

Lessons in Self-Care How I Got Rid of My Lockdown Slump

by Sandie Dennis



BeyondEAP

Specialist employee support
for life's toughest challenges

letstalk@beyondeap.co.uk

beyondeap.co.uk

[in beyondeap](https://www.linkedin.com/company/beyondeap)

Lessons in Self-Care – How I Got Rid of My Lockdown Slump

Like most people, for me November means getting busy with my Christmas preparations, and all the social fun they entail.

I'd be eagerly anticipating a month of glittering events, and I'd be excitedly contacting my friends, loved ones, and associates to book in long Christmassy lunches or cocktail catch ups (although it's strange how often these sessions merge into one!)



For obvious reasons, all that has had to go on hold this year.

Even though I'm a qualified therapist, I'm feeling the full sad and disappointing effects of all those missed opportunities to hug and laugh with my loved ones together and in person, particularly as the festive season draws ever closer.



I May Be a Qualified Therapist, But I'm Still Human!

I often describe myself to my clients as a 'living work in progress.' I know that my approach towards helping others is effective, because I witness amazing results every day.

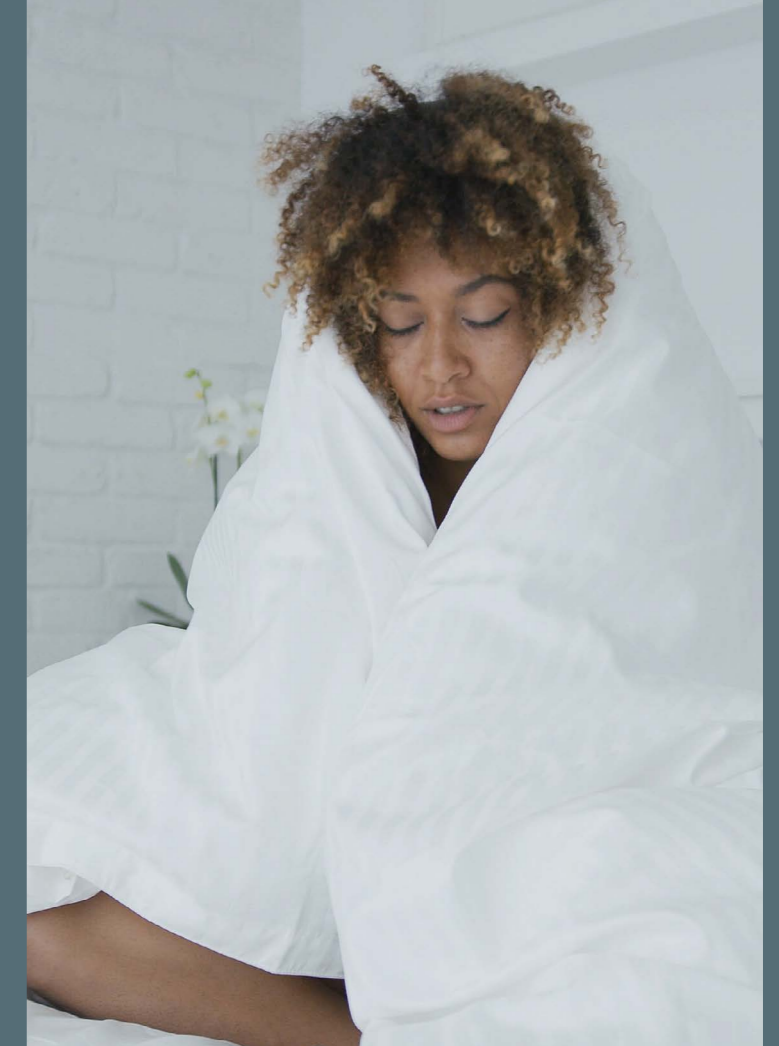
I also come equipped with a 'toolbox' of coping strategies that have the potential to change many people's everyday lives for the better.

But you may be surprised to know that every now and again, I have to open that toolbox up for myself, reflect on its contents, and make changes that will help me when my own mood shifts, and I feel low.

During Lockdown 1 in the UK, which began all the way back in March, I found myself frantically busy, providing different levels of support to anxious employees...

...which was no wonder, given all the fear and uncertainty that prevailed at the time. In March there was no promise of a vaccine, and nobody quite knew what was going to happen next, as the world paused and held its breath.

But instead of feeling anxious myself, I thrived on the challenge of helping and supporting all those people, as we all adjusted to our new, unfamiliar ways of living and working.



Then Lockdown 2.0 Hit

Two weeks into England's second lockdown, and I suddenly noticed a downward shift in my energy levels.

Looking back over the past few months, I realised that my work/life balance had become hazy and blurred... which could be ironic, given the fact that I'm always discussing balance and self-care with my clients!

But in helping so many clients, I had left my own sense of wellbeing behind. So, it was time to open up my toolbox, analyse its contents, and find something that would work for me.

Luckily, I managed to get rid of the 'lockdown slump' I'd been feeling, and my energy levels are nicely back on track.

Since then, it's occurred to me that others might like to know how I turned my mood around... because after all, who hasn't felt some kind of slump as the winter nights have started drawing in, and our Christmas plans have been put on ice?

So, here are the self-care tips I used on myself, to help see off the slump and regain my energy.



1. Identify the cause

I started by looking closely at how and why the slump had occurred. Why was I suddenly so lacking in energy?

When you ask yourself, quietly and honestly, what's missing in your life, you tend to know the answer instinctively.

For me, I knew that I had stopped making time for myself, and in the process, I'd naturally given up lots of the things I most enjoy doing.



2. Find a solution that works

I got out my diary and took a long, hard look at my working weeks.

I started blocking out slots in which I could reclaim time for myself. That meant reducing the number of therapy sessions I booked in every week, and changing the amount of time I would work for.

When you work for yourself, it can be easy to feel that you have to be available all the time... particularly when everybody is at home!

But in establishing clear boundaries between life and work, you are taking control of that vital balance, and giving yourself the time you need to approach both feeling at your best.

3. Fill your free time with things you enjoy

Has lockdown prevented you from doing things you love?

In my case, I'd been sorely missing all the classes I'd so enjoyed, including Pilates for stretching, and yoga, which I always refer to as my 'reset button'!

We may not be able to go out very much now, but there is a wealth of classes and events online that we can all take advantage of (and in doing so, we are actively helping other people and their businesses, so your wellbeing can count towards another's.)

I've found some excellent Pilates and yoga classes online, and I've planted them firmly into my working week.

4. Reduce your alcohol intake

Yes, I know we're approaching Christmas, but hear me out!

What with shorter, colder days, and nights drawing in much quicker, I found that I was beginning to crave a large evening glass of red wine, to help soothe my mind after a long day of sessions.

(I chose organic wine, and in doing so, duped myself into believing it was a 'healthy' option!)

Feeling tired and irritable, I decided to reduce my alcohol intake – a warming cup of tea can be just as soothing in the evening.

The result was that my sleep quality improved, and I was better able to make other healthy choices throughout the day.



5. Schedule a welcome break!

You don't have to fly away on holiday to relax.

I scheduled an intentional 'holiday' for myself to spend at home, free of sessions and catch ups with colleagues, to help recharge my depleted batteries.

If you can, I suggest you do the same.

Particularly with Christmas approaching, arranging an intentional break should be easier to do... and make sure you set an 'out of office' email message, stating that you aren't contactable during this time (people will cope, I promise!)

Taking some precious time out will not only help you relax, it will also allow you to reflect on the life-altering events of 2020, and look ahead to a brand-new year.

And on that note...

6. Look to the future

2020 will soon be over (not soon enough, I hear some people cry!)

With a new year, and a brighter future both on the horizon, it can be very motivating to think about what wonderful things you'd like to fill them with.

For me, this is as simple as getting out of my house more often, and taking invigorating walks in areas of beauty... something I know boosts my wellbeing in a positive way.

I also want to embrace the natural creativity I've let fall behind this year, letting my mind run wild and free on occasion!

Oh, and I've started scheduling some meetups with my friends and family for next year, so we've all got something to look forward to.

Planning ahead not only fires me up for the future, it also helps me feel empowered, because I'll be starting 2021 as positively as I mean to go on.

7. Set reminders

Don't tell yourself half-heartedly that you might make a few changes here and there, then leave it at that.

Actively plan your intentions, then set reminders to help you stay on track.

For me, this involves going through my calendar at the start of each week, setting alarms that signal the beginning of the time I've set aside for myself. Every time I hear that alarm, I know it's time to set aside whatever I've been doing, and swap it for an activity I love!

I hope these self-care tips are helpful to you, as we all navigate these strange and challenging times together.

Please visit my website for more advice and tips... and whatever we all end up doing, I wish you a safe and happy Christmas.



BeyondEAP

Specialist employee support
for life's toughest challenges

letstalk@beyondeap.co.uk

beyondeap.co.uk

[in beyondeap](https://www.linkedin.com/company/beyondeap)