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TOM TOM ENGLISH



Tired, depressed and working too hard

VOCABULARY

Feeling Beat up =

to feel tired, exhausted, battered. (literally to feel that you have been punched or kicked many times)

Doze, dozing =

To have a light sleep - similar to "nap"

Unwind =

To relax and to lose tension

Discussion questions

1. Why do you think people in the 20-39 year old age group are more and more unhappy?
2. Are you in this age group? If so, do you think this survey is correct? Do your friends feel the same?
3. If you are not in this age group, how did you feel when you were 20-39?
4. Thinking back in your (adult) life, what age was the happiest for you? Why?
5. The survey said that the happiest group is the over-65s. Do you agree with this? Think about your own experience or people you know.
6. What do you do at the weekend? Does it help you to relax and recover?
7. Do you agree that the government/companies should try to fix this problem? What should they do?

VOCABULARY

Sleep-in=

To sleep later than usual

Restorative =

Having the ability to recover health, energy or strength

Isolated =

separate from other people, alone

Progressive =

Forward thinking, modern, willing to change other people, being alone

Feeling beat-up before it's time

Japan's health ministry recently conducted a survey about work and happiness. They found that Japanese young people in the 20-to-39 age group are more overworked and unhappy than ever. The main reason for unhappiness was work stress. The only good news in the survey was that happiness levels rose through life. The most happy group were those aged over 65.

The survey also tried to find what young people do after their stressed-out workweek. Most young people spend their weekends doing nothing much at all. More than 30% said they spent days off "doing nothing or **dozing**." Older age groups were more active - only 25 percent said that they do nothing.

If younger workers feel they can only **unwind** through doing nothing, they are wrong. A good **sleep-in** or afternoon nap on the tatami can be very **restorative**. But the human mind and body needs soothing, engaging activity to recover from stress.

Unfortunately the most common weekend activity was surfing the Internet. More than 40% of all age groups do this. Surfing the net is a

solitary activity with little face-to-face interaction. It involves no movement.

Only 10 percent of those aged between 20 and 39 reported doing any exercise. This compared to over 30 percent of those over 65.

The survey therefore suggests that the typical Japanese weekend is **isolated** and inactive. The most common thing people did when they were anxious or worried was to relax and sleep. Young people don't spend time on their hobbies.

Companies can help to improve this situation. Recently some **progressive** companies buy membership in health clubs and gyms for their staff. The ministry of health also needs to make sure that companies reduce overtime work. When employees have to work until late at night, they don't exercise or enjoy hobbies. The current vicious cycle of overwork followed by inactivity needs to be changed.

Companies and the government should understand that stressed employees do not work efficiently. It's better if they have high energy. Employees must understand that their free-time activities affect their working ability. It's better for the company and the employees if they have a nice balance between work and activities. It's better for their mental and physical health.