

There's a psychological reason you're happiest on weekends

Two factors at play, researchers find

By Sharon Jayson
USA TODAY

It may be no surprise that people are happier on weekends.

But research out today looks at the psychology behind that mood boost. Men and women alike feel better — emotionally and physically — from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon, regardless of their age, education, salary, marital status or how many hours they work, the study says. It's published in the

Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology.

"Why weekends are better are the two factors of autonomy and relatedness," says co-author Richard Ryan, a psychologist at the University of Rochester, N.Y. "There's more connection with other people and more self-direction. Wherever you don't have autonomy or don't feel relatedness, your well-being will be lower."

And Ryan says that's "more likely to be at work."

Researchers financed by the Sage Foundation and the Human Motivation research program at Rochester used pagers with 74 adults, ages 18 to 62, who worked at least 30 hours a week. Over three weeks, participants were



By Alejandro Gonzalez, USA TODAY

randomly paged three times a day and rated on their activity and how they felt when beeped. They also said how close they felt to others present and whether they felt competent and autonomous.

Feelings of autonomy, relatedness and competency are key to satisfying psychological needs, says Ryan Howell, an assistant professor of psychology at San Francisco State University who was not involved in this study.

The research also found that participants felt greater competency on weekends.

That also makes sense, Howell says. A paper he co-wrote last fall in the *Journal of Happiness Studies* found that people who engage in behaviors that

increase competency but may be stressful or unpleasant in the moment still experience greater happiness and satisfaction in the long term, especially if they also experience autonomy and connectedness.

"When you clean the house, it may not make you happy in the moment, but it may make you satisfied, and that will make the weekend better," Howell says.

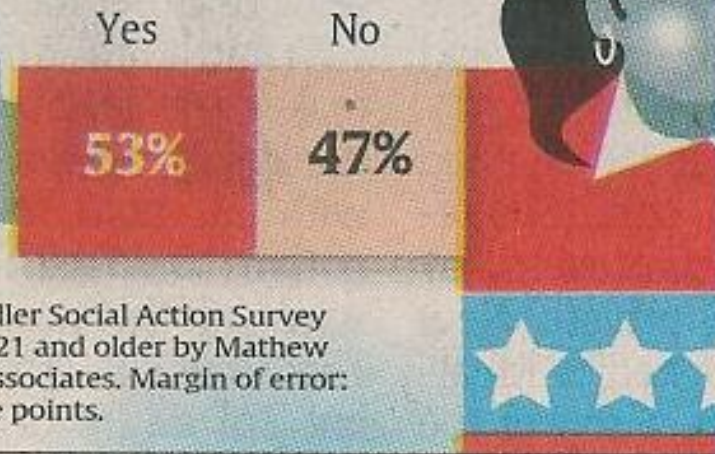
Even with onerous tasks, Ryan says, people probably have more autonomy and connection on weekends.

But the weekend effect isn't the same for those who regularly work weekends and have days off during the week.

Most people are happiest on days without work, Ryan says.

USA TODAY Snapshots®

Should military or civil service be mandatory for 18 year olds?



Source: 2009 Tiller Social Action Survey of 1,000 adults 21 and older by Mathew Greenwald & Associates. Margin of error: ±3.1 percentage points.



By Michelle Healy and Julie Snider, USA TODAY

USA TODAY Gallup Poll

Frequent fliers

How travelers rate their satisfaction with flying in the past year:

Procedures for going through security checkpoints:

Satisfied  **65%**
Dissatisfied  **35%**

Price you pay for tickets:

Satisfied  **60%**
Dissatisfied  **40%**

Airlines' efforts to deal with problems of flight delays/cancellations:

Satisfied  **53%**
Dissatisfied  **45%**

Fees charged by airlines for baggage or re-booking a flight:

Satisfied  **24%**
Dissatisfied  **76%**

Source: USA TODAY/Gallup Poll telephone survey of 542 adults who have flown two or more times in the past year, conducted Jan 5-6. Margin of error is ± 5 percentage points.

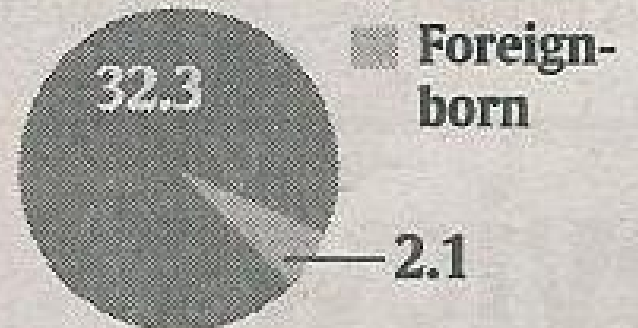
By Veronica Salazar, USA TODAY

On the rise

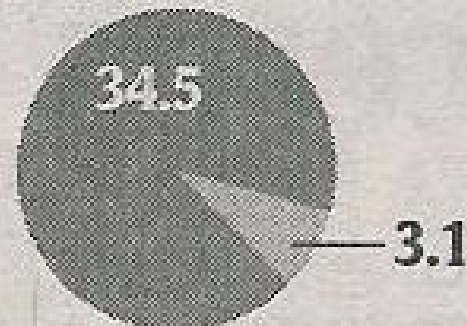
The share of immigrants among the USA's black population is rising this decade:

Total blacks (in millions)

2000 **34.4** ■ **U.S.-born**



2008 **37.6**



Source: Census Bureau

By Julie Snider, USA TODAY

USA TODAY Snapshots®

Florida colder than Alaska?

Low temperatures Monday morning in these two cities:

Juneau
26°

Tampa
25°



Source: NOAA

By Anne R. Carey, Doyle Rice and Sam Ward, USA TODAY

Statistics is the art and science of designing studies and analyzing the data that those studies produce. Its ultimate goal is translating data into knowledge and understanding of the world around us. In short, **statistics is the art and science of learning from data.**

Design: Planning how to obtain data to answer the questions of interest.

Description: Summarizing the data that are obtained.

Inference: Making decisions and predictions based on the data.

Probability