

Still dreaming of a perfect *Christmas?*

Trying to create a happy family occasion just like in the movies can leave you feeling more frazzled than festive! We asked leading psychologists for their problem-solving advice to help you enjoy the day

Making the most of being single

I've been single for three years, and find going back to my elderly parents' house alone at my age lonely and humiliating. How can I improve things? Jenny, 42

Christmas can feel isolating, almost as though everyone else is buying presents for, or spending time with, that special someone. 'If possible, find another single friend and go away together, so you escape all the hype,' says Hodson. Or go away on your own – try a group trip if you don't want to be completely solo – check out www.exodus.co.uk for a great selection. 'If you stay at home, you could always have Christmas dinner at your house instead,' suggests Hodson. Or how about volunteering? There are plenty of opportunities at homeless shelters or elderly care homes over the festive season. 'It can

make you feel good and really put your life into perspective,' says McMahon.

And remember that just because you're on your own this year doesn't mean you will be every year. 'Unless you are religious, this is really just another public holiday – a single day of celebration. Once you start thinking like that, being single for one day doesn't seem so bad,' McMahon adds. □



