



# New year's daze

## Holiday lethargy lingers but the ailments are gone

Isn't it amazing how relaxed you get when you're on holiday? Relaxed to the point of being almost comatose at times. A day or two into my three-week Christmas break, I found I could barely lift my head off the pillow in the morning and getting as far as the couch to watch morning TV was a struggle.

My usual sense of sartorial pride was replaced with a casual indifference that led to me wearing the same daggy shorts, T-shirts and thongs for much of the time. I couldn't even summon up the energy to shave for the first week and I started to look like Tom Hanks in *Castaway*. At one stage, someone asked me if I'd been sleeping rough.

We spent Christmas in Townsville where the heat sapped my last vestige of vitality. Up yonder, with a magnificent view out across Magnetic Island, I spent days slouched in front of the telly watching cricket, eating corned beef sandwiches and drinking tea. Occasionally, I would make the effort to reflect on my situation, wondering how I would ever be able to generate the will and energy to embark upon gainful employment again.

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Mind you, I felt pretty darn good. All the minor ailments that had developed during 2011 seemed to evaporate in the summer heat.

By November last year, I was seeing practitioners in several fields of medicine for conditions both real (my back) and imagined (everywhere else). The vitamin supplements and witch doctor potions began to form a phalanx on the kitchen bench and my wife kindly suggested I might have been feeling poorly because I was taking too much stuff.

But as my holiday dawned, magically, the symptoms fell away, one by one, and the various treatments seemed to be redundant. I felt so well I even cancelled all my doctor's appointments.

Then I began to worry. Why am I feeling so good, I wondered? It's just not natural. I felt my body was lulling me into a false sense of security, a calm before the storm. My wife, again, had her own view about this.

"You're just relaxed," she said. "You're not used to it, so your body is re-adjusting." I hoped she was right.

A naturopath friend who we visited over the break



seemed to confirm her theory. He told me that many of his patients reported that their symptoms disappeared during vacations. "That's interesting," I said.

"So how do you feel now that you're on holidays?" he asked. "Fine," I replied. "In fact, I feel fit as a fiddle."

Weird huh? It's amazing what a bit of rest and relaxation can do. Mind you, any more time off and I would have turned into a human blancmange, albeit one with an overwhelming sense of wellbeing. Hopefully I can trick myself into keeping that feeling going now I'm back at my desk.



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