

## How to survive your first Christmas alone

Your first Christmas alone doesn't have to be terrible. Make sure that you plan what you are going to do well in advance and that you arrange to keep busy over the holiday period. Be organised and don't leave any spare time when you might brood.

Don't worry about what your ex partner is doing or who they are spending it with; make sure that you are so busy having a good time that it doesn't matter what they are doing. Don't let any negative feelings (anger, jealousy) about your ex get in the way of enjoying yourself.

Prior to the Christmas break take advantage of all the parties you are invited to. If you haven't got a company party or a networking 'do' to go to then why not throw your own party? You can even throw themed parties –I recently went to a chocolate party (<http://www.chocolate-parties.com/index.php?p=home>) or there are various pamper and jewellery parties available. If everyone brings a bottle and a plate of food hosting a party doesn't have to be too expensive.

One of the options available is to go away on holiday. This is what I did the first year I was on my own. I packed my bags and flew to the Canary Islands with a friend. We had champagne by the swimming pool on Christmas Day and on New Years Eve thoroughly enjoyed the party that was laid on by the hotel with all the new people we had met. If you don't know anyone who is single why not try Buddies4Travel (<http://www.buddies4travel.co.uk/>) who can help you find a suitable travelling companion.

Alternatively, if you lead a hectic life, you could decide to spend the time on your own and have some quiet 'me' time. Stock up on your favourite foods, a good book and some classic DVD's and relax. A friend of mine did this a couple of years ago and she thoroughly enjoyed herself.

Don't forget to buy yourself a self-indulgent present such as a beauty treatment, a massage or a new outfit. If you really feel like splashing out why not have a colour consultation. I had this done for my birthday this year ([www.maximisegroup.com](http://www.maximisegroup.com)) and I felt like a million dollars. You can find consultants all over the country at <http://www.cmb.co.uk/directory.asp>

If you have other single friends who are going to be on their own over Christmas you could get together and have a house party. Why not play some board games such as Scrabble, Scattergories, Trivial Pursuit or a Murder Mystery? You don't have to be a child to play games! If money is an issue make a pact not to buy each other presents or limit the cost of presents for each other and share the cost of the food and drink.

Another option is to volunteer to work for a charity over Christmas. Why not help provide lunch for the homeless or visit a lonely elderly person? These websites provide some ideas about how you can help.

[http://www.timebank.org.uk/volunteer\\_christmas/](http://www.timebank.org.uk/volunteer_christmas/) or <http://www.do-it.org.uk/magazine/features/news/christmas2006>

If you have children you should communicate with your ex about the arrangements for the holiday well in advance. Reassure the children that you will be OK while they are spending time with your ex, that you have plans and will not be sad or upset. Ensure that they are happy with the arrangements that have been made for them.

Have a very Merry Christmas.

**Annie O'Neill**

**New Horizons Divorce Coaching**

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