



JANUARY 2026 HEALTH & WELLNESS

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Back to Work, Back to Stress:

How to Manage the Post-Holiday Return



Money Worries and Mental Health:

Coping When Finances Are Tight



Dealing with Post-Holiday Blues:

Why the Cheer Ends and How to Recover



Honouring Loss at the Start of the Year:

Navigating Grief and Looking Forward



Reset Your Health:

Simple Lifestyle Goals for a Better Year

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAMME

- 24-Hour health and wellness support for you and your family
- Less stress
- Improve your wellbeing
- Find solutions
- Improve your happiness

How can we help you?

WE ARE WAITING FOR YOUR CALL!



CONTACT US: 060 528 5429





BACK TO WORK, BACK TO STRESS

HOW TO MANAGE THE POST-HOLIDAY RETURN

The holidays are meant to give us a break, but returning to work in January can feel like hitting a wall. Early mornings feel harder. Your brain feels slow. Emails pile up. Your routine feels unfamiliar. Many people experience **post-holiday stress**, even if the break was enjoyable.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, tired, or unmotivated right now, you're not alone. This is a normal response to transitioning from rest back into structure. The good news is that a few simple habits can make your return-to-work smoother and far less stressful.

WHY GOING BACK TO WORK FEELS SO HARD

During the holidays, your body and brain slow down. Your sleeping patterns change. You relax more. You move differently. You eat differently. Your daily routine is completely reset.

So, when work starts again, your brain needs time to adjust. You may experience:

- feeling tired all day
- struggling to concentrate
- feeling irritable or emotional
- difficulty waking up
- feeling "behind" at work
- low motivation
- anxiety about responsibilities

This transition can take anywhere from a few days to two weeks. With the right support, you can make this period smoother.








STEP 1: EASE INTO YOUR ROUTINE



You don't have to jump back into full speed on day one.

Try:

-  going to bed 30–60 minutes earlier
-  waking up at the same time every day
-  planning your tasks instead of rushing
-  eating at regular times again
-  drinking more water and less caffeine

Your body loves routine. When you restore it gently, stress levels drop.






STEP 2: FIGHT THE 'MENTAL FOG'



That half- asleep feeling where nothing makes sense?

It's normal. After holidays, the brain takes time to get sharp again.

Try:

-  short "brain breaks" every 60–90 minutes
-  stretching or walking for a few minutes
-  eating brain- friendly snacks like fruit, nuts, eggs, yoghurt
-  limiting social media during work hours
-  doing one task at a time instead of multitasking

Your energy improves when your brain gets small moments of recovery.

STEP 3: PRIORITISE YOUR TASKS - NOT EVERYTHING IS URGENT



January can feel chaotic. You come back to:

- emails
- deadlines
- meetings
- new goals
- new plans
- added pressure

To avoid burnout, break tasks into three groups:

1. Must do today
2. Can wait
3. Nice to do when there's time

This helps you stay calm and avoid feeling overwhelmed.

STEP 4: TALK TO YOUR TEAM OR MANAGER EARLY



Don't carry the stress alone. If you're overloaded, communicate clearly and early.

You can say:

- 👉 "I'm catching up on my tasks; can we discuss priorities?"
- 👉 "I will complete ABC today and move to the rest tomorrow."
- 👉 "I may need some guidance on deadlines."

Clear communication helps everyone adjust together.

STEP 5: REBALANCE YOUR WORK—LIFE RHYTHM



Jumping straight from holiday mode to overworking is a recipe for burnout.

Protect your energy by:

- 👉 avoiding long hours in the first few weeks
- 👉 taking short breaks during the day
- 👉 spending time outdoors after work
- 👉 getting at least 7–8 hours of sleep
- 👉 doing enjoyable activities after work
- 👉 allowing yourself downtime without guilt

You function better when you give yourself kindness, not pressure.

STEP 6: REDUCE JANUARY FATIGUE WITH BETTER NUTRITION



Heavy holiday meals and irregular eating can leave you drained.

One of the easiest ways to feel better is to adjust your meals.

Try:

- 👉 eating a balanced breakfast (eggs, oats, fruit, yoghurt)
- 👉 drinking enough water
- 👉 choosing whole foods over processed foods
- 👉 reducing sugar and alcohol for a few weeks
- 👉 preparing simple lunches instead of buying junk food

Your mood, focus and energy improve when your body feels supported.

STEP 7: MANAGE EMOTIONAL STRESS WITH SIMPLE TECHNIQUES



If you're feeling anxious, overwhelmed or down, try:

- 👉 deep breathing exercises for 1–2 minutes
- 👉 journaling or writing down your worries
- 👉 stretching your body
- 👉 taking a quick walk outside
- 👉 listening to calming music
- 👉 limiting news and social media

These small tools help calm the nervous system and reduce stress.

STEP 8: IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING, REACH OUT EARLY



Some people find the return to work extremely difficult, especially if they're dealing with:

- burnout
- grief
- financial stress
- family conflict
- mental health challenges

You don't have to handle it alone.

The **Kula Partners Health and Wellness Support Line** is available 24/7.

The number is at the top of your newsletter.

Trained counsellors are ready to listen, guide and support you in confidence.

IN THE END, JANUARY IS A TRANSITION - NOT A TEST

Be patient with yourself. Getting back into routine takes time. Move slowly. Set gentle expectations.

Give yourself permission to adjust.

Your energy will return.

Your focus will sharpen.

Your routine will settle.

With small daily steps, you can make January calmer, healthier and more manageable.

A photograph of a Black woman with short dark hair, wearing a light blue sleeveless top. She has a distressed expression, with her mouth open as if shouting or crying. She is holding a black wallet that is open and empty in her left hand, and her right hand is raised to her forehead. The background is a solid bright yellow.

MONEY WORRIES AND MENTAL HEALTH

COPING WHEN FINANCES ARE TIGHT

Many people start the new year feeling stressed about money. December spending, school fees, transport costs, and debt can quickly pile up. When finances are under pressure, your **mental health** often suffers too.

If you lie awake worrying about bills, feel anxious when your phone rings, or avoid looking at your bank balance, you are not alone. Financial stress affects thousands of South African families every day. This article will help you understand how money problems affect your emotional well-being and what simple steps you can take to cope.

HOW MONEY STRESS AFFECTS YOUR MIND AND BODY

Financial pressure doesn't stay in your bank account - it shows up in your body and emotions. You may notice:

- Constant worry
- Feeling overwhelmed or helpless
- Irritability or getting angry easily
- Struggling to focus at work
- Headaches or body tension
- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling ashamed or embarrassed
- Avoiding people or withdrawing socially
- Anxiety or panic when thinking about money
- Feeling "stuck" or hopeless



These reactions are **normal** when you're under financial strain. You are not weak or failing - you're human.

WHY MONEY PROBLEMS HIT MENTAL HEALTH SO HARD

Money affects:

- your ability to feed your family
- your home environment
- your children's school needs
- your transport and work stability
- your relationships
- your sense of safety and dignity

When these areas feel unstable, your brain switches into survival mode, making it harder to think clearly, plan ahead, or stay calm.

Understanding this helps you be kinder to yourself during difficult times.



PRACTICAL WAYS TO COPE EMOTIONALLY WHEN MONEY IS TIGHT

1. Breathe Before You React

When panic hits, your brain shuts down logical thinking.
Try a 30- second reset:

- Breathe in for 4 seconds
- Hold for 2
- Exhale for 6

Repeat 4–5 times.

This helps calm your nervous system and improves problem- solving.



2. Face the Numbers - Avoiding Makes Stress Worse

Avoiding your bank balance, bills, or SMS alerts increases anxiety.
Courage is looking at your numbers without judgment.
Write down:

- what you owe
- what you must pay first
- what costs can be reduced
- what support you can access

Knowledge reduces fear.



3. Talk to Someone You Trust

Carrying money shame in silence increases emotional pain.
You don't need to reveal every detail - even saying, "I'm struggling financially and feeling stressed" lifts some weight.

4. Create a Small, Simple Plan

Trying to fix everything at once causes overwhelm.
Choose one or two steps you can do this week:

- call a creditor to arrange a payment plan
- plan meals to reduce food waste
- reduce takeaways for a while
- set a limit for non- essential spending
- track every rand you spend for 7 days

Small steps rebuild control.



5. Limit Social Media Pressure

Comparing your life to other people's "perfect" pictures increases your stress and shame.
Unfollow accounts that make you feel behind or inadequate.
Focus on your own progress, not someone else's highlight reel.

6. Protect Your Relationships

Money stress often leads to:

- arguments
- blame
- withdrawal
- resentment

Try to talk calmly and honestly with your partner or family:

- "We need to work together on this."
- "Let's set goals as a family."
- "This is temporary - we can handle it step by step."

Partnership reduces pressure.



7. Strengthen Your Emotional Health

Try:

- walking for 10–15 minutes
- deep breathing
- journaling
- prayer or meditation
- spending time in nature
- talking to someone supportive

Caring for your mental health gives you strength to face financial challenges.



WHEN FINANCIAL STRESS TURNS INTO EMOTIONAL CRISIS

Please get help if you:

- cannot sleep for days
- feel constant panic
- feel hopeless or trapped
- withdraw from everyone
- think your family would be "better off without you"

You can speak to a trained counsellor any time by calling the

Kula Partners Health and Wellness Support Line - the number is at the top of your newsletter.

You don't need to share your finances - just how you feel.

You deserve support.

You deserve care.

You deserve to feel safe, even during difficult times.



THE BOTTOM LINE

Money problems are temporary. Your mental health matters every day.

With support, small steps, and kindness to yourself, you can get through this season stronger and more in control.



DEALING WITH

Post-Holiday Blues

Why the Cheer Ends and How to Recover

January isn't always the "fresh start" we imagine. After the busy holidays, many people feel emotionally flat, unmotivated or even sad. This drop in mood is known as the **post-holiday blues** - a temporary emotional slump caused by the sudden shift from celebration and connection back to routine and responsibility.

These feelings might surprise you, but they are normal. Understanding what's behind them helps you move forward with less confusion and a lot more self-compassion.

Why the Mood Drop Happens

» A break in normal structure

During December, normal routines disappear. Mealtimes change, sleep schedules shift, and daily habits loosen. When January arrives, your mind has to work harder to re-adjust.

» Emotional overload

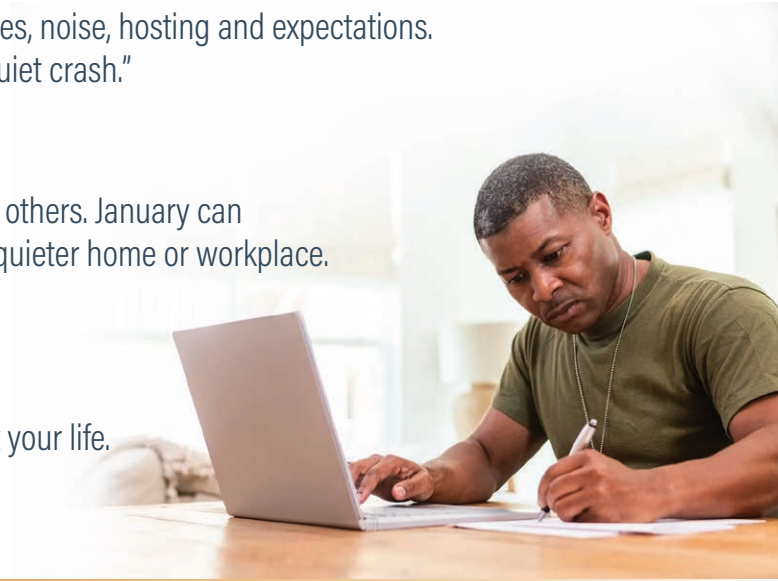
Even happy holidays can be emotionally intense: family gatherings, travel, visitors, conflict, responsibilities, noise, hosting and expectations. After everything slows down, your mind often hits a "quiet crash."

» Social contrast

During December you may have spent more time with others. January can feel lonely in comparison, especially if you return to a quieter home or workplace.

» Pressure to "start strong"

The new year often comes with pressure: be productive, achieve more, exercise, eat healthier, fix your life. This pressure quickly becomes exhausting.



How to Recover Emotionally Without Stress

✓ 1. Create gentle structure

Not strict routines - just small anchors in your day that help your mind settle.

Try:

- the same waking time
- planned mealtimes
- a short daily activity (walk, stretch, journal)
- a 10- minute "calm moment" before bed

Consistency is grounding.

✓ 2. Reintroduce joy in small doses

The holidays had moments of fun. Bring little pieces of that into January:

- music you love
- a weekly treat
- time in the sun
- chatting to someone who makes you laugh
- small creative hobbies

Small joys keep your mood balanced.

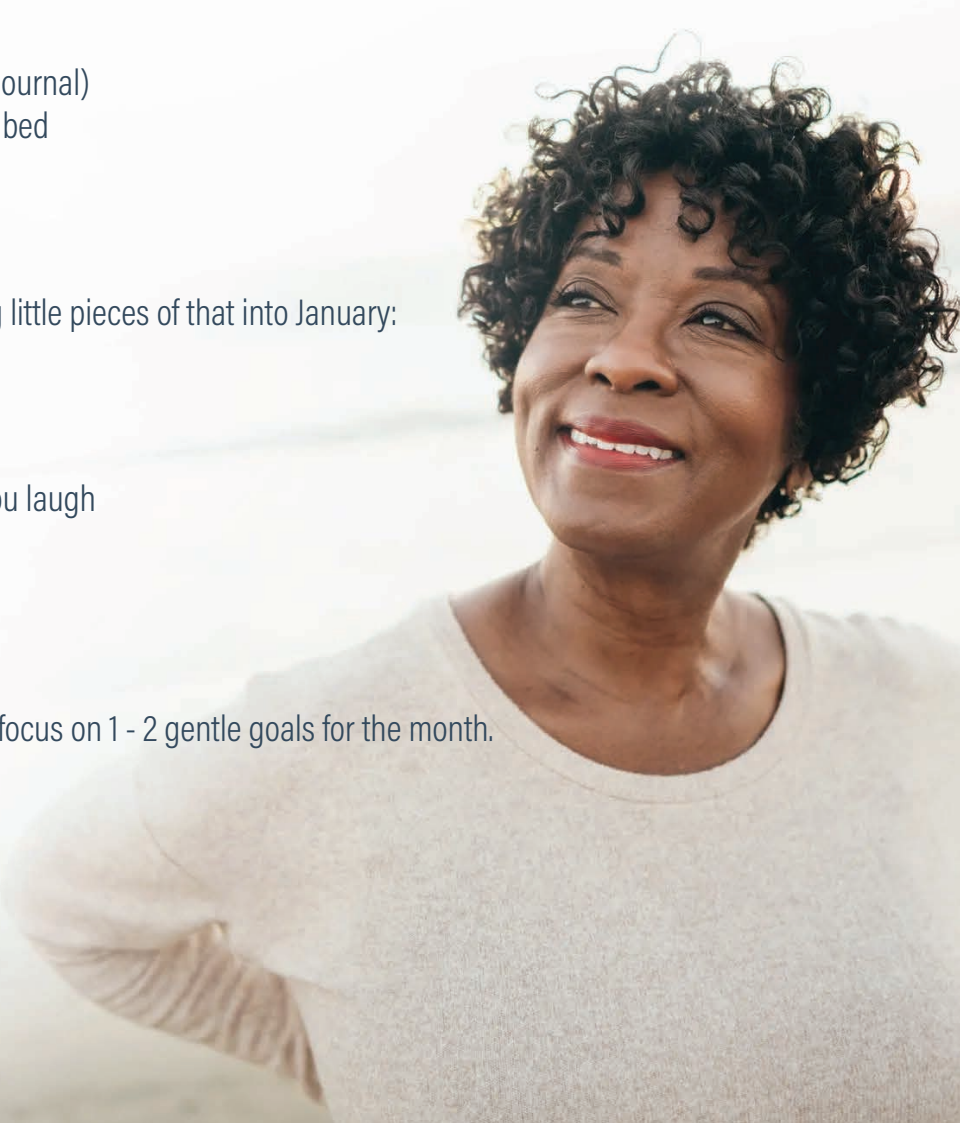
✓ 3. Limit the January pressure

Instead of trying to "fix your whole life," focus on 1 - 2 gentle goals for the month.

Examples:

- improve one meal a day
- take a 10- minute walk
- reduce late- night screentime
- get to bed earlier twice a week

Slow steps create lasting change.



✓ 4. Declutter your mental load

Write down everything worrying you, then divide into:

- what I can do now
- what can wait
- what I cannot control

This reduces overwhelm and helps you focus your energy wisely.

✓ 5. Rebuild your energy naturally

Holiday fatigue is real.

To gently boost your mood:

- drink water through the day
- spend 15 minutes outdoors daily
- eat foods that give energy (fruit, yoghurt, boiled eggs, nuts, oats)
- take breaks every 60–90 minutes
- avoid oversleeping (it increases tiredness)

Energy returns gradually, not instantly.

✓ 6. Reconnect, even in small ways

January can feel socially empty.

Try:

- sending a message to someone you trust
- arranging a quick catch- up
- joining a community activity
- taking part in a hobby group, church group or sports team

Human connection is one of the strongest mood lifters.

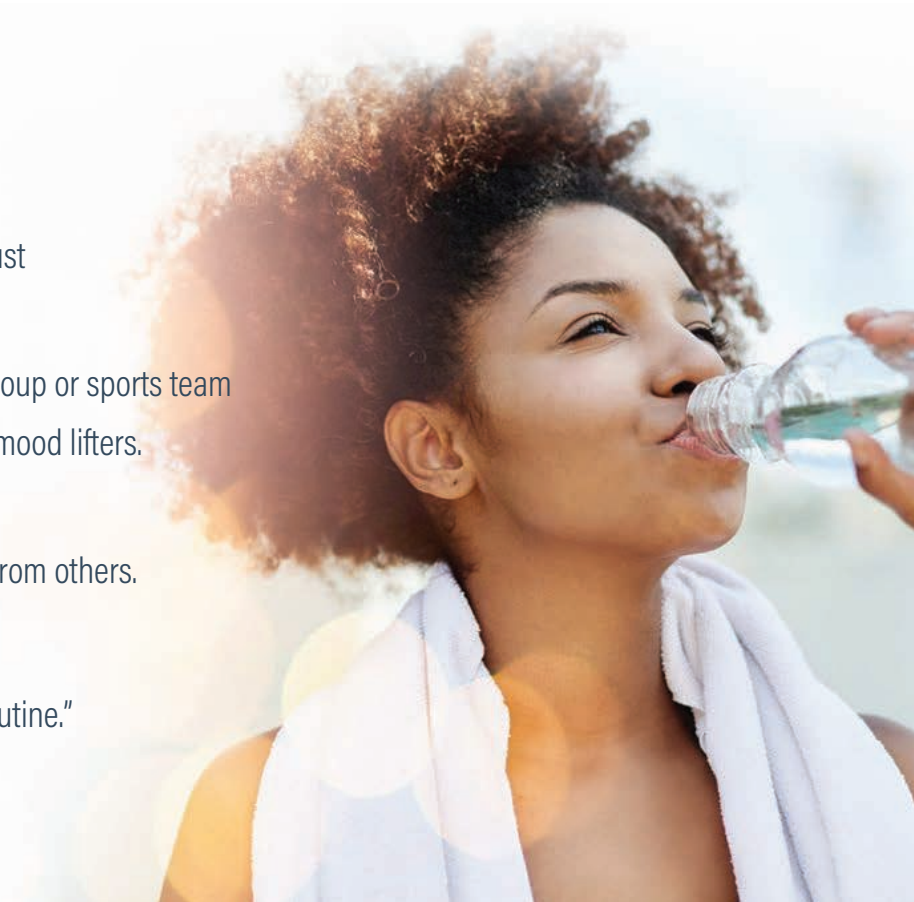
✓ 7. Protect your emotional space

The start of the year often brings pressure from others.

It's okay to set boundaries:

- "I can't commit to that right now."
- "I need some time to settle back into routine."
- "I'll think about it and let you know."

Your peace is important



When the Blues Feel Too Heavy

If you:

- cry often
- feel constantly anxious
- dread everyday tasks
- lose interest in things you enjoy
- feel disconnected from people
- can't sleep properly
- feel like life is too overwhelming



You may be dealing with more than just the post- holiday slump.

You can speak to a trained counsellor through the

Kula Partners Health and Wellness Support Line.

The number is at the top of your newsletter.

Support is confidential and available any time you need it.

You Are Adjusting, Not Failing

Post- holiday blues don't mean you're weak or unmotivated.

They simply mean your mind and body are rebalancing after a busy, emotional season.

Take things slowly.

Allow yourself room to breathe.

And remember: your energy returns gradually when you give yourself the space to recover.

HONOURING LOSS AT THE START OF THE YEAR

Navigating Grief and
Looking Forward



January can be a painful month for people who are grieving. While others speak about new beginnings, fresh goals and positive energy, you may feel the complete opposite. If you lost someone recently - or even years ago - the start of a new year can bring a quiet heaviness that is difficult to explain.

You may feel caught between wanting to move forward and feeling guilty for doing so. You may feel pressure to "be okay" because the holidays are over and life is restarting. You may even feel confused about why your emotions suddenly feel stronger.

Grief doesn't follow a calendar. It can rise at unexpected times, and the new year often brings those emotions to the surface.

This article will help you understand why grief feels harder in January and how to navigate this time gently.

WHY GRIEF FEELS SHARPER AT THE START OF A NEW YEAR

1. A new year highlights who is missing

When the year changes, it reminds you that time is moving on. That can be comforting, but it can also create sadness because the person you lost is not here to move forward with you.

2. The quiet after the holidays

December is busy. There are people around, activities, noise, and distraction. January brings silence. The mind finally has space to feel what the heart has been holding.

3. Pressure to feel “positive”

People around you may expect you to be excited about new goals or new routines. When you're grieving, these expectations can feel painful and unrealistic.

4. Emotional exhaustion

Grief is tiring.
Holidays are tiring.
When both combine, January becomes an emotionally heavy month.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO PRETEND TO BE OKAY

Grief is not something you “get over.” It is something you learn to live with. The first months of a new year are often a reminder that healing takes time - and that's okay.

Allow yourself to:

- cry when you need to
- take breaks
- avoid pretending
- feel your feelings without judgment
- speak about your loved one openly

Your emotions are valid.

WAYS TO NAVIGATE GRIEF WHEN THE YEAR BEGINS

1. Create a small ritual to honour your loved one

Rituals give grief a healthy space to sit.

You can:

- light a candle in their memory
- look at photos
- cook their favourite meal
- visit a special place
- write them a letter



This is not living in the past - it is acknowledging love.

2. Give yourself permission to move slowly

You don't have to match other people's pace.

Your energy may be low, your motivation reduced, your mind foggy.

Take your time. Your healing will not look like anyone else's.

3. Talk about your feelings with someone safe

Grief becomes heavier when carried silently.

Opening up reduces pressure and reminds you that you are not alone.

You can speak to:

- a friend
- a trusted family member
- a support group
- a counsellor

Talking is not a sign of weakness. It is a path toward healing.

4. Notice and accept emotional waves

You may have days when you feel stable, followed by days when the pain suddenly returns.

This is normal. Grief is not linear.

Try to observe your emotions with gentleness rather than fighting them.

5. Take care of your body

Grief affects the body as much as the mind.

Try:

- drinking enough water
- eating simple, nourishing foods
- taking short walks
- sleeping regular hours

Physical care supports emotional resilience.

6. Set small, manageable goals

Instead of big New Year's resolutions, choose soft goals:

- get through one day at a time
- do one healthy thing each day
- limit overwhelming commitments
- protect quiet time

Your only job is to take gentle steps.



IF THE LOSS WAS SUDDEN OR TRAUMATIC

Sudden deaths can cause:

- shock
- numbness
- guilt
- flashbacks
- questions with no answers
- difficulty sleeping
- fear about the future



Please do not carry this alone. Sudden loss often needs support from someone trained to guide you through trauma and complicated grief.

The Kula Partners Health and Wellness Support Line is available any time - day or night.
The number is at the top of your newsletter.
Your call is private and confidential.

LOOKING TOWARD THE YEAR AHEAD - WITHOUT PRESSURE

Healing doesn't mean forgetting.
Moving forward doesn't mean you didn't love them.
Smiling again doesn't mean the loss didn't hurt.
You carry your loved one with you in the small things:

- your memories
- your stories
- the ways they shaped you
- the lessons they left behind

January can be a time of both sorrow and gentle renewal.
You can honour the past while still allowing yourself to grow.
Whatever you are feeling, it is okay. You are doing your best, and you do not have to walk this part of the journey alone.



Reset Your Health

SIMPLE LIFESTYLE GOALS
FOR A BETTER YEAR








January often brings pressure to change everything at once - strict diets, heavy gym routines, long to-do lists and unrealistic expectations. Most people abandon these goals within weeks because the changes are too big, too fast, or too stressful.

A healthier approach is to choose small, simple habits that fit naturally into your daily life. These small steps are easier to maintain, and they make a bigger long-term difference to your health than any extreme plan. This article helps you reset your health in a real, manageable way so you can feel stronger, calmer and more energised throughout the year.

START WITH ONE SMALL CHANGE

Trying to overhaul your whole life leads to frustration. Instead, choose one small habit to start with. Examples:






-  *Drink one extra glass of water each morning*
-  *Add one serving of fruit or vegetables to your day*
-  *Walk for 10 minutes after work*
-  *Reduce late-night snacking*
-  *Go to bed 30 minutes earlier*

Small changes are powerful because they are repeatable.



REBUILD YOUR SLEEP ROUTINE

Good sleep sets the foundation for every part of your health. When you sleep well, you think clearer, feel calmer, have more energy and make healthier choices. Try:







-  *going to bed and waking up at the same time*
-  *reducing screen time 1 hour before bed*
-  *avoiding heavy meals late at night*
-  *keeping your room dark and cool*
-  *limiting caffeine after midday*

Improving sleep often reduces stress more than anything else.



GET MOVING (WITHOUT GOING TO THE GYM)

You don't need expensive equipment or hard workouts to improve your health. Movement should be simple and enjoyable. Ideas:

-  *walk when you can*
-  *stretch for 5 minutes every morning*
-  *do light exercises at home (sit-to-stand, gentle squats, arm circles)*
-  *take the stairs when possible*
-  *play outside with your kids*
-  *dance while cleaning*

Moving your body helps manage stress, improve mood and increase energy.









MAKE HEALTHIER FOOD CHOICES WITHOUT DIETING

Strict diets often fail.

Balanced eating works better.

Try:

-  *adding more colour to your plate (fruit, vegetables, legumes)*
-  *choosing whole foods more often*
-  *reducing sugary drinks*
-  *drinking more water during the day*
-  *preparing simple meals instead of fast food*
-  *reducing alcohol for a few weeks*





You don't need to be perfect. Just make small improvements consistently.



HYDRATE TO IMPROVE ENERGY AND MOOD

Most people feel tired simply because they're dehydrated.

Try:

-  *a glass of water when you wake up*
-  *keeping a bottle at your desk*
-  *choosing water instead of fizzy drinks*
-  *flavouring water with lemon or mint if you don't enjoy plain water*






Better hydration = better brain function, digestion and overall energy.



TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Your emotional well-being is as important as your physical health.

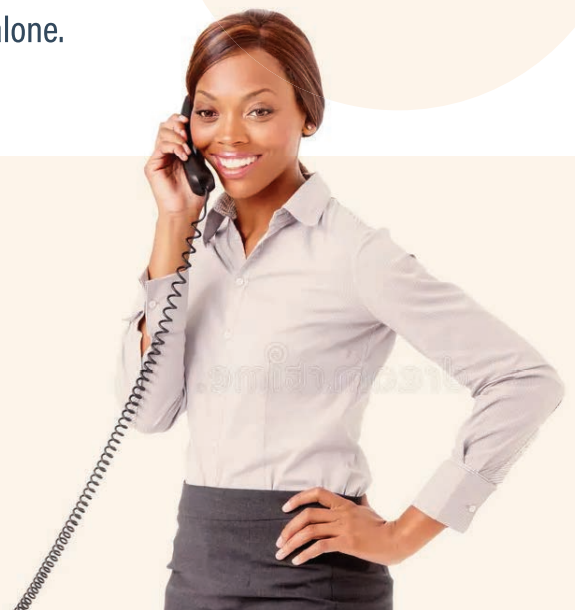
Try:

-  *short breathing exercises*
-  *journaling your thoughts*
-  *reducing social media*
-  *spending more time outdoors*
-  *taking quiet moments during the day*

If you feel overwhelmed, sad, anxious or exhausted, you are not alone.
Support is available.







You can speak to a trained counsellor through the
Kula Partners Health and Wellness Support Line
- the number is at the top of your newsletter.
The call is confidential and available 24/7.



STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS WITH OTHERS

Healthy relationships support your emotional well-being.
Try:






-  *reconnecting with someone you trust*
-  *spending time with people who lift your mood*
-  *limiting time with people who drain your energy*
-  *expressing appreciation more often*

Strong social support improves resilience and reduces stress.



CREATE A LOW-STRESS WEEKLY ROUTINE

Instead of strict schedules, build gentle structure:

-  plan meals for the week
-  choose 2–3 days for movement
-  schedule time to rest
-  review your budget briefly
-  check in with your goals

A simple routine gives you stability without pressure.



CELEBRATE SMALL WINS

Did you drink more water today?
Did you walk for 10 minutes?
Did you choose a healthier meal?
Did you take a few minutes to breathe?

These are wins.

Small victories build confidence and create momentum for bigger changes later.

FINAL THOUGHT

**Resetting your health is not about perfection
or big resolutions.**

**It's about choosing habits that support your body
and mind, one small step at a time.**

**You don't have to do everything at once.
Just keep moving forward gently, and your health
will improve naturally over the year.**

