



LELO

SELF-LOVE DAYS

the LELO economy of
pleasure report 2023

meet our experts



FINANCIAL JOURNALIST
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Rosanna Spero has been a financial journalist for more than 30 years, working on a range of publications, including the Daily Mail, Independent, Daily Mirror and House Beautiful. She has also written a book called Every Woman's Guide to Personal Finance and has worked with brands such as Aviva, AXA, AA, Allianz, RBS, Standard Life, BMW, RBS, Tesco, Zurich and Healthspan.

PSYCHO-SEXOLOGIST
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Kate Moyle, is an Accredited Psychosexual & Relationship Therapist and Certified Psycho-Sexologist. She is the author of The Science of Sex : Every Question About Your Sex Life Answered and host of The Sexual Wellness Sessions Podcast, as well as the UK Sex Expert at LELO.

Twenty years ago the founders of LELO realised the importance of happiness and launched their range of products to help people find joy in their lives. Now they help some 550,000 people a year find happiness in sex, which transfers over from the bedroom to the workplace and society at large. This happiness is more important than ever, given the lasting damage the COVID-19 pandemic has had on people's mental health and the world economy at large.

What is the link between happiness and economics? **When we are happy we are more productive - and research has shown up to 20% more productive - so we get more work done.** Move several stages through the economic chain and the net result is both the economy and individuals benefit from lower prices and higher wages - a win win situation all around.

Looking at it from a different perspective, the 20% increased productivity could translate to all of us working a four-day week without impacting our country's financial well-being. This extra day could be used to improve our mental health and happiness by taking part in activities we love and give us pleasure such as sex either alone or with a partner.

Improving productivity is a key aim of governments around the world. According to the World Bank's 2020 Global Productivity: Trends, Drivers, and Policies report global labour productivity growth slowed from a peak of 2.7% in 2007, just before the global financial crisis, to a post-crisis trough of 1.5% percent in 2016, and it remained below 2% a year in 2017-18. If productivity remains low then countries struggle to increase the amount of goods and services they produce and their citizens struggle to improve their standard of living.

But what a difference increased happiness could have made over the 20 years of LELO's existence. Global GDP stood at \$101 trillion at the end of 2022 according to the World Bank. If it had risen by 20% year on year since 2003 when LELO launched and it stood at \$39.16 trillion, it would have been \$1,501 trillion by the end of 2022 - an incredible nearly 15 times bigger - not bad for an orgasm or two!

“Productivity isn't everything, but in the long run it is almost everything”

(Paul Krugman, 1994-Nobel prize winning US economist)

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

Productivity is commonly defined as a ratio between the volume of output and the volume of inputs. In other words, it measures how efficiently production inputs, such as labour and capital, are being used in an economy to produce a given level of output. Productivity is a key source of economic growth and living standards and, as such, internationally comparable indicators of productivity are central for assessing economic performance.

Labour productivity, measured as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked or per worker, is one of the most widely available measures of productivity.

The effects of 20% compound GDP and GVA growth (using OECD figures) from 2003 to the end of 2022:

* **The UK** would have seen its GDP grow from \$2.06 trillion to \$78.97 trillion - not the \$3.07 trillion it actually stood at at the end of 2022. Its GVA would have grown from \$1.85 trillion to \$70.92 trillion in the same time period - far above its actual \$2.53 trillion 2019 figure.

* **The US** would have seen its GDP grow from \$11.46 trillion to \$439.34 trillion - not the \$25.46 trillion it actually stood at at the end of 2022. Its GVA would have grown from \$11.05 trillion to \$423.63 trillion in the same time period - far above its actual \$19.84 trillion 2018 figure.

* **France** would have seen its GDP grow from \$1.84 trillion to \$70.54 trillion - not the \$2.78 trillion it actually stood at at the end of 2022. Its GVA would have grown from \$1.66 trillion to \$63.64 trillion in the same time period - far above its actual \$2.41 trillion 2019 figure.

* **Spain** would have seen its GDP grow from \$0.9 trillion to \$34.79 trillion - not the \$1.4 trillion it actually stood at at the end of 2022. Its GVA would have grown from \$0.82 trillion to \$31.56 trillion in the same time period - far above its actual \$1.26 trillion 2019 figure.

* **Sweden** would have seen its GDP grow from \$0.33 trillion to \$12.81 trillion - not the \$0.58 trillion it actually stood at at the end of 2022. Its GVA would have grown from \$0.29 trillion to \$11.37 trillion in the same time period - far above its actual \$0.47 trillion 2019 figure.

* **Italy** would have seen its GDP grow from \$1.58 trillion to \$60.57 trillion - not the \$2.01 trillion it actually stood at at the end of 2022. Its GVA would have grown from \$1.43 trillion to \$54.82 trillion in the same time period - far above its actual \$1.8 trillion 2019 figure.

* **The Netherlands** would have seen its GDP grow from \$0.58 trillion to \$22.23 trillion - not the \$0.99 trillion it actually stood at at the end of 2022. Its GVA would have grown from \$0.51 trillion to \$19.88 trillion in the same time period - far above its actual \$0.8 trillion 2019 figure.



happiness and productivity

the link

So does happiness make us more productive? The experts think so and LELO has reviewed an extensive range of scientific research into the links between happiness and productivity and happiness and sexual activity to produce this report.

For example The Social Market Foundation and CAGE's (Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy) 'Happiness and productivity: Understanding the happy-productive worker' report by Daniel Sgroi (Department of Economics at the University of Warwick) found happiness increased productivity by up to 20%.⁽¹⁾ He says in the report: "However, just as we have worried in the past about the links between national income or economic growth and national level happiness measures, so too should we be interested in the links between individual-level income or productivity and happiness. The reason is simple: at the individual level it may be possible to establish the direction of causation: while much of the debate so far has focused on whether income or economic growth at the aggregate level generates happiness, we turn instead to look at the converse question: can happiness at the individual-level generate productivity improvements?"

Just as importantly, he found upsetting news which reduces happiness can dampen productivity by 10% or more for up to three years after the event.

In addition, Shawn Achor, author of the 'Happiness Advantage' makes the case that the single greatest advantage in the modern economy is a happy and engaged workforce. He says: "A decade of research

proves that happiness raises nearly every business and educational outcome: raising sales by 37%, productivity by 31%, and accuracy on tasks by 19%, as well as a myriad of health and quality of life improvements."⁽²⁾

Backing these up, earlier this year a study, 'Does Employee Happiness Have an Impact on Productivity?' by Clement S. Bellet, Jan-Emmanuel De Neve and George Ward linked increases in happiness to a 12% increase in productivity in a group of telesales staff in the UK. ⁽³⁾ Gallup also found engaged employees can improve a company's profitability by up to 23%. ⁽⁴⁾

And sex does make us happy. In the National Bureau of Economic Research's 'Money, Sex and Happiness: An Empirical Study' by David G. Blanchflower and Andrew J. Oswald, ⁽⁵⁾ the authors reported:

- * **"The more sex, the happier the person."**
- * **"Having sex at least four times a week is associated with approximately 0.12 happiness points, which is a large effect."**

And it concluded "The paper estimates happiness equations in which sexual behaviour is included as an independent variable. The frequency of sexual activity is shown to be positively associated with happiness. The effect of sex on happiness is statistically well-determined, monotonic and large. This is true for males and females and for those under and over the age of 40."

This was backed up by a 'Tracking Happiness' survey in January this year which found 15% of respondents associated sex with happiness, though interestingly it was 250% more likely to be chosen as a word association by men than women. ⁽⁶⁾

And finally, a Kinsey Institute ⁽⁷⁾ report found that: "When participants had sex, they reported gains in mental well-being the next day. In particular, they felt more meaning in life and experienced more

positive and fewer negative moods." This finding was backed up by LELO's own research. The report also concurs with us on the duration of the happiness effect, saying: "It is important to note that the observed increase in well-being was temporary. Specifically, it lasted just one day, meaning there was no lingering benefit on day two or beyond. However, greater sexual intimacy was linked to enhanced positive mood two days later, which tells us that some types of sexual activity might lead to longer-lasting effects than others."

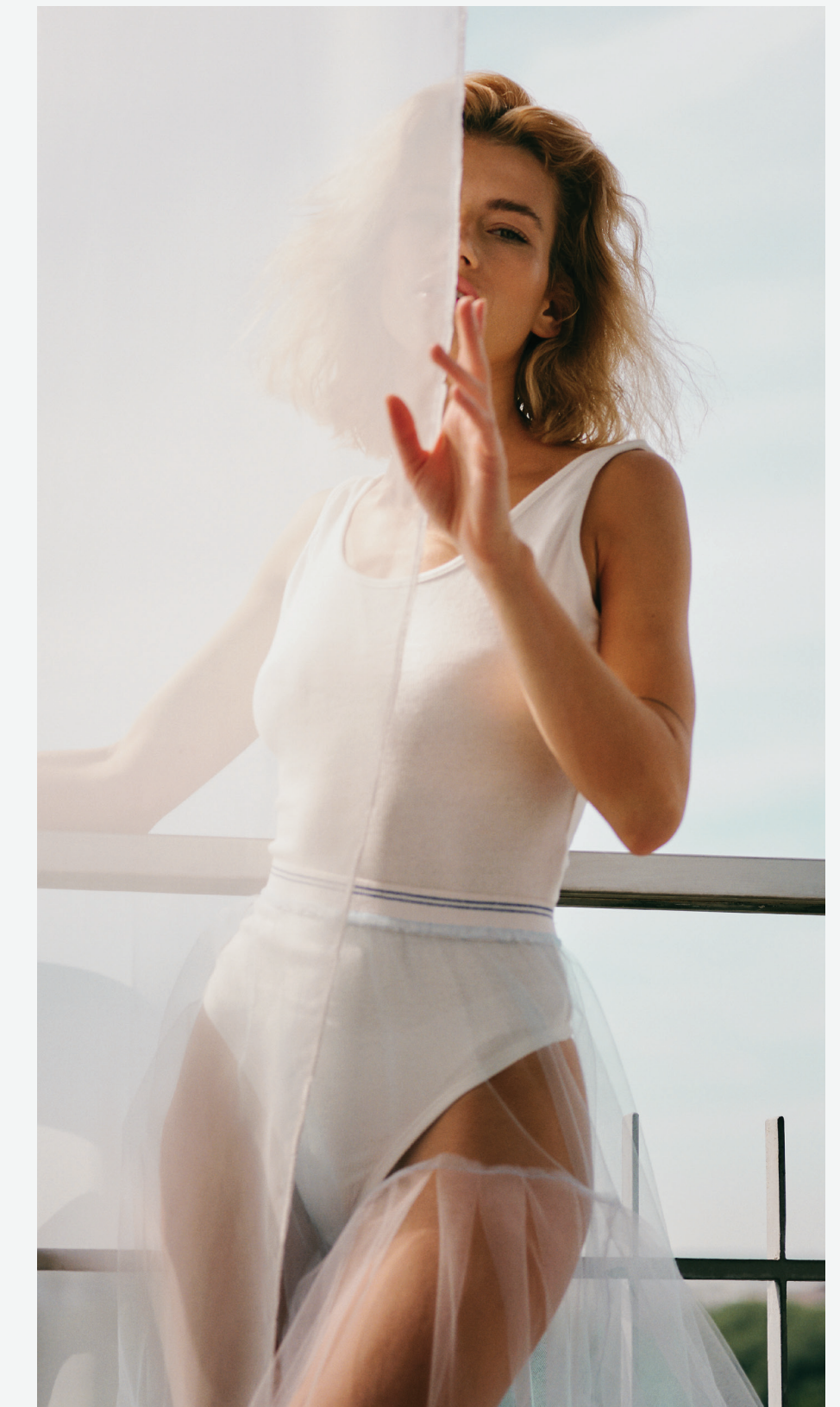
One of the biggest negative impacts on our health is stress, and both the psychological and subjective feel good, and neurochemical release associated with sexual pleasure and orgasm can offer buffering effects. There are well-documented health benefits of pleasure and orgasm such as having a positive impact on sleep, relationship with self and increased partnered intimacy all of which can impact our general happiness and wellbeing. We see a bidirectional relationship between sexual wellbeing and mental wellbeing and this isn't just contained to the moment but can have a spillover effect into other areas of our lives such as our working days; which can positively influence our mood, confidence and as a result productivity and engagement.

The well-documented productivity and happiness link can feed back into our sex lives too with stress and anxiety being commonly reported interrupters of desire and arousal, and many people reporting that they feel distracted or not in the mood for sex often due to the leaking of work stress into our bedrooms as a result of our enmeshed relationships with our smartphones and technology; meaning that many of us struggle to 'switch off to turn on' and get ourselves into a different headspace for sex. Approaching sex from a biopsychosocial understanding and looking at it from a mind-body approach we know that our sex lives can be influenced by, and influence what's happening for

us as individuals in our life contexts and relationships as it can shape how we see and feel about ourselves both as individuals and in terms of our relationships.

These are all factors that can shape our experiences, perspectives, worries and self-beliefs, and so having improved sexual wellness not only plays a role directly but also how we think, feel and behave in other contexts.

Kate Moyle



the science behind orgasms and happiness

Orgasms increase our happiness because of the hormones they release into our bodies. Because these “feel good” hormones stay in our systems, when we get up and go to work the next morning we are happier and so more productive.

So what happens when we have sex? These are the chemicals that are triggered when we orgasm.

When we orgasm our brains become flooded with dopamine, and in the period immediately after oxytocin, prolactin and endorphins. These hormones leave us feeling more relaxed and bonded with our partners or the people around us. Since these feelings can last for typically up to 24 hours if not more, the benefits are felt when we go to work, where this happiness translates to increased productivity.

Dopamine: A chemical messenger in the brain, technically known as a neurotransmitter, which is responsible for sending signals from the central nervous system. It is what allows information to be passed from one neuron to another. Dopamine is the central chemical in our brain regulating how we perceive and experience pleasure.

Endorphins: These are also neurotransmitters and are responsible for our feelings of pleasure. The majority of our emotions are processed by our brain's limbic system, which is rich with opioid receptors. When endorphins reach the opioid receptors we experience pleasure and a sense of satisfaction.

Oxytocin: Known as the love hormone as it is released when we hug and have intimate contact. It makes us feel more trusting and connected to our partners and the people around us. Oxytocin is produced by the hypothalamus and secreted by the posterior lobe of the pituitary gland, a pea-sized structure at the base of the brain.

Prolactin: This hormone works as a dopamine inhibitor, curtailing our sex drives once we orgasm and providing us with feelings of satiation and sexual gratification. The happy feelings caused by our orgasms are carried along by prolactin.



what you think about sex

LELO research

The experts all have their academic views and theories, but the most important is whether happiness actually transfers from the bedroom to the workplace, and for that LELO asked more than 7,000 people living in the UK, US, France, Spain, Italy, Sweden and the Netherlands. Here's what they thought.

One in 10 people across all countries felt they were a staggering 71-80% more productive when they were happy, with the same number putting the increase at a marginally more modest 51-60%. More than seven in 10 also believed they were less productive generally when they were stressed.



One in 10 Brits felt 41-50% more productive when they were happy.

One in 8 Americans felt 91-100% more productive when they were happy.

One in 10 French respondents felt 71-80% more productive when they were happy.

One in 7 Spaniards felt 91-100% more productive when they were happy.

One in 8 Dutch respondents felt 51-60% more productive when they were happy.

One in 8 Italians felt 21-30% more productive when they were happy.

One in 8 Swedes felt 51-60% more productive when they were happy.

An overwhelming number of people felt relaxed and less stressed after having an orgasm, with eight in ten respondents reporting these feeling across all countries. Even better, two in ten people said these feeling lasted for up to 24 hours after, with one in 20 feeling the benefits up to two days later. Crucially in the happiness stakes, LELOs research also revealed that more than three quarters of respondents felt more relaxed and less stressed after sex, even if they didn't have an orgasm and these effects lasted just as long as after an orgasm.

Sex and orgasms with a partner was preferred by three in five of all respondents worldwide, though one in seven preferred a self pleasure orgasm and almost a quarter said both were equally as relaxing.

75% of Brits asked felt relaxed and less stressed after having an orgasm

84% of Americans asked felt relaxed and less stressed after having an orgasm

83% of French respondents asked felt relaxed and less stressed after having an orgasm

91% of Spaniards asked felt relaxed and less stressed after having an orgasm

74% of Dutch respondents asked felt relaxed and less stressed after having an orgasm

87% of Italians asked felt relaxed and less stressed after having an orgasm

81% of Swedes asked felt relaxed and less stressed after having an orgasm

Orgasm Relaxation Stats

country	percentage
BRITS	75%
AMERICANS	84%
FRENCH	83%
SPANIARDS	91%
DUTCH	74%
ITALIANS	87%
SWEDES	81%

Some 17% of Brits were still enjoying the benefits of their orgasm up to 24 hours later and **4% up to two days later.**

Some 20% of Americans were still enjoying the benefits of their orgasm up to 24 hours later and almost **6% up to two days later.**

19% of French respondents were still enjoying the benefits of their orgasm up to 24 hours later and almost **5% up to two days later.**

20% of Spaniards were still enjoying the benefits of their orgasm up to 24 hours later and **4% up to two days later.**

20% of Dutch were still enjoying the benefits of their orgasm up to 24 hours later and **6% up to two days later.**

16% of Italians were still enjoying the benefits of their orgasm up to 24 hours later and almost **6% up to two days later.**

Some **20% of Swedes** were still enjoying the benefits of their orgasm up to 24 hours later and **5% up to two days later.**

More than half of Brits were more relaxed after an orgasm with their partner, almost one in seven through self-love and over a quarter the same either way.

Almost six in ten Americans were more relaxed after an orgasm with their partner, almost one in six through self-love and just under a quarter the same either way.

Seven in ten French respondents were more relaxed after an orgasm with their partner, almost one in eight through self-love and just under one in six the same either way.

Over half of Spaniards were more relaxed after an orgasm with their partner, one in eight through self-love and nearly a third the same either way.

Half of Dutch respondents were more relaxed after an orgasm with their partner, one in six through self-love and three in ten the same either way.

Almost seven in ten Italians were more relaxed after an orgasm with their partner, over one in eight through self-love and over one in six the same either way.

Half of Swedes were more relaxed after an orgasm with their partner, more than one in five through self-love and over a quarter the same either way.

And this happiness does promote productivity, with six in ten people saying they were more productive when having regular orgasms. Split down however, this applied to 71% of men but only 50% of women. The research also showed the happiness productivity link peaks between 25 and 44 with two-thirds of respondents noticing a link, although half of respondents in all other age groups also acknowledged it.

45% of Brits are more productive when they are having regular orgasms.

67% of Americans are more productive when they are having regular orgasms.

55% of French respondents are more productive when they are having regular orgasms.

74% of Spaniards are more productive when they are having regular orgasms.

49% of Dutch respondents are more productive when they are having regular orgasms.

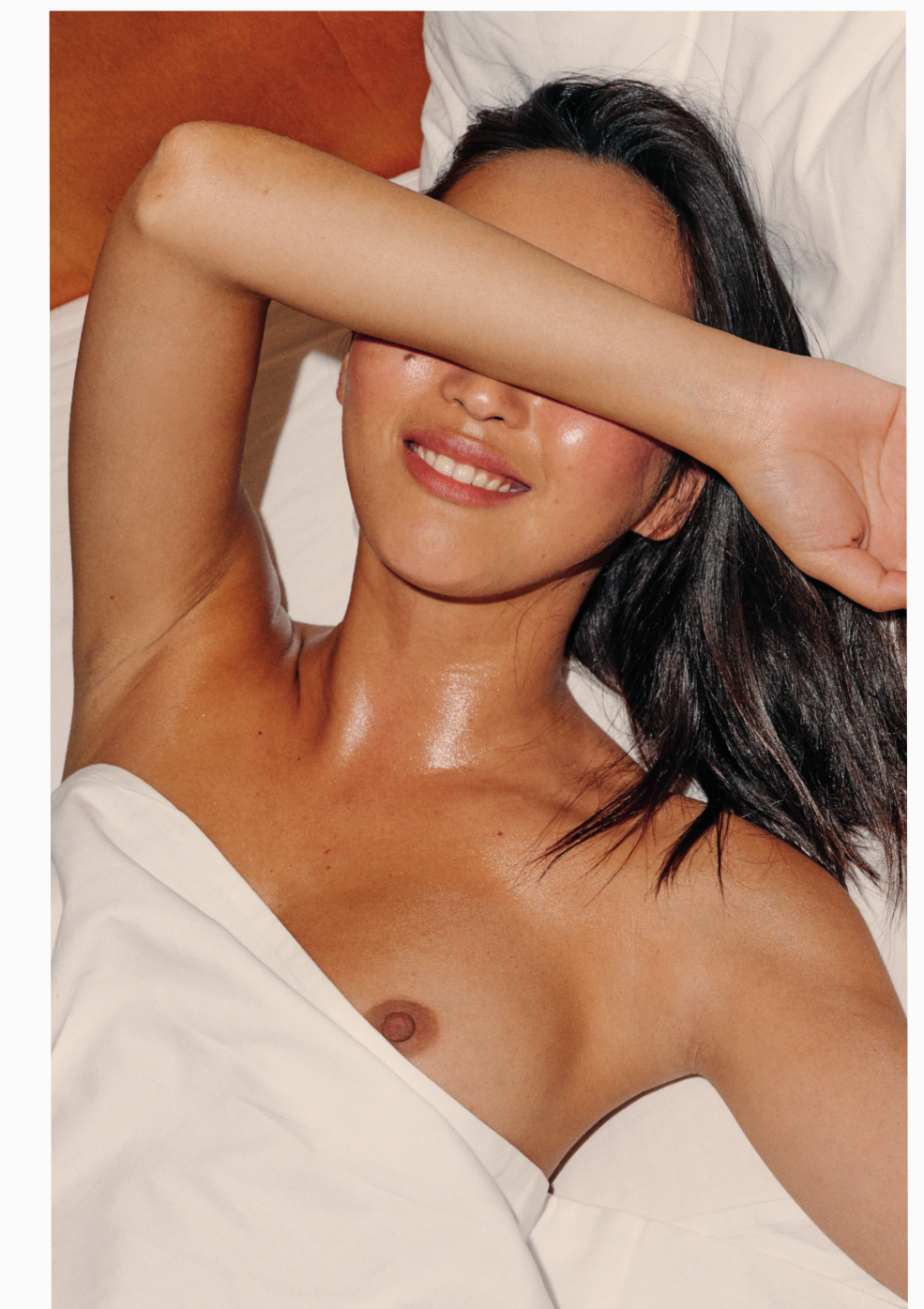
67% of Italians are more productive when they are having regular orgasms.

52% of Swedes are more productive when they are having regular orgasms.

country	percentage
BRITS	45%
AMERICANS	67%
FRENCH	55%
SPANIARDS	74%
DUTCH	49%
ITALIANS	67%
SWEDES	52%

Finally LELO asked respondents if they were offered time off work to work on their pleasure and productivity would they use it, and an overwhelming 70% said yes. However the willingness to have fun depended on where in the world you lived, with the Brits being the least willing to try at 55%, but some **three quarters of Dutch, American, Italians and Spanish willing to use the time off for pleasure.**

“Three quarters of Dutch, American, Italians and Spanish willing to use the time off for pleasure.”



sex and the four-day week

All the evidence points to the fact that happy workers are more productive.

In their report 'The influence of stress and satisfaction on productivity', George Halkos and Dimitrios Bousinakis from the University of Thessaly, Department of Economics (8) concluded: "Our results showed us that productivity is seriously affected by the two qualitative factors, stress and satisfaction. As expected, in the former, increased stress leads to reduced productivity and in the latter, increased satisfaction leads to increased productivity."

This is echoed by Dr Daniel Sgroi from the Department of Economics at the University of Warwick who says: "The driving force seems to be that happier workers use the time they have more effectively, increasing the pace at which they can work without sacrificing quality."

In the real world this is being played out by companies across the globe who are offering their workers happiness in the form of a four-day week in return for increased daily productivity - translating to no drop in productivity from the five-day week model.

In the UK, the biggest four-day week trial yet, for six months by 61 companies and around 2,900 workers, took place from June to December 2022 organised by The Four Day Week Campaign and Autonomy. The results, published in February this year, revealed that 39% of employees were less stressed, and 71% had reduced levels of burnout

at the end of the trial. In addition, levels of anxiety, fatigue and sleep issues decreased, while both mental and physical health improved. **So great was their work life-balance, that 15% said no amount of money would convince them to go back to a five-day week.**

Employees also found it easier to balance their work with both family and social commitments. 54% said it was easier to balance work with household jobs and they were more satisfied with their household finances, relationships and how their time was being managed. The result, said the organisers largely mirrored those from the US and Ireland, adding fuel to the four-day fire.

The companies also saw benefits, which is why 92% are keeping the four day week model. Participating companies' revenue stayed roughly the same, rising by 1.4% on average. In addition, the number of sick days taken fell by 65% and there was a huge decline (57%) in the chances of an employee quitting, dramatically improving job retention.



conclusion

The global hangover from Covid 19 and the ongoing global crises are combining to keep productivity at worryingly low levels across the world. But small changes can make enormous differences.

If global productivity can be increased by 20% the effects of lifting people out of poverty and improving standards of living across the board are immense. More realistically though, even smaller increases will make immeasurable differences in people's lives. Making and keeping people happy can be achieved with behavioural changes as small as regular happiness injections through orgasms and intimacy in the bedroom. Changes such as these cost nothing, just creative thinking from governments, employers and their employees. LELO is doing its bit by offering its UK staff the opportunity to take up to four days a year as self-love day's holidays in addition to their allotted entitlement and will be rolling it out worldwide to all employees.

It is time to put love and happiness back on the economic agenda - the data and proof exist of the effectiveness of sex and orgasms in increasing productivity.

But even if companies won't listen to reason, we still owe it to ourselves to increase the joy in our lives through increased sexual pleasure and more orgasms to counter the stresses and strains of our working lives.



source:

(1)

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YEARS
OF PLEASURE