

Christmas Survival Guide

It's that time of year again when things can become a little bit stressed for one reason or another so it pays to be prepared! So if you're feeling more stuffed than a Christmas turkey, check out our tips to help you through to the New Year:

1. Manage your expectations.

It is hard to escape media and movies at this time of year that show images of happy families, thoughtful gifts, reunited friends and smiling faces. This may be a special and magical time that you enjoy but it may also be a very difficult time. We can be reminded of those we have lost and some people even feel really lonely at this time. Try not to expect too much – aiming for the “perfect” Christmas or assuming that everyone will be on their best behaviour may not be realistic.

2. Take time out for you.

Even though Christmas is usually a time jam-packed with family visits and activities, it's worth while making sure you have time just to relax and have your own space. Taking time out might be all that you need to avoid some of the common family conflicts that occur over Christmas. Know your limits and listen to your emotions. Some things you can do to get time out include going for a walk, phoning a friend, finding a quiet place to relax, or putting in your headphones and listening to the music that makes you feel good.

3. Look after yourself.

Your body and mind needs sleep, healthy foods, exercise and rest to function at its peak. If you look after your body your mind will feel much better too. So take some time for yourself. If you're feeling run down, you probably are. 2015 has been a busy year, so take time to reflect on what was and look forward to what will be.

4. Dealing with a split family.

If your family is split it might be that you have to separate your time between your mum and dad's place. Sometimes it means going away and being away from friends over the holidays. It might also be a time when your mum and dad seem to be fighting, which can be pretty hard to cope with.

Work out a Christmas plan - Talk with your parents about how you're going to split your time at Christmas. If your parents live close by, you might want to do lunch at one place and dinner at the other (swapping each year). If you live a little further away than you can swap who you spend Christmas with each year.

Take time out - Spending time with someone you see very little of can be tough. It is also hard to stay in a place you may call 'home', but is not complete with all your stuff. Taking time out might help you to have more fun. You might want to chill out listening to some music, go for a walk or talk to a friend.