work every day, and feel great about your precious, precious sabbatical. You've earned it.