

## Ready, Set, Stress! It's Memorial Day Weekend!

*karen amster-young :: The Beach Chair Chronicles*

All month I was in April: My brain, my calendar, my closet and my body. This year, more than any other I could remember, Memorial Day weekend arrived long before I was ready. Most people will agree that at some point around age 35, life really begins moving at warp speed. There should seriously be two “unofficial” summer kick-off weekends: one for those under age 35 and one for those after age 35. The under 35 set should keep Memorial Day Weekend – let them get things started! For those on the other side, let me propose July 1st as the kick-off: the fact is, after a certain point in life, you simply need more time! Just to have some fun and make my point, I compiled a representative sampling of some of the preparation involved – physical, mental and logistical:

- Lose at least 10lbs (if you pretend that this is not always on your list, don't bother to continue reading)
- Schedule time for spray tan or at least a few hours in the make-up department at a select department store for summer self-tanning and protection essentials (driven by necessity, not vanity)
- Reorganize closet (move the dark, winter clothes to another area or closet to minimize packing stress)
- Take inventory of summer wardrobe, (including children's if applicable) – break out the Jack Rogers again!
- Prepare to fit 7 days of life into 5 days since there will be no or little productivity on weekends from this point on
- Arrange new babysitting schedule if applicable (find new babysitter if the one you use in the city does not want to schlep to the Hamptons)
- Enroll child or children in various summer activities (paperwork, deposits)
- Review summer schedule of so-called “hot” Hamptons happenings – which ones are really worth going to?
- Invite select summer guests for designated weekends and coordinate schedules (this involves at least 10 e-mails); learn how to politely turn-down certain prospective guests
- Determine if you are going to continue to “see” your current girlfriend or boyfriend for the summer or break things off (if applicable). I've been told that for the latter it involves starting fights for no reason around the end of March

- Secure beach permit for select beaches (not as easy as it sounds)
- And finally, buy all accoutrements for the new hobby or leisurely activity that you convince yourself you will absolutely do this summer

Well...you get the idea. The list goes on and on. It can truly be exhausting just to prepare for the summer — especially if you are the type of person who simultaneously is ambitious but generally procrastinates and therefore has not accomplished any of the above despite the late date on the calendar. Being summer-ready can really evoke anxiety; it's the pressure of a new season like that feeling in the fall when you are supposed to have your fall wardrobe and mind-set in order for "back-to-school" time. One begins to wonder if it is all worth it. But, in the end of course it is. Maybe the answer though is just to take things as they come. There have been summers where I am absolutely SURE I will cook gourmet meals; I arrive at the beach house with those great summer magazines featuring recipes and great photos with titles like "How to Prepare the Most Delicious Poolside Brunch". By August they are usually still in a pile near the T.V.; there was another summer I was determined to learn how to paint. I even bought one of those kits that are supposed to make getting started "as easy as 1-2-3". The box remained closed all summer as ran back and forth after my 3 year old in the backyard. Oh and there was last summer when I envisioned myself biking around the Hamptons instead of driving. I even bought a new bike rack that would fit my bike and my daughter's (with training wheels). That was until I realized that we could not go very far together and certainly Majors Path was out of the question. So instead I just drove to Starbucks every morning in my SUV. So this summer, I am just going to relax. Chances are there will be "too many" BBQs with kids and just hanging out at the house with friends and family despite all those amazing parties and benefits that "I intend to go to". But in the end, I think we all get to a point that we realize that it's really all about just hanging out. The great lobster dinners in the backyard still happen. You may not learn to paint but chances are you at least walk into a few great galleries featuring East End artists. The bike may not get as much use as you thought but somehow we manage to get some tennis in or workouts at the gym. The beach, the sand, relaxing, being with friends for those great sunset "happy hour" gatherings with kids running around (OK, maybe it would be better at times without the kids). Perhaps this summer, when I am truly not ready and have no aspirations of learning a new hobby it will just naturally happen and I will discover a new passion. If I can just relax about the whole thing — it's all about not having expectations and just letting the summer happen.

Shit, where is the summer schedule anyway?

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