



# Beating the Winter Blues: Overcoming 'Blue Monday' and the Post-Holiday Slump

The festive season is often filled with excitement and joyous celebrations. However, once the decorations are packed away and the cheer fades away, many people find themselves facing a challenging time. The period after the holidays, particularly January, can feel like a real slog.



## Why Do We Feel Down After the Holidays?

It's common to feel a sense of loss after the holiday period ends - there aren't any parties to look forward to, reunions with family members are now months away, and many keenly feel financial pressure after overspending on gifts, food, and activities.

In addition, the winter weather can make it harder to get outside or stay active, contributing to low energy and a lack of motivation. The shorter days and lack of sunlight can disrupt your sleep patterns and affect the production of serotonin, the chemical in your brain responsible for regulating mood, leading to feelings of sadness or anxiety.

However, there are things you can do to beat the winter blues and reclaim your energy and enthusiasm for the year ahead.



## Tips for Beating Blue Monday and the Winter Slump



### 1. Set Small, Purposeful Goals

January is a great time to set small, realistic goals that will give you a sense of direction. Whether it's starting a new hobby or focusing on fitness, having goals can provide motivation and a sense of direction.



### 2. Embrace the Light

Try to get outside during daylight hours, even for a short walk. If that's not possible, consider using a light therapy box to mimic sunlight, which can help boost mood and energy levels, especially for those affected by seasonal affective disorder (SAD).



### 3. Stay Active

Exercise is one of the most effective ways to combat low mood. Physical activity releases endorphins, the "feel-good" hormones, which help lift your spirits. Whether it's a brisk walk, home workout, or fitness class, staying active can boost your energy and improve mental wellbeing.



### 4. Connect with Others

Stay in touch with friends or family, whether virtually or in person. Social connections are vital for maintaining your mental wellbeing, and having something to look forward to can break up the monotony of winter.



### 5. Prioritise Self-Care

Carve out time for activities that nurture your body and mind, like taking a relaxing bath, reading, or practising mindfulness. Self-care helps you recharge and stay grounded when you're feeling low.



### 6. Celebrate Small Wins

During the winter months, it's important to recognise and celebrate small achievements. Whether it's getting out of bed on a dreary morning or completing a workout, acknowledging the little victories can provide a sense of accomplishment and lift your spirits.

## Focus on What's Ahead

January is just a small part of the year. By focusing on self-care, staying active, and connecting with others, you can make it through the winter months feeling positive and energised for what's to come. Embrace the new year with intention, set inspiring goals, and take small steps every day to brighten up the season. You've got this!

It's not uncommon to experience a dip in mood at the start of the year. In fact, 'Blue Monday', typically the third Monday of January, is often cited as the "most depressing day of the year." But don't worry - you're not alone, and there are plenty of ways to boost your mood and make it through the winter months with a more positive outlook.