



Busting the Myths Around Blue Monday



We've all heard of experiencing *the blues*. Those little dips in mood that you just can't seem to shake until the feeling passes by. But did you know there's a whole day devoted to feeling blue?

What is Blue Monday?

Coined by psychologist Cliff Arnall, Blue Monday denotes "the bluest day of the year" based on a calculation that considers a number of different factors. Arnall believes that cold weather, debt, low motivation, failing new year's resolutions, and the post-Christmas slump impacts us most prominently on the third Monday of January – causing a collective feeling of melancholy that is now known as the most depressing day of the year.

But, Is Blue Monday Really That Blue?

Before you succumb to the blues just because you're told that's how you *should* be feeling on this day, take a moment to reassess the situation. [The Mental Health Foundation](#) maintains that "Blue Monday is a PR stunt that was

originally dreamed up to sell holidays. It is a myth, a false calculation based on things like the gloomy weather, post-Christmas debt, disappointment from not keeping new year's resolutions, dissatisfaction about going back to work, and general doom and gloom."

This sentiment has been echoed by countless counter-studies that dismiss the concept of Blue Monday as nothing more than pseudoscience. In fact, Birmingham City University psychologist, [Professor Craig Jackson](#), believes that "the notion of Blue Monday can be dangerously misleading for people who struggle with mental health issues and suicidal thoughts," as it can weaken general compassion and diminish the understanding of psychological and psychiatric struggles.

Tips for Staying Positive

While Blue Monday appears to be rooted in gimmickry, it's still important to ensure you're looking after your wellbeing during the cold days of January – and beyond. Here's a few simple steps you can take to ensure you're supporting your wellness, in spite of the Blue Monday myth!

Be realistic about new years' resolutions - Setting goals and intentions is a great way to start the new year, but don't feel guilty if you haven't achieved everything you set out to accomplish. You've got the whole year ahead of you to work on your resolutions, so start small, take it slow, and try to remember that it takes little steps to achieve big results.

Soak up the sunshine – The chilly days and dark nights of January can take a toll on even the biggest winter lovers, so it's vital to make sure you're getting your daily dose of Vitamin D in any way you can. Even if it's cold and dreary outside, try to spend at least fifteen minutes a day out in the fresh air and sunlight to control your body's circadian rhythms, aid digestion, boost sleep, enhance your energy levels, and lift your overall mood.

Make time for friends and family – It can be really challenging to summon up the motivation to socialise when temperatures start to bite. However, a [study](#) carried out by Gallup has found that meeting with one friend leads to a significant improvement in a person's mood. Even if it's just a quick catch up and a coffee, be sure to make time to engage with people who lift you up and make you feel good this January.

Spruce up your space – The bright days of summer may seem like a distant dream during January, but there's no reason why you can't add a dose of sunshine to your living space. From a few cosy accessories like cushions and blankets to capturing the benefits of the sun with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFBs), there's so many ways to brighten up your home and make it your own little oasis to beat the January blues.

Enhance your endorphins – Many of us resolve ourselves to get fitter and healthier in the new year – especially after the many indulgences of the festive season. Aside from helping shift the Christmas pounds, exercise is a great way to boost your dopamine levels, relieve stress, elevate your mood, and achieve a happier state of mind. Just fifteen minutes a day is enough to make a difference, so whether you're hopping in the saddle or going on a short hike, don't wait to experience the mental health benefits that regular exercise can bring.

Above all, don't let the Blue Monday hype get you down this January. Focus on the positives while finding simple ways to brighten up the month, and you could find yourself starting the new year off with a bang instead of the blues.

If your employer offers Vivup's Employee Assistance Programme, there are lots of useful resources and downloadable workbooks to help you discover new ways to manage your wellbeing throughout the year. You can also access a 24-hour telephone helpline for responsive, confidential, and totally independent advice should you or a colleague need mental health support.

Sources

[What does Blue Monday mean for our mental health? | Mental Health Foundation](#)

[The Psychological Dangers of Blue Monday - School of Social Sciences |](#)

[Birmingham City University \(bcu.ac.uk\)](#)

[The Business of Good Friends \(gallup.com\)](#)

[Blue Monday: What's it all about? | Holland & Barrett \(hollandandbarrett.com\)](#)