

## **Managing the Post-Australia Day Blues**

With Australia Day over many people feel a bit stressed or even low as they return to the busy routine of work and school but there are ways to keep the calm and happy holiday feelings going.

### **How do you keep the holiday calm going?**

- Get plenty of sleep – we often sleep more on holidays and this helps us to feel calmer. Take a note of how much you slept during the holidays – maybe it was only an hour more – and change your night routine to allow more sleep each day.
- Start each day at an easy pace – during the holidays we have more time in the morning to have a cup of coffee, read the newspaper and shower. You won't have the same leisurely start to the day but organise your morning routine so you don't have to rush – you'll feel calmer all day.
- Make dinner time easy – maybe you had lots of bbqs during the holidays or just easy meals with the family helping themselves – there's no need to stop this! Salads can be prepared in advance and last for several days in the fridge - just cook the meat each night.
- Keep doing relaxing things – maybe it was reading, listening to music or watching the cricket. Spending some time on the things you enjoy each week can help keep you relaxed.

### **How do you manage the transition from holiday to work mode?**

- Get back into your usually sleep/wake cycle – If you've been staying up late and sleeping until 8am during the holidays you may be seedy for the first few days but persevere – the sooner you're back in routine, the better you'll feel.
- Have regular meals – During the holidays you may have grazed through the day and just had one main meal at night but this won't do at work! Get back into the routine of three meals a day – if you're not a "breakfast person", grab a protein drink to give your brain morning energy!
- Spend a day clearing the clutter – go through your emails, clear any old clothes out of your cupboard or clean out the garage. Start putting things in your diary.

### **How do you stop the stress creeping up?**

- Be prepared – Each week, maybe Sunday, work out what has to be done that week, when and by whom. Write a "to do" list, including who has to do it, on a calendar or put a white board where everyone can see it.
- Get organised – How much can you do in advance? Maybe make lunches or set out breakfast the night before? And importantly, get the kids to pack their school bag the night before!
- Delegate – you don't have to do everything yourself! Get the kids to help around the house: put away the washing, help prepare meals or do the dishes.
- Prioritise – What really needs to be done? You have to eat, sleep, work but is the world really going to end if the washing is done on Friday night rather than Saturday morning?
- Be realistic about what you can achieve in a day – If you're working and you have children, you're not going to be able to study for that career change unless you've got lots of support!
- Exercise – If you haven't been exercising during the holidays, it's time to get back into it but be gentle as you would have lost some fitness. If you have been exercising, consider taking it up a level or trying something new.

### **What else can help?**

- Drink lots of water – sometimes the return to work also means a return to caffeine!
- Remember the fun times – put some pictures around of your holiday. If there was a game you played as a family, get it out from time to time.
- If you're feeling a little overwhelmed, massage or acupuncture may help!