

Digital nomads returning home

adapted from an article by Alina Dizik

- 1 When Anna Wickham, 28, came back from 14 months of working as a digital nomad in the Philippines and Vietnam, she expected to settle back into her old life easily. But six months later, the Oklahoma City native is still re-adjusting to American ways. “It takes no time to uproot yourself, but inputting yourself into a social ecosystem is more difficult – I’m still at it,” said Wickham.
- 2 After years on the road, the latest generation of digital nomads – people who work as they travel thanks to an increasing number of remote opportunities – have come back home with a message: It’s not always a dream to work while travelling and re-integrating can be difficult. Though constant travel can start out to be exciting, eventually some degree of isolation sets in and may lead to more serious depression. “Even keeping in touch virtually via video chat may not be enough since having a physical presence is key to warding off loneliness,” according to Sean Truman, another former nomad.
- 3 Many digital nomads end up slowing down and eventually heading home. Take Taylor Pearson, 27. The digital-marketer-turned-author is now settled in New York, but spent almost three years travelling to Brazil, Vietnam and Thailand. After months of travel, he wanted to settle down to spend longer in each place because he was having trouble finding enough jobs while switching destinations. “Working in the US has made it easier to find new business opportunities,” he added.
- 4 Because many of the digital nomads who boomerang home had never planned to return or come back earlier than planned, the re-entry process can be both time-consuming and mentally draining at first, experts say. Keeping up with friendships while abroad can reap benefits once you’ve returned, Wickham advised. She hadn’t worked hard to maintain friendships and since returning has had to re-invest in forging new relationships. Now, she tries to be in town to meet friends most weekends.
- 5 Many digital nomads end up creating hybrid lives, between periods of travel and having a home base, said Victoria Watts Kennedy, 32, founder of the Bridges and Balloons blog, which focuses on her current travels and life back home. She spent more than



three years as a digital nomad with her now-husband and visited more than a dozen countries in that time. Now back home in London, she continues to keep a flexible schedule to travel for weeks, sometimes months at a time. This year, she spent two months in New Zealand with her husband. “It doesn’t have to be all or nothing,” she said.

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