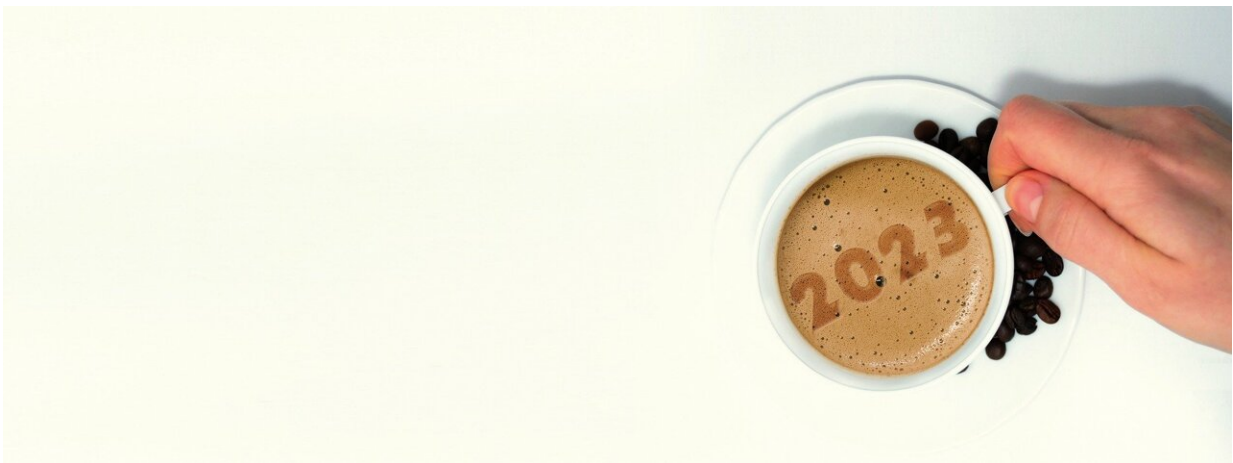


Beat the January blues with simple resolutions and less screen time, psychologist says

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Short days, cold temperatures, a long wait until payday and unachievable new year's resolutions—it's no wonder some of us are suffering from the January blues.

But there are simple ways we can get 2023 off to the best possible start, according to Dr. Daria Kuss, Associate Professor and Chartered Psychologist from Nottingham Trent University's (NTU) School of Social Sciences.

As part of NTU's latest Re:search Re:imagined podcast, Dr. Kuss gives her top tips for staying positive during the winter period, including getting outdoors, connecting with other people and learning new skills.

She said, "Connection with the world around you and your [social environment](#) is fundamental. Make time in your diary to see your friends, to speak to [family members](#), even though you might be tired, or you've got work to do.

"Be active, go for walks, go for a run, whatever you like to do. To be able to feel your body and really go back to the fundamentals of our social and physical well-being will certainly improve our [mental health](#) and emotional well-being."

However, with half of adults making resolutions, but less than 10% actually keeping them, Daria recommends keeping targets simple and achievable to avoid feeling disappointed.

"People put a lot of pressure on themselves, and this contributes to feeling a little bit miserable, a little bit down, having lower energy and really not necessarily feeling the way that they would want to feel.

"I would recommend setting small new habits that may be formed throughout the year. If you set yourself the resolution to run a marathon next year and you're not a runner, you'll find it really difficult to do that. Instead go for more regular walks in the beginning and then gradually increase the amount of time you're spending being active in nature. Using these tiny habits rather than massive goals is significantly more realistic.

"We will have the rewarding moments which are really crucial to keep the positive things going in our lives. And perhaps eventually you will actually be able to run that marathon after all."

Daria also suggests that we try to change our habits and put smartphones and other technology away more often to reconnect with ourselves and our household.

"There are a number of things that we can do to use technology a little bit less. Mindful awareness of your environment is certainly something that I would encourage. Instead of scrolling through [social media](#), have a look around, and see what you can notice. Different colors, different people. Noticing the world around you is a very healthy thing that you can do.

"When it comes to how we use technology, I would say to put the phone away when you're working or doing something at home. If you have it on your desk, we know from research that this is going to detrimentally impact your attention even if you're not actually actively using it. Out of sight, out of mind actually works.

"I would also recommend having technology free times during the day. For example, mealtimes when the whole family puts their phones away and has a proper conversation. And the final thing would be to have [technology](#) free zones in the house, such as the bedroom. So rather than scrolling through your phone at night when you're trying to go to sleep, put your phone in a different room and instead read a book.

"These small recommendations can make a big difference to your behaviors and your mental health and well-being can be significantly improved."

Provided by Nottingham Trent University

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