



50 ways to fight the grind

Part five: domestic tips



The last in our series on how to beat post-holiday blues

1. Clear out your children's old toys, then get the windows cleaned and have a good clear-out. Start with the smallest room so the task feels less daunting. Edit your house — for every thing that comes in, throw another out.

Now that our winters are milder, moths are not dying off, so put lavender bags and cedar balls along clothes rails and in between your silks and cottons.

Aggie MacKenzie
Grime buster

2. A good holiday reminds you how much you enjoy the company of your partner. The challenge is to continue that at home — so you need to make time for each other again to keep the intimacy going. Shared pursuits need not cost a fortune: just light some candles and order a takeaway.

Denise Knowles
Relate counsellor

3. I unpack everything straight away, then start preparing my home for autumn, bringing out the candles and cushions, cashmere throws and seasonal flowers to create a different mood.

Kelly Hoppen
Interior designer

4. Moving home is expensive if not impossible at present, but the home you have can be transformed.

First, plan the space and assign a realistic budget. Make a scale drawing of any room you want to change — and don't forget the lighting: add lamps or uplighters to create "layered light". Then get crafty: it's easy to transform a

headboard with a great fabric remnant and a staple gun. Stencils have also made a comeback, with bold designs replacing the twee Eighties look, and can look stunning.

Net curtains can steal natural daylight from a room. Replace them with opaque window film or blinds.

Julia Kendell
Designer DIY SOS

5. Don't let your accumulated workload overwhelm you. Prioritise and plan before you start to tackle any backlog; don't panic; delete e-mails as quickly as you can, and don't work late to catch up.

Dr Sally-Ann Law
Life coach

6. Deadheading is the key to making the garden shine and lifting your spirits. Depending on the season, roses and other perennials may continue to flower until November, if you keep on top of things. By the same token, clearing fallen leaves will not only give you a bit of exercise, but also smarten up the garden. It's also time to start trimming the hedge and lawn. If you have a yew, this may be the only clipping it will need — the same goes for any topiary pieces.

Lastly, if the container bedding plants

in your garden have shot their bolt, buy some seasonal architectural plants and foliage, such as ferns, phormium and perhaps small maples, to add freshness.

Stephen Anderton
Times gardener

7. Have a wardrobe cull. Put all your

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clothes on the bed and take a hard look, asking which you have not worn in three years and how many gardening shirts you really need. A pile can go straight back in the wardrobe; some will need to be cleaned, others altered and the rest can go to the charity shop.

Julia Dee
Designer Alterations

8. Post-holidays, we help our clients to clear the decks — dealing with admin, paying bills, answering letters, organising filing, finding better utility providers.

We also organise those repairs that otherwise never get done. The curtains will be cleaned, the house painted and de-cluttered — which all helps to relieve that “nose to the grindstone” feeling.

Lisa Morel
Buy-Time.co.uk

9. Bring fresh flowers or healthy plants into your home, and try to replace any dull artwork with fresher, more inspiring pieces. Then fix one home problem that has been irritating you, such as a squeaky door or wobbly table leg.

Mike Chester
Feng Shui expert

10. Most people take lots of holiday photos but never use them. Cheer up the house by framing some, or getting them blown up on large canvases.

Give high-traffic areas of the house a new coat of paint — and fill big glass bowls or vases with oranges, limes and your favourite colourful fruit and veg.

Simon Buhl-Davis
Head of [redacted] Interiors

