

## Shake Off the After-Christmas Blues

You've experienced them, haven't you? The after-Christmas blues? The sort of empty, blahsy, low-energy lethargy that strikes many of us right after Christmas?

Many of us do feel that way after Christmas. After all, the build-up to Christmas is long and intense. We start anticipating and preparing for the holiday months in advance.

Even the actual celebration of Christmas occurs not just on a single day, but over a period of weeks. Parties, dinners, get-togethers, potluck lunches and many other activities celebrating the season begin occurring several weeks before Christmas day.

Talk about a build-up! No wonder there's a huge letdown when all the Christmas joy is over!

And most of us are living life at a frenetic pace in the weeks leading up to Christmas. There's so much to do to prepare for the holiday; so much that we have to squeeze into our already jam-packed schedules.

So it's no surprise that once we've survived Christmas, many of us are left feeling somewhat numb and exhausted, both physically and emotionally. And adding insult to injury, many of us have to go back to work after an extended time off. Bah Humbug!

Fortunately, there are a few things you can do to fix your funk and obliterate your blues:

- Exercise! Did you know that exercise is one of the best ways to stave off a case of the blues? It's true; exercise is a mood-boosting activity. Now admittedly, since the after-Christmas blues are often accompanied by a feeling of physical fatigue, you're probably not going to feel much like exercising. But force yourself. Instead of sapping what little energy you have, exercise will actually boost your energy levels.

Oh, and one other benefit to kicking your post-Christmas exercise program into high gear? It'll help you start shedding those extra post-Christmas pounds you've accumulated. You probably made a New Year's resolution to do that anyway, right? Two birds with one stone!

- There are more holidays on the horizon. Next one up is Valentine's Day (we're lumping New Year's Day in with the Christmas holiday season). Why not fight the feeling of emptiness over the holiday just passed by making plans for the next holiday on the schedule? Might be sort of a hair-of-the-dog solution, but whatever works!
- Who says all the Christmas decorations have to come down immediately after New Year's? Why not leave them up for a bit longer? Leave them all up for a few weeks, or just take down a little each day. Taking ALL of your Christmas décor

down ALL at once right after Christmas is a cold-turkey approach to the after-Christmas period. But there's really no need to make such an abrupt transition. (Careful though -- don't leave a dried-out Christmas tree in your house. A fire would really kick your blues into high gear!)

If you've experienced the melancholy of after-Christmas blues from Christmases past, you'll likely experience the very same thing after the upcoming Christmas season. But by being aware that it's going to happen, you can make plans now to diminish the effects, and greet the New Year with a more positive outlook.

After all, the upcoming New Year is going to be a great one, isn't it?