

The Juggle

WSJ.com on choices and tradeoffs people make as they juggle work and family.

JUNE 24, 2011, 8:17 AM ET

Do You Work Summer Hours?

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By Sue Shellenbarger

With summer officially underway this week, some employers have switched to summer hours to give employees a head start on the weekend, and that is good news for some. But amid [high unemployment](#) and forced cutbacks in work hours, a lot of other people would be grateful to simply be working a full five-day week.

About 17% of employers [adjust work hours](#) to suit the season, the [Society for Human Resource Management](#) says. Some let people work from home on Fridays, and others [compress the work week](#), allowing people to work longer hours on Monday through Thursday so they can leave early on Friday.

[Hartman, Leito & Bolt](#), a Texas accounting and consulting firm, switches to a compressed work schedule for eight weeks during the summer, as a way of helping retain employees. Workers putting in 80 hours over nine days, and take every other Friday off. Productivity remains as high as during the firm's normal schedule, of 80 hours over 10 days, the firm says. A growing number of employers [mention summer hours](#) in job postings as an incentive to apply.

There is a downside. As having fun on the weekend becomes easier, reaching people at the workplace on a Friday afternoon becomes harder and can hurt customer service, critics say.

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And many workers would love to be working Fridays, but have been forced to take them off because of budget cuts during the recession. Widespread [furloughs](#) by state and city governments nationwide have sent thousands of employees home for long weekends. Many production plants have switched to [four-day weeks](#) for months. Other employers, including some school districts, are closing their administrative offices during summer Fridays, to save energy costs. And as we have [said previously](#), the four-day school week can cause problems for working parents too.

Readers, does your employer offer summer hours? If so, do you take advantage of them? If not, do you think it is a good idea?

