

# Episode Summary

Why do we feel exhausted during Christmas, even when we're off work?

Video link: [click here](#)



## 1. Holidays overload the nervous system with social stimuli

Large gatherings, conversations, noise, many faces and emotions at once create sensory overload. Even positive stimuli consume the brain's energy resources.

The nervous system works like a battery with limited capacity – especially after the age of 40–50. When stimuli are excessive, fatigue appears instead of relaxation.

## 2. Holiday multitasking acts like hidden stress

Cooking, planning, cleaning, managing the atmosphere and social dynamics require constant attention switching. The brain doesn't multitask – it rapidly shifts between tasks.

Each switch costs energy and activates the stress response. Even though we are “off work”, the nervous system is operating at full capacity.

### **3. Cortisol doesn't take a holiday break**

Strong emotions, expectations, disrupted routines and intense social interactions trigger repeated cortisol releases. Even “positive stress” produces the same biological response.

Elevated cortisol disrupts sleep, recovery and immunity, and drains mental energy. That's why after the holidays we often feel the need to rest from the holidays themselves.

### **4. A disrupted circadian rhythm reduces recovery**

Late dinners, long evenings and irregular sleep times shift the biological clock. Melatonin is released later, and deep sleep becomes shorter and lighter.

Instead of repairing itself, the body continues digesting and stays activated. The result is feeling unrefreshed despite spending many hours in bed.

### **5. Overstimulated senses lead to exhaustion**

Lights, smells, music, decorations and constant conversation keep the sensory system highly activated. For the brain, this is work – not background noise.

Prolonged stimulation without breaks leads to exhaustion and irritability, often felt most strongly after the holidays end.

### **6. Emotional tension consumes energy, even when unspoken**

Holidays activate memories, expectations, comparisons and old family patterns. Even without open conflict, the brain stays in a state of alertness.

## **7. Overeating comes with a high metabolic cost**

Heavy, fatty and complex meals require intense digestive effort. A large portion of the body's energy is redirected to the gut.

Post-meal fatigue isn't laziness – it's physiology. During the holidays, this metabolic effort often happens several times a day.

## **8. Lack of movement deepens fatigue**

Prolonged sitting lowers endorphins and serotonin and worsens blood sugar regulation. Muscles and joints become stiff.

Even a short walk or gentle movement acts as a natural reset for the nervous and hormonal systems.

## **9. Emotional intensity acts like a workout for the brain**

Joy, nostalgia, tenderness, fatigue and expectations can all appear in a single day. Even positive emotions consume psychological resources.

When emotions shift rapidly, the nervous system works intensely – similar to the effect of demanding physical exercise.

## **10. Recovery during the holidays depends on small choices**

Short moments of silence, walks after meals, simpler food, reduced evening stimulation and gentle movement meaningfully lower overload.

Fewer expectations and more presence allow the body to return to balance without drastic changes.

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