

# Joyce's Tips for Beating Homesickness

**Homesickness and culture shock are real and can be incredibly hard for au pairs, especially in the beginning. Not everyone experiences this, but most au pairs do at some point and they often underestimate it. Give yourself some time and allow yourself a good cry – there's no use trying to fight it.**

Here are a couple suggestions to help you manage it:

- Get out and socialise! – This is the most important. Connect with others through Facebook groups, Smart Au Pairs Meet & Greet sessions, gyms, sports clubs etc. Here are some [other suggestions](#).
- Talk to your host family – They want to know how you're feeling and what's going on.
- Communication keeps a relationship healthy.
- Get active – Go for a walk after work, whether it's for 5 mins or for 30mins, it doesn't matter. Or, join a sports team/gym. Exercise releases happy hormones / endorphins.
- Set a timeframe – Tell yourself that if you don't notice any improvement in how you feel after a month then you can allow yourself to think about going back home. This is not as overwhelming as thinking you still have 6 months to go. You'll see that after a month you will feel much better and won't want to leave.
- Write a list – Write down why you want to be an au pair and all the positive things you can think of. What do you want to learn? What are you grateful for? Keep this piece of paper with you to look at when you're not feeling well.
- Reduce contact with friends and family back home – Try not to contact your family and friends in your home country too often. As comforting as it may seem, it may only make you feel more homesick. Try focusing on building a new life and friendships here. A Skype call every two weeks tends to work best.
- Write a journal – Write your thoughts and feelings down in your native language. It can give you clarity on what exactly is upsetting you and may help you resolve these more easily.
- Bookmark this doc – Read it when you're feeling down. Sometimes all it takes is to know that you're not alone in this and that it's perfectly normal.