

While #BlueMonday stems more from a marketing campaign than scientific fact, it's a reminder that feeling low, anxious, or unmotivated isn't bound to a single day. In reality, our emotions are deeply personal and influenced by what's happening in our lives, whether it's January or July.

Here are some suggestions that may help:



1. Scratch Your Creative Itch

Winter is the perfect time to pick up a creative new hobby! Whether you've always wanted to learn how to knit, take up calligraphy or practice making the perfect cake.

Learning a new skill can create new neural connections in your brain while strengthening the old ones, which is extremely valuable for cognitive health. Focusing on a fun activity outside your comfort zone can also relieve anxiety. To get started, check out this [list of easy and stress-relieving hobbies](#).

2. Practice Relaxation

A meditation or mindfulness practice helps relax your mind, body and soul. With so many things out of your control and a seemingly endless to-do list, this allows you to focus on the current moment and your breath. Studies also show that practicing mindfulness and meditation has a myriad of health and wellness benefits, from reducing chronic pain to alleviating depression. Tune inward and help control a sad or anxious mind. Get started with just a five-minute daily session. Apps like [Calm](#) offer free guided meditations which many beginners find easier than simply sitting quietly on your own.

3. Schedule Time to Move

Although in winter we may lack a little motivation, exercise—in any form—is healthy for your brain and body and boosts your mood as well. The good news is, you don't have to go out and speed-walk a half marathon. Just moving thirty minutes a day, three times a week, is enough to make a noticeable difference when it comes to beating the winter blues.

4. Put on a Favorite Film

When all else fails, throw on an old favorite film—bonus points if it makes you laugh. The more reminiscent of your childhood or happier years, the better. Focusing on pleasant memories and utilizing the power of nostalgia is a mood booster. Harness some healthy escapism this winter season with a trip down memory lane.

5. Turn Off the News

Although it's important to stay informed, the constant onslaught of negative stories is not mentally healthy, particularly if you already struggle with staying positive during winter. If you're finding this difficult to listen to, take a break. Put down the newspaper, exit the news apps and most importantly, limit social media use. The human brain is primed to react to negativity. As such, limiting the stimulus that puts your mind in a state of stress will significantly improve your overall mood and outlook.

If you want to keep up-to-date, give yourself a designated time of day to listen, read or watch the news—then choose other activities from this list to fill the rest of your day.

6. Bake (or just eat!) a Treat

Believe in the power of comfort food! Sometimes, all you need is a little bit of sweetness and a dash of nostalgia. When you find yourself getting down in the winter blue's, choose a recipe and start baking. By committing to a task and completing it, your brain will release the "reward chemical" dopamine and continue to release it even while you eat your treats afterward.

Baking recipes that bring back fond memories also stimulates your brain in a healing manner.

7. Ask For Help If You Need It

Even with all of these tips, you may experience a slump you can't climb out of. It's crucial to pay attention to the distinction between having one bad day and struggling mentally. It can mean the difference between the winter blues and Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). If it all seems too much, reach out for help.