

# Sunday-night fever

*Weekends are meant to be a precious time for R & R, but why is it that, as they draw to a close, a sense of doom can creep in and spoil the fun?*

As Sunday evening approaches, some people feel a spike in anxiety. It's been defined as a feeling of impending doom about the working week ahead – and Monday morning in particular. This anxiety, the 'Sunday scaries' or the 'Sunday-night blues', as it's sometimes called, can be so all-encompassing that it spoils the last few hours of your weekend.

I've often noticed the gloom descending in my house as Sunday draws to a close. Although we might try to enjoy watching a fun film together, I'll find myself getting restless and wanting to do something on my computer, my kids will wander off to another room, and my husband will doomscroll on his phone, distracted by negative news.

It can feel like being stuck in an uneasy loop, a general restlessness or just an avoidance of staying in the present moment. The anxiety of the approaching week is something that affects many people in one way or another, but there are a few strategies to avoid getting caught off guard by this Sunday-night visitor. Here are a few:

- **Have a ritual.** A routine that you follow at the end of the weekend can help you to calm down. When you take the time to plan a mental strategy, those anxious thoughts are less likely to creep in. Self-care rituals could include meditating, reading a book with calming content, taking a bath or listening to a playlist of mellow music. Whatever the activity, try to be consistent and do it every week at the same time. This helps train your brain to automatically lower your stress levels before they have a chance to spike.
- **Watch your words.** Often, the language your internal voice uses about an upcoming situation can trigger negative emotions. Statements such as, 'I hate going back to work' or 'Work is going to be awful' and 'I have so much work to do', can

raise the body's level of cortisol (the primary stress hormone). Instead, try more gentle phrases like, 'I can't do this now but I can figure it out tomorrow' or 'I'm doing enough for tonight'. These are more likely to ease any stress you're experiencing.

- **Have a digital detox.** This might feel difficult if you're dependent on your phone, but it's the quickest way to bring down stress levels. Set aside time on Sunday to turn off your phone and shut down PCs and tablets. Allow yourself to do nothing. Give yourself a digital break, and your stress levels will thank you for it.
- **Listen to your body.** Even at the end of the weekend, it's still possible to be physically and mentally tired from the trials of the previous working week. View it as a sign that you require further rest. The body sometimes cranks up the anxiety as a reminder, especially if not enough attention has been given to your physical and mental needs. Take a few minutes to breathe deeply and check in with your body. When in doubt, going to bed early can be a positive strategy for resetting yourself for the week ahead.

So, the next time you find yourself pacing around as the weekend draws to a close, remind yourself that you can deal with it all on Monday morning. You've done enough for one night. Protect your relaxation time and honour it as much as possible. Save Sunday from yourself, for yourself.

Words: **Risa Williams**

Risa is a licensed psychotherapist and the author of *The Ultimate Anxiety Toolkit: 25 Tools to Worry Less, Relax More and Boost Your Self-Esteem*. You can read more of her self-esteem tips at [risawilliams.com](http://risawilliams.com).