The third Monday of January has been dubbed ‘[Blue Monday](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23bluemonday&src=typd&lang=en)’ over recent years and is thought to be the day of the year when British people are at their most miserable.

The day derives from a theory by psychologist Dr Cliff Arnall and is based around variables like weather, levels of debt, the end of Christmas and difficulties with New Year’s resolutions.

Though there’s little science to back-up the theory, the day highlights ways, like eating and drinking healthier, speaking to friends and exercise, to combat poor mental health.

As champions of all physical activity and sport in the capital, London Sport run down some of the excellent reasons why exercise can help you battle those blues – whenever they arrive.

**Healthy Body**

The body of research into the positive benefits of exercise is huge with physical activity lowering your risk of getting health conditions such as stroke, heart disease and diabetes.

Across London there’s a huge range of different physical activities to target every level and interest whether it’s walking, road running, team sports, climbing, rowing, yoga, pilates or an exercise class.

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Getting outside for activity can also support your intake of Vitamin D, through exposure to sunlight, as well as helping fight fatigue and general sluggishness whilst also supporting sleeping patterns.

*For more on the benefits of exercise*[*click here*](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-health-benefits/)*.*

**Healthy Mind**

Many people involved in regular exercise referred to ‘runners high’ and science has proven that physical activity releases a hormone called endorphins to boost our mood.

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Completing physical activity, whether that’s an exercise class or five-a-side football, gives us a sense of achievement and can help reduce levels of anxiety, stress and the risk of depression.

*For more on the mental health benefits of exercise*[*click here*](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-benefits-of-exercise/)*.*

**Inspiration**

Feeling inspired to get active? Here’s a couple of ideas:

A brand new walking event, The London Winter Wander, will be hitting the streets of the capital on Sunday 3 February and we’ve got an exclusive [free entry voucher here](https://londonsport.org/the-london-winter-wander/).

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The walk will begin in three London locations with each group arriving at Trafalgar Square to join the celebrations alongside the thousands completing the London Winter Run 10k.

If you’re feeling more adventurous, there’s a #BlueMonday deal being offered on the London to Brighton cycle ride which is taking place in September. [More here](https://twitter.com/skylineevnts/status/1087290218598801408).

If running is more your thing, there’s a host of London-based [half](https://findarace.com/half-marathons/london) and [full marathons](https://findarace.com/marathons/london) available to really test yourself or mix your exercise with a good deed by signing up to [Good Gym](https://twitter.com/goodgym).