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RELAXNOMIKS



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Dear Reader,

Welcome to our Easter Edition of the Relaxnomiks!

It seems like just yesterday that we dismantled the Christmas decorations and gave away those hampers we received but didn't really need. Time has been on fast-forward and it's hard to believe we are already in Easter!

Yet, so much has happened in this short space of time that it feels like we've been running around the same mountain in slow motion!

This is the paradox of time we face!



Inflation has spiked above the CBN ceiling of 9%, reaching its highest rate since 2012. Meanwhile, real GDP growth has declined to a 17-year low as the economy is reeling from the effect of low oil prices, forex shortages and currency depreciation. Indeed, these are tough times, and as the saying goes, "when the going gets tough, the tough gets going".

Well, whether you are a brave pragmatist or a cautious optimist (or somewhere in the middle), allow us to take you away from these external pressures and usher you into the celebratory period of Easter!

This issue of Relaxnomiks features write-ups that will surely provide an escape from the stress of reality. After all, all work and no play... you know the rest.

Enjoy your read,

And as always, your readership is very much appreciated

Happy Easter!

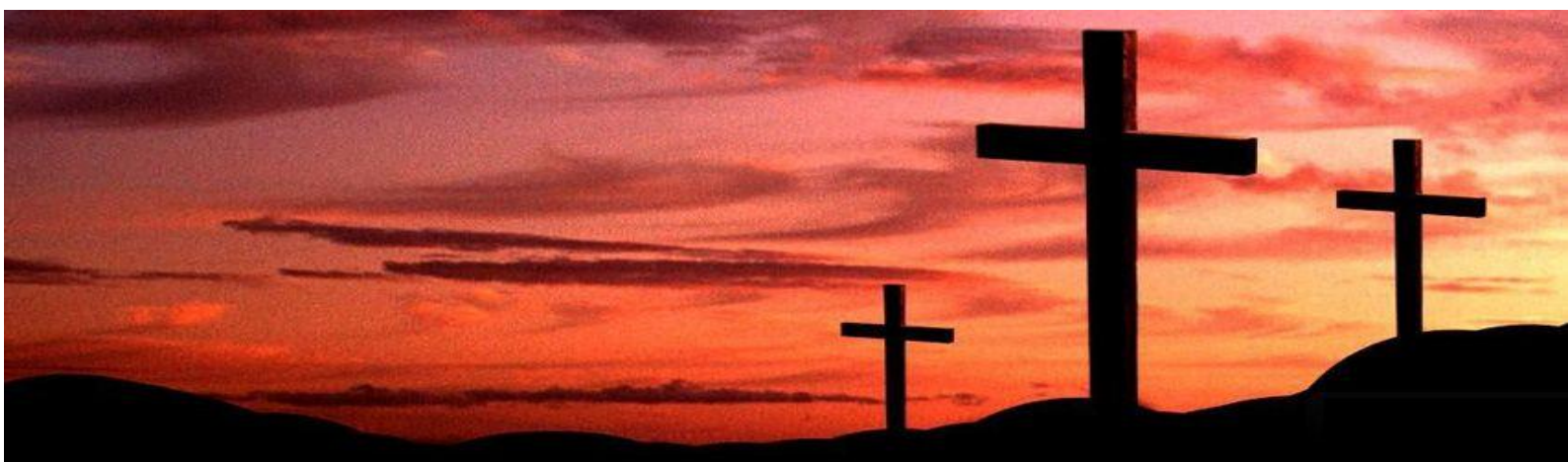
Yours faithfully,

Bismarck J. Rewane

(For and behalf of the publisher)

Contents

❖	Top 3 Easter Movies.....	5
❖	Beauty Secret: Puffy Eyes and Dark Circles.....	8
❖	The Skinny Jeans Myth- Culled from Bloomberg.....	12
❖	The Travel Spread.....	15
	○ Underwater Tourism.....	15
	○ The Holiday Hotspot Hunt.....	18
❖	The Easter Bunny.....	22
❖	Work Stress- Culled from Stressstop.com.....	24



TOP 3 EASTER MOVIES

Easter is just around the corner. Right now, you are preparing to celebrate the holiday that forms the core of Christianity. And you are just itching with excitement as the four day holiday you have been dreaming about since January 1st draws nearer. Yet after you have slept to your heart's content, a part of you is probably wondering what you will do to occupy yourself that will maintain the sacredness of the essence of Easter. Well, below is a list of the best movies about the death and (or) resurrection of Jesus Christ. So if you are up for a friend/family movie outing or you just prefer an indoor time of Netflix and chill, we've got you!

Warning: this review contains spoilers!

Risen (2016)

This movie is set in 33 AD and tells the story of the first forty days after the resurrection of Jesus through the eyes of a cynic unbeliever. Following the mysterious disappearance of Jesus' body, a Roman centurion, Clavius (played by Joseph Fiennes, the English actor that also starred as



William Shakespeare in *Shakespeare in Love*), is ordered to investigate the matter and retrieve the body immediately. Although his initial intention was to disprove the rumours that Yeshua (Jesus Christ) had risen from the dead, he experiences life changing moments that change his mission and destiny.

The movie was directed by Kevin Reynolds and released on the 19th of February 2016. In its first week the movie finished third in the U.S. box office with a total earnings of \$11.8 million, after *Deadpool* and *Kung Fu Panda 3*. The movie is still showing in cinemas across the country. The plot angle and the interpretation of historical and biblical facts makes the movie a must watch this Easter.

The Passion of the Christ (2004)

With its graphic imagery, excellent acting, and infusion of Hebrew and Aramaic dialogues, there is no way this popular movie would not have made it into our list. The movie depicts the last twelve hours of the life of Jesus. It opens in the Garden where Jesus is betrayed by his disciple, Judas Iscariot. It depicts almost every scene as told by the four gospels. From the popular 'not my will, but yours be done' prayer of Jesus in the garden, to the arrest showing Peter slashing off a soldier's ear, then to the round trips from the high priest, Caiaphas, to Pilate's house and Peter's denial to the 39 lashes, the nailing to cross, and Jesus' final words. The movie also brilliantly includes flashbacks of Jesus' life such as his triumphant entry in Jerusalem.



The movie was directed by Mel Gibson and released in cinemas on 24th February 2004, Ash Wednesday. The movie was shot independently on a budget of approximately \$30 million. In its opening weekend it earned over \$83 million. The movie holds records for being the highest-grossing R-rated movie and the highest-grossing religious movie of all time, with a total grossing of \$600 million worldwide.

With some popcorn, a box of tissues and a pillow to cover your eyes when it gets too gruesome (and it does!), this movie will bring great yet meaningful entertainment to your Good Friday evening. The beautiful drama about Christ's sufferings is a classic that you cannot watch too many times! The movie is available online for streaming or download.

Ben Hur: A Tale of the Christ (1959)

Although this movie is not centred on the story of Christ, it runs in parallel with Jesus' crucifixion. It follows the life of Ben-Hur, an affluent Jewish man who is wrongly accused by the new Roman chief, who is also an old friend. He is sentenced to the galleys and his family is imprisoned. While in slavery, Ben-Hur gains the favour of a roman consul, Arrius, who appeals for his freedom and takes him in as a son in Jerusalem. While visiting his family, he sees Jesus pass by with his cross to the site of the crucifixion. In the end, Ben-Hur witnesses the crucifixion and death of Jesus and accepts his salvation.



The movie, directed by William Wyler, held a record for the most Oscars won (11 in total) until 1997, when Titanic met the record. It had a large set, with 200 workers, 10,000 movie extras, 2500 horses and 200 camels – which brought the budget to a total of \$15million- an incredibly large budget for movies produced at that time. On one side, the movie is a tale of human betrayal and vengeance and on another side it tells a story of God's love and forgiveness. It is inspiring and quite engaging and it is available online for streaming and download. Nevertheless, if your modern 4D-cinematography eye can't get over the lacklustre video and audio quality that was typical for movies produced in that period, you can wait for the remake of this movie that will feature Jack Huston and Morgan Freeman and will be released in cinemas in August 2016.

BEAUTY SECRET: PUFFY EYES AND DARK CIRCLES

Waking up with puffy eyes that eventually graduate into dark circles overtime is one of the most common beauty problems. The thin layer of skin around the eyes is sensitive and requires special care to sustain its radiance and youthful look. Hence, managing eye bags and dark circles are extremely important to maintain a young and vibrant appearance. But before we delve into the best ways to mitigate these defections, let's have a quick look at the causes of such abnormalities pertaining to the skin around the eyes. As it is usually said, if you know the cause of a problem, you are one step closer to finding a solution

Causes

Dark circles are usually caused by tiredness or late working hours. Whilst these factors are major contributors to the development of the defection, other factors such as generic composition and aging play a role. In the world of science, this condition is usually called panda eyes or periorbital hyper pigmentation (scientific name), a condition in which there is excess production of melanin in the skin just below the eyes, thus, resulting in a dark patch underneath the eyes.

The skin loses its ability to regenerate as one gets older, making it thinner and less elastic. This is one of the reasons why elderly people have dark circles underneath their eyes despite the fact that they do not work late and do not suffer from insomnia or insufficient sleep.

With periorbital dark circles comes puffiness (a.k.a. eye bags) underneath the eyes. This is usually caused by a fluid build up arising from an infection, illness, allergies or excessive salt consumption to name a few. Eye puffiness usually occurs when the body retains more fluid than usual..

In addition, puffy eyes are also caused by engorged blood vessels. According to Smallwood (2014), the body combats fatigue by increasing the production of a chemical named cortisol to retain the energy needed to stay awake.

Coincidentally, this chemical increases the volume of blood supply flowing through blood vessels, hence, causing vessels to enlarge to accommodate the surge in blood flow.

Solutions

1. *Reduce fat intake and stay hydrated* - As with most issues that pertain to the body, hydration, hydration, and some more hydration is key. A well hydrated body is less likely to suffer from water retention that can cause your under-eye area to swell. 8-10 glasses are recommended but it might be a good idea to take it over the top with 12 glasses to make up for the days where you have a shortfall.

To ensure that you follow through, it is advised that you set a reminder to drink 2 glasses of water at a convenient time 5 times daily. Aside from drinking water, applying water to the affected area will also be effective. The cold water will help compress the blood vessels and reduce swelling.



- i) Submerge face in ice-cold water repeatedly, OR
- ii) Place a cloth filled with ice cubes on the eyes

This approach can be done early in the morning, just right after you take a shower or late at night just before bed.

2. *Tea Bags* – They contain anti-irritants that reduce swelling and inflammations

- i) Wet tea bag and Refrigerate for 20 minutes
- ii) Place refrigerated tea bags on closed eyelids
- iii) Relax and let the chills settle in
- iv) Repeat procedure twice a day



until desired results are attained

3. *Cold spoons*-- This will tighten up the skin underneath the eyes as well as relax the blood vessels

- i) Refrigerate 8 metal spoons for 30 minutes
- ii) Place cold spoons on the eye until the spoon becomes warm
- iii) Repeat this procedure until all spoons that were refrigerated have been used
- iv) It is recommended you used this approach to complement other methods.

4. *Egg whites*

Egg white is famous for the wonders it performs when applied to the skin. This can be attributed to its skin tightening agents which reduces under eye puffiness as well as reduce the appearance of wrinkles underneath the eye. Although be ready for the smell of the egg.



- i) Extract the yoke from the egg white
- ii) Add a few drops of another natural skin tightening agent (i.e. witch hazel); mix together by whisking
- iii) Apply the mixture to defected area underneath the eyes and leave it to dry
- iv) Wash off the mixture after 20 minutes
- v) It is recommended that this approach should be done daily for two weeks for best results

5. *Strawberries* - The alpha hydroxyl acid present in strawberries help make the skin look smoother and young hence reducing under-eye puffiness and swelling.

- i) Refrigerate some strawberries for 30 minutes
- ii) Peel off the tops and slice them into thick pieces
- iii) Lie down and place the slices under your eyes until the sliced berries become warm



This can be done repeatedly for 3 weeks. Though, this might pose to be an expensive approach, on the bright side, you get to eat them when you are done!

To conclude, while panda eyes are technically inevitable for most people working in the corporate environment, the next time you have puffy eyes, these home remedies proffer a quick fix. However, it is extremely important to note that puffy eyes may also result from infections or liver issues. In any case, if puffiness is accompanied with unusual sensations such as pain, schedule an appointment with your doctor. On a final note, ensure that you rest well and eat right.

THE SKINNY JEANS MYTH- CULLED FROM BLOOMBERG

Reports of the Skinny Jean's Death Have Been Greatly Exaggerated.

Leg-hugging denim remains the most popular style, and it's not going anywhere soon.

Sorry, haters.

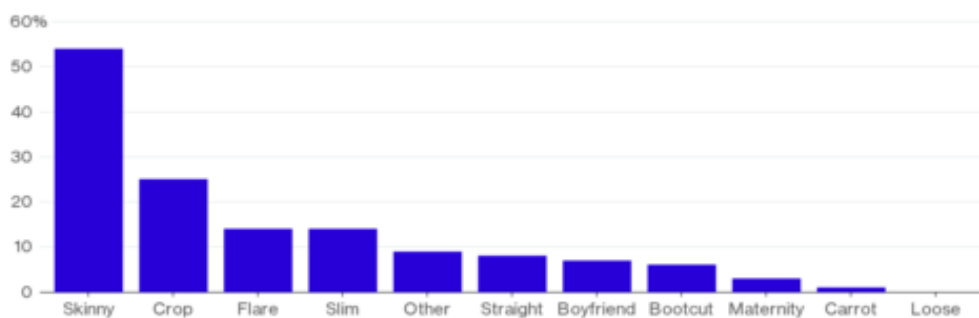
Figure-hugging denim has been a staple of women's wardrobes since the mid-2000s. Even as different styles saw fashion booms and busts in recent years, nothing has truly threatened the supremacy of the skinny. It's the essential style; all others are auxiliary.

Many have declared the death of the skinny jean. From influential fashion blogs such as *WhoWhatWear* to Internet hotsheets like *BuzzFeed*, skinny jeans are being called a fizzling trend. Nonetheless, no single style has yet been able to gain a following sufficient to pressure the skinny—much less dethrone it—and it's likely to be a while before one does. Perhaps it's just wishful thinking. "The skinny jeans trend just won't die," *Jezebell* lamented, back in 2014. Two years since, it still won't.

According to March data from trend forecasting firm WGSN, skinny jeans make up 54 percent of new full-price jean assortments in retail stores—the merchandise you see on typical store racks. No other style comes close.

Keeping It Tight

The skinny dominates share of new women's full-price assortments at retail in the U.S.



Source: WGSN

Because some styles overlap (e.g., cropped flare jeans) the numbers given exceed 100 percent

Bloomberg

"The skinny jean is not dead," said Sidney Morgan-Petro, a retail analyst at WGSN. "It just has more competition now."

That competition remains weak. Store shelves are actually selling fewer bootcut and boyfriend jeans than last year, at under 10 percent each. While flares have seen a large increase, to 11 percent, its still nowhere close to unseating the skinny. Slim fit jeans stand at 14 percent. The closest rival is the cropped style, at 25 percent. But that particular cut overlaps with many others, including the skinny. (Skin-tight jeans that stop mid-calf count as both skinny and cropped, for instance.)

Most retailers, if not all, still bank on the skinny to drive sales volume because that's what the masses demand. Street and runway styles pushing wider jeans have yet to convince the populace to switch. For instance, a recent trend in '70s clothes sparked a spike in flared jeans. The latest entrant is high-waisted flares cropped above the ankle, popularized by designer Rachel Comey. Fashion show catwalks last fall were chock-full of baggier denim but the style was less prominent just one season later, according to WGSN's runway show analysis.



It's not for lack of effort. Shoppers have lately had more kinds of jeans to choose among, as stores try to drum up excitement for new styles while ensuring they don't miss out on the next big thing. Some are worried that customers are bored with fashion because there simply hasn't been much to be excited about.

Take Urban Outfitters Inc. On a conference call with analysts this month, Chief Executive Officer Richard Hayne said a fashion "malaise" has beset the industry. Shoppers' closets remain full of the various types of skinny bottoms that the company has continued to sell over the past decade. "We've had all varieties of skinny: low-rise, high-rise, color, black, white, and print, washed, sanded, sliced and destroyed, yoga and active, leggings, jeggings, and stretch," he said. Lately, Urban Outfitters's Free People label has tried to push wider bottoms in an effort to stay in front of fashion trends. They still haven't caught on. "Surely, a major fashion shift is the cure," said Hayne. "I am not predicting exactly when that change will come, but I am certain it will."

The top women's style before the skinny proliferated was the bootcut: denim that widened at the calf and engulfed the foot. But that was a long time ago: You'd have to go all the way back to the early 2000s, an age of rhinestone-encrusted Juicy Couture tracksuits, popped collar polos, and Britney Spears in her pop star prime. The '90s were defined by higher-rise, straight-leg cuts that were roomier all the way down the leg, such as the iconic Levi's 501 style. In each era, one style dominated. For now, the skinny's reign continues.

"At the end of the day, the skinny jean is still the top-selling, top-ranking, most stocked style," said Morgan-Petro. "And it's probably going to remain that way for some time."



THE TRAVEL SPREAD



UNDER-WATER TOURISM

Are you planning a trip to an island in the middle of the ocean? Well my friend, that's so 2015. While we wait for holidays in mars, and the opportunity to use the phrase 'out of this world' literally, the 'in thing' in the travel industry is underwater tourism.

Two-thirds of Earth is water, yet humans have only made moderate steps towards its full exploration. We have counted over one million species of animals and plants in the ocean, and scientists estimate that another nine million are yet to be discovered by science. The growth of the under-water tourism industry allows us to get a peek into this world of great unknowns and ultimately contributes to the conservation of marine life. Underwater tourism is an experience everyone needs to incorporate into their holiday plans. Below is a list of things to do when walking on the oceans bed.

Submarine tourism: Board these machines at the bank of the vast ocean and be submersed 100 ft below sea level. From the comfort of the air-conditioned room, an underwater tour guide will take you through the mysterious world of sting-rays, eels, corals and reefs and the vast marine life.

Snorkelling: This is a more adventurous way to explore the ocean while swimming face down at the surface of the water. The basic equipment includes

a mask (goggles and a nose pincher), flippers for your feet and a snorkel (a mouthpiece and a tube). The mask improves vision underwater, the flippers allow faster propulsion through water while the snorkel allows mouth-breathing. Preferred water levels are generally shallow varying from 3 to 13ft deep. It provides a more intimate experience than submarine tourism and requires less expertise or training than scuba-diving.



Scuba diving: This is for the more venturesome and expert level swimmers (who also are secretly part fish!). Basic equipment includes a mask, a diving suit, and an open-circuit connected to the mouthpiece and scuba. The scuba is a breathing apparatus compressed with filtered and dehumidified air and is usually transported on the back of the diver. Just like with any other sport, you can undergo training in scuba-diving, and upon completion you will be awarded a certificate which many scuba-diving sites or rental agencies will require to see. First-timers may opt to pay for the services of an experienced escort. Although more rigorous than the others, scuba-diving is loved for its freedom of movement which allows depth towards the oceans bed.

Other Activities

Restaurants: When talking about underwater restaurants, it is impossible not to bring up Ithaa, the world's first glass underwater restaurant. The restaurant is one of the seven restaurants in Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, a luxury resort owned by the Hilton which occupies two private islands connected by a jetty. Ithaa was built on dry land before being carefully placed 16 feet below sea level on the bed of the Indian Ocean. Guests enter through a floating hut that houses a spiral staircase that leads to the 14-person capacity restaurant. Ithaa serves a fusion of Asian and European cuisine while offering a 180 degree panoramic view of



the exciting marine life around it. When you compare the 14 guests to the myriad of aquatic life at the glass walls it might feel more like an underwater human zoo with sea life watching humans than vice versa!

Hotels: If you're one who doesn't just want to eat with fishes, but to also sleep with them, then a night at an underwater resort is for you! Jules Undersea Lodge is a cottage-sized hotel located in the maroon lagoon in Florida. Guests must scuba dive 21 feet below the sea level to reach a latched opening which leads to the hotel. Jules was initially a research laboratory before it was renovated into a commercial lodge combining comfort and sea-tourism to create a unique experience

Museums: The most notable of them all is the Cancun underwater museum Museo Subacuatico de Arte (MUSA) in Mexico. Visitors can explore the over four hundred original sculptures while scuba diving in the wide Mexican Gulf. The museum was built for eco-conservation to attract some of the flocks of people coming to see the nearby coral reefs. It thus contributes to environmental preservation and international tourism.



THE HOLIDAY HOTSPOT HUNT

All work and no play makes Olatunde a dull, and might we add, irritable and stressed-out 'manbie'. A manbie (a blend of the word human and zombie) is a figure resembling a human usually characterized by a blank stare and an attention-span almost as short as their temper. They are commonly found cutting petrol queues, shouting at waiters at restaurants or kicking ATM machines for being 'too slow'. Don't let that be you! Get away from all the mayhem of work life and cool off on a holiday.

It's never too early to start planning for a holiday. In fact, the earlier you plan, the better for you, because you are more likely to get the best deals when you book early.

This year, try to resist the urge of visiting the usual U.S. or U.K (for the tenth year in a row). There are 200 other countries to choose from that have great relaxation and entertainment options and value for money. Below is a list of some countries with the above plus an added bonus: these countries have also experienced depreciations in their currencies in the past few months, so it'll be cheaper!

Morocco is a hotspot for those who love cultural history, art and sight-seeing.

The North African country is extremely exciting and diverse due to the various leisure activities the country has to offer. Journey through the Atlas Mountains to the edge of the Sahara desert where you can ride a camel and get a clear breathtaking view of the sunset.

Marrakech, also known as the "Red City", has a perfect blend of history and modernization. The city provides luxury hotels, Moroccan dinner and cultural shows, palaces and monuments. Djemaa el-Fna, an open market square beneath the Atlas Mountains, is a popular favorite. The square hosts magicians, street miners, snake charmers, musicians, food stalls, henna tattoo artists and more, all fighting for the attention of by-standers. Marrakech



also hosts a yearly Art festival in July and a Film festival in December. Other notable cities are Casablanca and Fes, whose medina is the largest and oldest medieval medina in the world. Spending a day wandering the narrow maze-like medieval streets within the ancient walls is sure to be a breathtaking experience.

It's important to note that Morocco is a Muslim country, thus to avoid attention it's best to cover up (low hems and long sleeves) Additionally, avoid travelling during the month of Ramadan (which starts June 6th this year). As it is the period of Muslim fasting the country generally slows down, restaurants open only for dinner, activities are reduced, and transportation becomes a challenge.

Kenya is a particularly entertaining holiday spot for wildlife and nature lovers

The country is known for its beautiful national parks, amazing ethnic culture and abundant and diverse wildlife. The country's geography has made it the habitat for a variety of wildlife. Its many natural parks and resorts provide a paradise to animal lovers. With elephant orphanage homes, giraffe centers, bird-watching fields, crocodile farms, wild ape parks and much more, tourists will be spoilt for choice!



Lake Nakuru (with its huge flock of flamingos) and Lake Naivasha are natural habitats for over 400 species of birds, thus, perfect havens for bird watching. Another attraction is the Daphne Sheldrick's elephant orphanage a home for elephants, rhinos and other animals. The initiative behind most of these reserves/parks is nature preservation and promotion of tourism.

Nairobi, the country's capital and largest city, offers a blend of rich colonial and traditional history with modernity. Museums display history, nature, culture and art. Close to this north-eastern city stands the mountain Kenya, the second tallest mountain in Africa after mountain Kilimanjaro. It is a much-loved spot for hiking and picnics.

Another city to visit is Mombasa, the second largest city in Kenya. Mombasa's strategic location on the shores of the ocean, make it a hotspot for tourists looking to enjoy a little sun or take part in water activities. There are several palm-lined, white sand, clear water beaches towards the south coastline of the city that offer both luxury and budget hotels. Small Islands by Mombasa provide perfect spots for fishing, snorkelling and swimming with dolphins.

The Lake Turkana cultural festival is another attractive activity offered in Kenya. This festival brings about 10 local tribes together showcasing their traditional dances, fashion and music.



Seychelles is a wonderful destination for people whose idea of a holiday is not complete without a beach

It is an archipelago of 115 islands in the Indian Ocean, off East Africa, known for its beaches, coral reefs, diving and nature. With breathtaking picturesque landscape, that looks like something out of a travel brochure, it's no surprise that it is specifically attractive to honeymooners and newlyweds. Also, the weather is gorgeously warm all year round.



The island offers activities like cruising and snorkelling- but, if you ever get bored of the way the sunlight reflects on the crystal clear sea, take a hike through the coastal jungles and observe the vast natural wildlife. A walk through Vallée de Mai island with a local guide telling you about age old tales of the forest is sure to keep you entertained for a whole day! You can also look forward to a vibrant night life with clubs, casinos and fancy dining.

But it's not all high-end luxury; there are many options for cheaper accommodation, such as guest houses and self-catering houses available for

short-term rent. Also, the country doesn't have any visa-entry requirements so all you need to get in is a ticket!

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil is the perfect place for those looking to witness the 2016 Olympic Games.

The city is known for its rich and unique culture. Beach football and volleyball matches are major annual events that have turned into tradition. And then there's the music that rings through the city, from speakers of street shops, to street samba players and road carnivals. Essentially, the Rio culture is a powerful blend of street sports and music. It's no wonder the Olympics 2016 is scheduled to hold there in August 2016.



The opening ceremony of the Olympics will hold in the recently refurbished Maracana Stadium and tickets for the event start from about \$600. Tickets to individual games and races, such as archery, swimming or football, start at about \$60. The Football final match will also hold at Maracana. Rowing games will be held on the Lagoa, a natural lake ringed by imposing black mountains. The road cycling will speed through the city's rainforest hills; and the beach volleyball will be on Copacabana beach – also the site of the Olympic fanzone.

Remember that the best things go quick, so book your accommodation and transport arrangements well in advanced. Additionally, if you are not keen on attending any of the Olympics games, it is advised that you visit Rio before or after the games instead, when prices (of accommodation, leisure and transport etc) are much lower.

THE EASTER BUNNY: WHAT'S THE FASCINATION WITH A RABBIT?

Although the history of Easter is primarily linked to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the history of Easter arguably has roots linked to the pagan holiday of Eastre. This festival was celebrated at every vernal equinox (the start of spring) in honour of the German divinity Eastre (Anglo-Saxon) or Ostara (German). Ostara can be traced back to a Proto-Indo-European deity of dawn, hence representing the change of a season into another. These roots made for the easy adoption by Christians, in the 8th century, to replace the change in season, with the death to the resurrection of Christ.

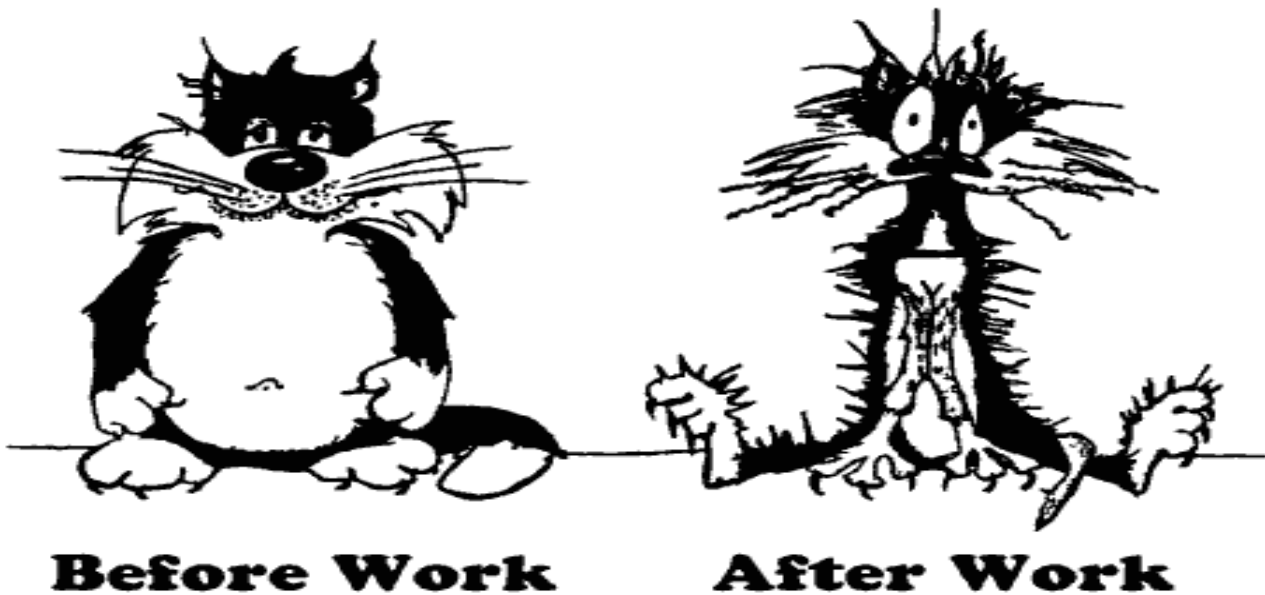


The link to the rabbit and its eggs, however, is less clear. In many portrayals of Ostara, an earthly symbol of a hare or rabbit is utilized. This was because the hare symbolized fertility. The first recording of the rabbit associated with Easter, however, is not until 1968 in Georg Frank Von Franckenau's *About the Easter Egg*, where he records that the tradition of the Easter bunny first originated in the French town of Alsace, which was previously occupied by Germans. Another possible rabbit link comes from the eggs themselves. Authors such as Ace Collins argue that the association stems from children searching for eggs in fields. At this point, eggs from all kinds of birds were consumed before the domestication of certain birds came into play. Therefore egg hunts, which would enable survival, as eggs were a major source of food, were later utilized as means for entertainment and interaction amongst families. The eggs from different kinds of birds had their own idiosyncratic attributes that made them attractive. In the event that children searched for eggs in fields, they indirectly scare the rabbits living in those fields. As the eggs are discovered in the wake of the rabbits fleeing, the association of rabbits to the eggs was concocted.

The eggs themselves may be linked to Easter through the orthodox Christian lent which involves abstaining from certain things, eggs inclusive. Eggs were then

used to break the fast after a period. They did this by through a colour dying ritual, with dyes made from flowers to bring in spring into the home. This likely set the foundation for the artistic nature of Easter eggs.

No matter your reservations and speculations surrounding the birth of the Easter bunny tradition, it is always a fun way to bring the family together like Christmas morning.



Most working people don't realize that stress is a vital part of their job. Without some job stress you wouldn't be very productive. That's why, when your boss places reasonable demands on you (like giving you a deadline you both agree on) it can actually help you get the job done more efficiently.

However, there are many (stress-related) factors that can affect your performance at work. For one thing, each worker handles stress differently. So the right amount of job stress for one person might be too much for another.

In addition, not all jobs are created equal. An air traffic controller, coal miner, stock broker, emergency medical worker or an inner-city school teacher is thought to have more job stress than workers in other professions. But everyone experiences stress differently. That's why some people love roller coasters and other people hate them. So you can't predict whether a job is going to be stressful strictly based on objective measures (if there were such a thing) of how stressful a job might be.

That's why determining how much job stress is too much is a tricky proposition. But you can start this process by asking yourself three questions. 1. How adept am I at handling job stress? 2. How much control do I have in my occupation? 3. Is my job environment more stressful than other job environments?

How adept am I at handling job stress? Take a look at your coping skills. You can improve your coping skills by learning standard relaxation techniques like progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing and mindfulness. Meditation and regular exercise will also help. Even getting organized can help you cope better with job stress.

Do you mean to tell me a stress ball isn't for throwing at people who stress you out?



How much control do I have in my occupation? Nurses often have more stress than doctors; air traffic controllers often have more stress than pilots; And assistant managers often have more stress than managers. Why?

There is a correlation between responsibility and control when it comes to job stress. If you have lots of responsibility in your job and little or no control you are going to have more stress. But if your levels of responsibility and control are in balance chances are your stress will be lower.

For example, nurses often have as much responsibility for patient's health as doctors but not as much input into the control of their care. This imbalance can be very stressful. Pilots and managers have more responsibility but the increased levels of control helps decrease their susceptibility to job stress. If you feel the responsibility in your job doesn't match the control, see if you can make adjustments: Making minor changes in your job description can sometimes bring these two forces into balance.

Is my job environment more stressful than other job environments? In order to answer this question you need to examine the circumstances under which you

work. Conditions that can contribute to job stress include: chronic time pressure, a difficult supervisor, unsafe working conditions, a period of downsizing, changes in management, major changes in policies, increase in the pace of work, conflicts with co-workers, or being forced to work overtime.

In a healthy organization, the management:

1. Clearly defines your responsibilities
2. Empowers you to participate in decisions that affect your work.
3. Creates work schedules that are realistic and compatible with the demands outside your job.
4. Challenges you to work up to but not over your capabilities.

If job stress is adversely affecting your life carefully examine the three areas we've just discussed. Try to improve your coping skills, seek out jobs that have equal measures of responsibility and control and most importantly look for healthy organizations (and/or supervisors) that encourage you to work at optimum levels.

What can I do to help me manage stress at work right now?

1. Exercise. Engage in vigorous exercise every morning before you go to work. If that's not possible, take a walk at lunch. If that's not possible, get a pedometer and find a way to walk 10,000 steps a day at your job.
2. Balance control and responsibility. If you feel like your job entails a lot of responsibility but not a lot of control look for ways to put these two forces in balance. Tell your boss, I don't mind doing this task (for example, restocking the supply cabinet), but I need to be in control of when and how it should be done. (If your boss says you can only order so much or makes you



wait to get permission to place an order - then blames you for running out—that's an example of control and responsibility getting out of balance.)

3. Check your values. Sometimes your company may have a different set of values than you do. Imagine a vegetarian working in a meat packing plant and you'll know what we are talking about here. If your company's values don't match yours, you'll experience stress at work. Maybe you don't agree with certain business practices your company takes for granted. If there's a mismatch, it's time to change jobs.

4. Change bosses. If you believe you have a difficult supervisor, check and compare with several co-workers and several friends first, and if your boss comes out last, go to HR and ask for a transfer to a different department.

5. Change jobs. Remember the vast majority of stress at work is caused by unfriendly and or unsafe working conditions. If you are working in a hostile or unsafe environment with poor lighting, unrealistic deadlines, unrelenting time pressure, forced overtime, poor benefit packages, and/or a difficult boss think about how much time you'll spend at work in the course of your lifetime. Probably over 60,000 hours! Then send out your resume

