

Here are 10 ways to beat the holiday blues:

Carole and Ronald Krist Samaritan Center for Counseling and Education

1. **Keep expectations manageable:** Try to set realistic goals and pace yourself. Organize your time. Make a list and prioritize the important activities.
2. **Save time for yourself and recharge your batteries:** Let others share in the responsibility of planning activities. Don't put the entire focus on just one day. Remember that it's the holiday season — activities can be spread out to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.
3. **Let go of old animosities:** Forget family feuds and maybe try mending fences when you get together for the holidays. Even if your effort is not reciprocated, what can it hurt? Feel good about what you say or do to make a situation better, and don't overreact to caustic remarks. They may not be intended the way you hear them.
4. **Take care of yourself:** Get plenty of sleep. Eat regularly, but don't overeat. Be aware that excess drinking will only increase your feelings of depression.
5. **If you are used to exercising, don't give it up:** Make time to keep exercising during the holidays, but avoid too much exercise, which can lead to fatigue.
6. **Watch your finances:** If you can't afford to travel, connect by phone, e-mail, cards and letters. Enjoy activities that are free, such as taking a drive to look at decorations, going window shopping or making a gingerbread house with a child.
7. **Feelings are OK:** The holiday season does not banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely; there is room for these feelings to be present.
8. **Get help:** If you are being treated for depression (therapy or prescriptions), this is not the time for missing appointments or forgetting to take your medication.
9. **Remember the essence of the holidays:** It should be somewhat spiritual with a focus on family and friends. Spend time with supportive and caring people. Reach out and make new friends or contact someone you haven't heard from in a while. Do something for someone else. Try volunteering some of your time.
10. **Celebrate the holidays in a new way:** Leave yesteryear in the past and look toward the future. Life brings changes. Each season is different and can be enjoyed on its own. Don't set yourself up by comparing today with the good ol' days.

