

# YOUR TIME

## 5 WAYS TO ENJOY A HOLIDAY WITH YOUR PARTNER ...

**1** Look back at previous holidays together and be honest about what worked and what didn't.

**2** Try to be less rigid while on holidays. Be open, tolerant and prepared to compromise so you and your partner can enjoy the time together.

**3** Think about ways to indulge your partner or do something special for them during your time off.

**4** Make sure you also have 'me time' planned for the holiday.

**5** Remember, it's also your partner's holiday.



# THE HEAT IS ON

The summer holidays can spell trouble for relationships, writes **Kamahll Cogdon**

**A**HHHH, the summer holidays. Finally a chance to take it easy, relax and enjoy some time with your loved ones.

At least that's how it's supposed to go, right?

But holidays can be far from blissful for many couples, says Meredith Brown, manager of counselling at LifeWorks Relationship Counselling and Education Services.

Brown says it's common for tensions to emerge and also for existing problems to flare during the holidays.

So what's behind this holiday hell and how do we fix it?

### FAMILY ISSUES

Spending more time with immediate and extended family often causes friction, especially when a couple has different values around parenting and how to spend time off.

Brown says it can also be tricky to divide time between both sides of the family without creating the "perception that one partner's family is more important and, by extension, that one partner is more important than the other".

**Solutions:** Try to be more tolerant and understanding. "This is a time where couples need to bring a higher level of compromise to their relationship and

be prepared to give ground to each other," Brown says.

### CHANGE IN ROUTINE

Holidays usually mean a significant change in your daily routine. There's no rushing to and from work, school or extra-curricular activities.

"In theory this may sound great, but the increased time together can highlight or exacerbate issues or frustrations that may exist within the relationship," Brown warns.

"It also means people have less solitary time to themselves. If there are existing problems within the relationship the romance in the season can often make people feel lonely, even when they are partnered."

**Solutions:** See this time as an opportunity to reconnect. Brown urges couples to remember what first attracted them to each other and to use

their time off to do things together that they like.

Brown says it's also important to build in some "me time" and give yourself permission to enjoy your break.

### FINANCIAL TENSIONS

Holiday periods can place a significant financial strain on couples, Brown says.

"Whether it be from large post-Christmas credit card bills that arrive in the new year or increased expenditure or financial demands during the summer holidays, January can be an expensive time of year," she says.

**Solutions:** Plan ahead, be mindful of the costs associated with debt and try not to add to financial stress by overspending. See a financial counselor if overly concerned about finances.