

Fridays Off

by Pat Katepoo

How to Have 26 to 52
Long Weekends a Year
at 90 to 100% Pay

Pat Katepoo has been a flexible work advisor since 1993. Through her WorkOptions website—online since 1997—and her popular eBooks, she has helped tens of thousands of professionals successfully negotiate telecommuting, compressed workweek, part-time and job sharing arrangements. Her *Proposal Packages* for flexible work have sold to satisfied customers in all 50 US states and more than 25 countries.

Pat and WorkOptions have been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Smart Money*, *BusinessWeek*, *US News & World Report*, *Chicago Tribune* and dozens of other magazines and newspapers, as well as in more than 40 books including *The Working Mother's Guide to Life*, *Working After Retirement for Dummies*, and *The Wall Street Journal Guide to the Business of Life*. Pat was the featured expert on a special *NBC Nightly News* segment on flexible work.

Learn more about her other downloads and services at WorkOptions.com.



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How to Get Fridays Off at 90 to 100% of Your Pay

Imagine having enough time off for family outings, home projects and community activities. Enough time for fun, for frequent weekend getaways or for mini-road trips. Find out how starting here. But first...

Surprise! Taking 26 - 52 Fridays off a year *won't* slice your salary to smithereens. The specific strategies below explain how to claim most Fridays to yourself and still keep 90 to 100% of your pay. And...

You *don't* have to work four, 10-hour days to make it happen.

Option # 1 Take Every Other Friday Off (90-100% pay retained)

Option # 2 Take Every Friday Off (90-100% pay retained)

With an extra tactic for people 50+

Option # 3 Fridays Off Variations to Fit Your Needs

Should You Ask for Fridays Off in a Down Economy?

As you read through the three options, you'll learn why a down economy may provide a ripe opportunity for trading money for time off.

Fridays Off Option # 1: Take Every Other Friday Off

Here's how this one plays out:

Work 72 hours over two-week time periods, all-year round.

- First week: Monday through Friday (40 hours)
- Second week: Monday through Thursday (32 hours)

That's only 10% fewer work hours than the standard, which makes it relatively manageable for your boss—and your budget.

(As a salaried professional, you probably work longer than eight hours a day. You can still make your case because the cut in hours from taking every other Friday off would be proportional to the 40/32 split.)

Retain 90% or More of Your Pay...Even up to 100%

Really? Yes! Follow me on this. Negotiating 10% fewer hours generally means a 10% cut in pay, or 90% retention of your salary. But to do better than that, time your request to line up with your next performance review when you're expecting and offered a raise.

Acknowledge your manager's recognition of your performance and contributions to your employer, then segue into your pitch to forego the pay raise and trade it instead for time.

From that point, **negotiate for more hours off instead of more pay.** Further down, you'll find some scripted opening lines you can use to introduce this idea to your manager.

Trading Pay for Time Off

At face value, 10% (in hours) may seem like a lot to ask for in lieu of a raise. After all, the average raise for salaried, non-union, non-executive, white-collar workers is in the 3-5% range, depending on what's happening with the economy. (As of this mid-recession May 2009 writing, wage freezes are not uncommon.)

Yet because it costs your employer *nothing* in *direct* dollars to give you more time off, it's possible to negotiate those same eight hours off (10%) as a trade for a raise of 3 to 5%.

Keep Talking...

If that doesn't fly, keep talking. You may be able to find an agreeable compromise position. For example, combine a 5% pay raise offer with a 5% pay cut to get your 10% cut in hours, that is, eight hours off every other week.

It's a Part-time Arrangement, But Don't Call it That

Working 72 out of 80 hours fits the "part-time" category, even though it's only 8 hours off every two weeks. But don't call it that; pitch it as a "reduced workweek" when presenting your [professional proposal for part-time hours](#).

Slow Economy? No Raises in Sight This Year?

If your employer has slowing business or other budget reasons for a delayed or less-than-satisfactory raise, you could actually be in a stronger position for making your time trade-off proposal.

But how do you approach this? What should you say?

I've developed scripts to get the conversation going.

Scripted Opening Lines for Pay-for-Time Off Trade

Whether you choose Fridays Off or another less-than-full-time option, one way to get it approved is to trade a pay raise for the reduced schedule that you want.

I've developed some scripts to introduce the idea to your manager the next time you have a favorable job review. (And what to do if you can't wait.) First, let's look at three scenarios.

At your next job performance review, your manager might grant you:

A - The pay raise you expect or ask for, and earned

B - No raise, even though you've earned it, citing economic or other reasons

C - A raise that is below your expectations, due to budget constraints or other reasons unrelated to your job performance.

Following are suggested scripts for each of the three scenarios. Use them as a springboard for your custom-crafted responses—i.e., wording that reflects your voice and the relationship with your manager—for trading a would-be pay raise into part time hours.

In Response to A:

“Thank you. I appreciate your recognition of the value I'm bringing to the job. [Pause and lean forward.] This may surprise you, but I'd like to make a request for something in lieu of the raise. May I? [Manager responds.] I've put together [a proposal for a restructured work schedule](#) that would have me working [briefly describe the part time schedule you want]. That would be a highly-valued acknowledgment of my work here. [Hand your manager your proposal.] Would you please give it serious consideration? I'd like to follow up with you on this in the next week or so. For now, I'm ready for our discussion about my future performance goals.”

In Response to B:

There are various reasons unrelated to job performance that a manager might not grant a raise; a common one relates to budget. For example, “We don't have the budget for (some or all of) your pay raise request.” OR “Revenues have slowed down lately, so it just doesn't look good for a raise right now.”

There are a few ways to get around that barrier and still get a pay increase (see Chapter 7 of the [Get a Raise Workbook for Women](#)), but for now, let's address the raise-time issue.

First get acknowledgment from your boss of the merits of granting the raise, even though s/he contends there are reasons it won't be forthcoming. Then negotiate your time off. "What I hear you saying is that, you would grant my request for a 5% increase if it weren't for the budget constraints. Is that correct? [Manager responds.] Thank you. I appreciate your recognition of the value I'm bringing to the job. Since my merit raise can't be put into place in the near-term, I'd like to suggest a way that my job performance could be rewarded now that won't add to payroll costs. Since time is money, I have an innovative way to acknowledge my performance with time instead of money." [As above; [present your proposal for part-time hours.](#)]

In Response to C:

A less-than-expected raise for an otherwise deserving employee is likely to be accompanied by an apologetic explanation about budget restraints. In this case, you can use a variation of the responses found earlier:

"What I hear you saying is that, you would grant the full raise of 5% instead of 3% if it weren't for the budget constraints. Is that correct? [Manager responds.] Thank you. I appreciate your recognition of the value I'm bringing to the job. I'd like to suggest a way that my job performance could be fully rewarded now that won't add to payroll costs. I have an innovative way to acknowledge my performance with time instead of money." [[Present your proposal for your new part-time schedule.](#)]

Will It Work?

This tactic of trading a pay raise for fewer hours is best pulled off in smaller, private employer settings. Rules are more fluid, making flexibility more easily adapted than in government and union settings, or at some larger employers with rigid policies.

Can't Wait for a Job Performance Review?

You could take a gutsier approach to asking. Before you do, assess four factors that could work in your favor. You'll find them in the article, [How to Get a Raise When Negotiating Part-time Hours.](#)

Additional Reading found at <http://WorkOptions.com/articles.htm>

- Part-time Work: "How Could We Afford It?"
- Redesign Your Job to Part Time
- Don't Get Personal! Make the Business Case for Flexible Work
- How to Prepare for Objections
- Requesting Flexible Work: Two Big Mistakes to Avoid

Fridays Off Option # 2: Take Every Friday Off

This time off tactic gives you every Friday off with a pay cut of 0-10%. How is that possible?

It's no secret. Thousands of other professionals have already done it by proposing a flexible work schedule.

Here's the alternative schedule:

- Work 36 hours a week
- Monday through Thursday
- 9 hours a day

Because this is a variation on the four, 10-hour workweek (but a less strenuous variation), use the [Compressed Workweek Proposal Package](#) to make your request.

And at 36 hours a week, it's only 10% fewer hours than the standard workweek.

Is It Really Only 10%?

But wait. If you're a typical career professional, you're probably already working 9-hour days (or more), right? That's a 45-hour workweek.

In that case, proposing a 36-hour workweek is closer to 20% fewer hours, so your manager *might* challenge your proposed pay reduction of only 10%.

Are You 50+? This Tactic is for You

I said “might.” This is where your value as a seasoned professional can pull some weight.

Try this tactic: present your written proposal for a new work schedule at face value, using the 36/40 restructuring, but include a preface **which preempts a rebuttal** from your manager. Like this:

“Along with countless other baby boomers, I’m not interested in a full retirement lifestyle. My desire is to continue being actively engaged in work. I have a wealth of knowledge and experience to contribute, and my current position is a good fit for my skills. At the same time, I’d like to give more attention to outside interests and commitments.

I propose that we restructure my current full-time position as [your job title] into a reduced workweek. The detailed plan below describes how it would work. I’d like to encourage a collaborative effort to make a flexible work schedule a success for all involved.”

With this preface, you're positioning and emphasizing your value as an experienced employee. Ideally, your manager—as a reward and retention measure—will respond to your 36-hour workweek plan without adjusting the proposed 10% pay reduction, even though you're cutting back from 45 hours a week (i.e., a 20% reduction in hours). That's the ideal, anyway. If it isn't reached, you'll move on in your negotiations, as noted below.

[If you're copying the first page of the written proposal](#), place the preface above the INTRODUCTION. Or adapt the above script as your oral introduction when presenting your written proposal.

How (or if) you apply this strategy will depend on how you think your manager would receive it, so I'll leave it to you to make that judgment.

Go For Less Than a 10% Pay Adjustment

Then move on to apply the pay trade-off strategy as described in Fridays Off # 1.

Negotiate to a Mutual Agreement

What if despite your strategic efforts your manager challenges you about the actual hours reduction (20% vs. 10%)? Simply move on to negotiate the time/pay trade-offs until you reach a mutually agreeable percentage point.

All this is moot if your hours are pretty close to the standard 40-hour workweek. In that case, yours should be a relatively smooth path to getting agreement of your new work schedule if you [present a professional proposal](#) outlining all the details.

Words of Wisdom About Working Less

It is useless for you to work so hard
from early morning until late at night,
anxiously working for food to eat;
for God gives rest to his loved ones.

Psalm 127:2 (New Living Translation)

Fridays Off Option # 3 is on the next page.

Fridays Off Option # 3: Variations to Fit Your Needs

Need more ideas for extra long weekends?

Variation A

- Work 32 hours a week
- Monday through Thursday
- 8 hours a day

A straight salary pro-ration would mean a 20% pay cut, but by now you know better: you'll negotiate a 0-10% cut instead, right?

For a how-to refresher, re-read Option # 1 and [How to Get a Raise When Negotiating Part-time Hours](#).

Use the [Part-time Proposal Package](#) to make your request.

Variation B

- Work 36 hours a week
- Monday through Thursday
- 9 hours a day
- + four hours from home on early Friday mornings

That's 40 hours a week so 100% of your salary is retained.

Okay, Friday isn't all yours but there's no commute and you'll get a good jump on the weekend by noon!

A practical solution for making this work is to use GoToMyPC so you can be in front of your office computer without leaving your home.

[Click here to get your free 30-day trial of GoToMyPC.](#)

To get a yes to this request, [order the Popular Pair of Proposal Packages which combines telecommuting and compressed workweek.](#)

Flexible work arrangements don't have to fit a formula. You can craft the schedule that fits your needs and then negotiate your request.

If you're not sure which flexible work combination and Proposal Package to use, [please ask me](#). I'd be glad to help.