

Yahoo Japan is considering cutting the work week down to four days

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KAROSHI NO MORE



Four days is enough. (Reuters/Yuya Shino)

The Japanese have a word for “death by overwork:” *karoshi*. So it’s no surprise that Japan ranks towards the bottom of economically advanced countries when it comes to work-life balance.

Almost [22% of employees](#) work long hours and find work intruding in important aspects of personal life—taking time away from relationships, for instance. Yet in the past few years, Japan has been working to put to rest the stereotype of the overworked employee, both through [government-led efforts](#) (last year, prime minister Shinzo Abe launched a task force to improve the work-life balance in the country) and private companies initiatives.

The latest of such efforts is a government-sponsored campaign, called Premium Friday, to push companies to have shorten the workday one Friday every month. Some companies are moving beyond that, for instance forcing workers to head home at a certain time or allowing work-from-home days.

One of the companies leading the change is Yahoo Japan, which unlike its US counterpart—where work-life balance was [notoriously not a priority](#) of CEO Marissa Mayer, who will soon leave the company’s board [after it joins Verizon](#) (paywall)—has been trying to promote a healthier work culture. Now, the company is considering the introduction of a three-day weekend.

A four-day work week could have advantages for the company, too, as it

could cut costs without sacrificing productivity. “By giving employees more freedom on how to work, we’re hoping that employees choose a style that lets them perform at their best, so that we boost productivity,” Megumi Yagita, a spokeswoman for the company, [told Bloomberg](#).

Already, Yahoo Japan allows its 5,800 employees to work remotely five days a month, and gives employees who live far from its offices a monthly allowance of ¥15,000 (\$130) to take the bullet train.