

Dreading going back to work tomorrow? Here's what to do



If you live in Australia, it's likely you've used the Christmas and New Year period to take a lovely two-week break from work. A break that ends ... today.

If you're feeling less than enthusiastic about heading back to the office tomorrow, you're certainly not alone. There's a great conversation going on in the [Straight and Curly Facebook group](#) about this very thing, and some great advice has been shared in there.

So great, in fact, I thought I'd summarise the best of it here for you all.

Tammy Tansley, author of *Do What You Say You'll Do* and principal at [Tammy Tansley Consulting](#), says the most important thing you can do is correctly identify the cause of your dread.

1. Sadness that the holiday is at an end

If you generally like your job but you're struggling to transition your brain from holiday mode to work mode, Tammy suggests reframing your thoughts. (Reframing is simply choosing to see things differently.) So, dread at going back to work could be reframed as delight at having had such a lovely holiday. Sadness at a holiday coming to an end could be reframed as gratitude for having a job to return to.

Other members in the Straight and Curly group said they use the evening or afternoon before returning to work to get their inboxes under control so that when they start work the next day, they don't start off feeling like they're drowning.

Kim said: "I'm heading back tomorrow and it is going to be very full on. I've done a little bit over the break so I feel 'still tuned in'. Today's task was doing up an action plan for this week so I feel I have direction for tomorrow rather than 'OMG, where do I start?'"

Leigh has a slightly different coping mechanism. "A small change I've found that works is to spend at least an hour or so on a Sunday evening doing something I love. For example, my boyfriend and I watch a documentary every Sunday night. They're often inspiring and a good distraction before bed. I'd much rather go to sleep thinking about what I just watched rather than all the emails I have to answer the next morning!"

Nina says she "likes to plan something nice to look forward to on the first or second day back." It gets her through the day and makes her feel like she's in holiday mode a bit longer. Usually, she plans a dinner with her bestie, but it could also just be planning to cook her favourite meal/get her favourite takeaway or go to a movie.

2. Anxiety because you have a stressful job

No matter how much you love your job, if your role is a stressful one, adjusting from holiday mode to work mode can be especially jarring. For this situation, Tammy is a huge fan of Jonathan Fields' new book *How To Live A Good Life* for making it easy to access mindfulness and gratitude as stress management tools. She says: "One of the things the author provides in his resources is a three-minute meditation. You just save it your phone and do it first thing in the morning. He has longer ones, but I've found starting off short and actually doing it, is better than having intentions of doing longer ones but not getting there."

A few people in the [Straight and Curly group](#) recommend the [Headspace app](#) for anxiety reduction while Melinda is a big fan of the [Insight Timer app](#). She says: "You can search for anxiety meditations and get some that are 5-10 minutes long. When you need breathing space during the day, find a quiet place and take some deep breaths."

Tammy also makes this note: "Some jobs are inherently stressful, and it's just about managing your own reaction to that. But, some are made more stressful by the environment – other people's poor decision making, or the team dynamics for example. If you can identify what's making your job more stressful than it needs to be, you can potentially see if there is anything you can do about it. If there really isn't anything you can do about it, you might need to make a decision about whether the job is the right one for you."

3. You hate your job

Ugh. You hate your job and the thought of returning to work tomorrow makes you feel sick. What to do? All of the above will certainly help in the short term. But, for the sake of sound long-term mental health, you need to look at your options. These might include:

- Trying new things internally (new projects/different responsibilities/different role).
- Seeking a similar role with a different company.
- Doing some further training that will allow you to break through a ceiling you may have reached in your career.
- Seeking training outside your current career with a view to changing paths completely.

Tammy says chatting with an accredited coach or career counsellor can provide some clarity around the best path to take. It's also worth remembering these three things:

1. There is no 'one' best path in these situations. There might be several.
2. It's *really* important to figure out: is it the actual job you hate, or is it the bits around it (team/manager)?
3. It's hard to make sound decisions from a position of frustration and unhappiness. Boosting resilience through good sleep, exercise, mindfulness and meditation will give you the best chance of correctly identifying the source of your career/work-related unhappiness ... and allow you to formulate a sound plan for moving forward from there.

Are you back at work tomorrow? What's your best technique for getting over the post-holiday blues?

Some of the books Kelly has worked on are pictured below. [Click here](#) to see what these authors have to say about working with Kelly.

