



**Press Release**

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**For Immediate Release**

**How to Beat the January Blues**

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After the excitement and bustle of the Christmas season, it is completely natural to feel a little down at this time of the year. January, the month of cold weather, dark mornings and (possibly) failing in our New Year's resolutions collide to create "January Blues". Typically, January Blues manifests itself as feelings of low mood, sadness, lack of motivation, tiredness and low energy. It is also the peak season for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which can induce serious depressive episodes during the darker months.

Blue Monday, so-called the most depressing day of the year, falls on January 16th this year. It is typically the third Monday of the month and it is supposedly the saddest day of the year, due to a combination of bad weather, long nights and lingering aftermath of the festive period.

The least upbeat day on the calendar has taken on new meaning in 2023, as many of us are experiencing an increased level of stress and uncertainty due to financial difficulties and challenges which we are all having to cope with. Instead of giving into "The January Blues", why not learn how to beat them? Here are our tips for giving yourself the best start to 2023.

Tip one: Understand that this is normal

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There are biological reasons why many people feel low and lack energy during January and there is nothing 'wrong' with having these feelings. Many people will be going through the same or similar feelings, but you may not realise it. Understanding that it is a natural response is helpful.

The restrictions we had due to COVID-19 and the impact these had on our connections with other people meant we had to adapt how we interact with each other. But it's really important that since these restrictions have been lifted, that we continue to have face to face social interactions with our friends, family and colleagues so that we feel connected and supported by each other.

Tip two: Get as much daylight as possible

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Lack of daylight is partly why people suffer from "The January Blues". Not getting enough sunlight and Vitamin D, has been shown to decrease our happiness and leaves us feeling down in the dumps. The sunlight can make you feel better and also help to regulate your sleep cycles properly. Exposure to natural light increases the level of serotonin in the brain, which is associated with improved mood.

### Tip three: Keep fit and stay active

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Regular exercise has been proven to reduce stress, help improve self-esteem levels and relieve depressive tendencies as exercise releases endorphins which gives your body a positive feeling of happiness. The exercise can take any form, even if it is just gentle or moderate activities like jogging, yoga or even a brief lunchtime walk.

### Tip four: Avoid unrealistic New Year's resolutions

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One of the reasons why people suffer from the January Blues is that they are overly ambitious with their New Year's resolutions and are left feeling unhappy when they can't fulfil them. Making resolutions to better yourself is a good thing, but make sure they are things you can stick to. Avoid difficult and vague resolutions such as "save money", "be more organised" and make sure it is one you can actually achieve and measure.

### Tip five: Eat properly

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It is normal for us to want more fatty and heavy food during the cold months of winter. Apart from being very unhealthy, sugar crashes cause tiredness and make you crave food unnecessarily. You can improve how you feel by eating a good, varied diet with things like oily fish and take extra vitamin D – the 'sunshine vitamin'.

A healthy diet will boost your mood, give you more energy and stop you putting on weight over winter. Balance your craving for carbohydrates, such as pasta and potatoes, with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

### Tip six: Sleep well

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National Sleep Foundation guidelines advise that healthy adults need between seven and nine hours of sleep per night. Poor sleep can have a negative impact on your mental health and lead to you feeling irritable, anxious and worried. Try to reduce screen time in the evenings to let your brain switch off and allow for a good quality of sleep.

### Tip seven: Learn a new skill

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Getting creative or learning a new skill is an ideal way to gain a sense of achievement and boost your confidence. There are plenty of hobbies you can take up indoors. Learn how to paint or cook, or try writing a journal. When you tap into your creativity, studies show that you reduce your stress levels and experience fewer symptoms of depression.

### Tip eight: Get help for financial pressure

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With money worries being one of the largest wellbeing challenges facing us during January and also in the months ahead with the cost of living crisis, more and more of us are experiencing stress about dealing with financial pressures. Worrying about money can negatively affect your mental health and the stress of dealing with financial pressures does not just affect your personal life, it can affect your work, family life, health, and relationships.

### Tip nine: Use positive affirmations

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Try to start every day with a positive thought, saying, memory, or quote that sets you up for the best possible start. Don't forget to keep reminding yourself of it throughout the day too.

Tip ten: Be grateful for what has happened

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Focus on the positive things taking place all around you – no matter how small. For example, you can be grateful for having a good night's sleep, completing your work on time. Remember to treasure the little wins and celebrate your achievements, this helps to move your focus away from the negatives.

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### **Notes to Editors**

For interviews, please contact Gemma Attew, External Communications Manager, at [gemmaattew@cygnethealth.co.uk](mailto:gemmaattew@cygnethealth.co.uk)

### **About Cygnet Health Care**

Cygnet Health Care has been providing a national network of high-quality, specialised mental health services for the NHS and local authorities for the past 30 years.

Cygnet Health Care's pioneering services support people with complex and acute mental health needs across the UK.

As one of the best quality providers in mental health services in the country, Cygnet Health Care's focus is always on the best outcomes for those who use or commission its services. 85% of Cygnet's facilities are rated as good or outstanding, which is above the national average. [www.cygnethealth.co.uk](http://www.cygnethealth.co.uk)