

“Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by:

- **feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;**
- **increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one’s job; and**
- **reduced professional efficacy.**

Burnout refers specifically to phenomenon in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life.”

Burnout can affect not only your work, but also your relationships and your health. It’s important to know what burnout is and its symptoms so you can spot them quickly and take steps to intervene.

Burnout is the effect of chronic, long-term stress. The result of this stress leads to the inability to function well at work or in your personal life. Most people suffer from physical and emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and the feeling that they can no longer achieve. Even if you love your job, you can still be at risk for burnout.

Understanding the symptoms of burnout gives you the ability to take care of yourself before things get worse. Daily tasks, such as getting exercise and fresh air and doing something outside of work that you enjoy, can help prevent burnout. For others, taking leave or going on vacation can help. The best practice is to stop burnout before it starts.

Here are the top 10 signs you’re heading toward burnout:

1. You get sick more often. From colds to heart disease, your body starts wearing down under the constant stress.
2. Inability to sleep. Stress leads to insomnia in many people.
3. Physical fatigue. You feel wiped out at the end of your work week, or sometimes even before.
4. Mental fatigue. Constant stress leads to forgetfulness and the inability to concentrate. You may find that making decisions is difficult.
5. Irritability. You may feel irritable at work or in your personal life. Little things that used to not bother you begin grating on your nerves.
6. Feeling apathetic. You’re heading toward burnout if your attitude is “What’s the point?” You may feel hopeless about your career, which can spill over in your personal life.
7. You don’t feel enjoyment at work. Most people find that there’s at least one thing they like about their job, but after a long period of extreme stress, you may find that you dread going to work, or you punch the snooze bar a couple of times more in the morning.
8. Negativity. Chronic stress leads to seeing the glass half empty. Feeling negative affects everyone around you, at work and at home.
9. Anxiety. Constant worry is a classic symptom of burnout. It also produces a steady stream of stress hormones that can be very hard on the body.
10. Depression. Prolonged stress leads to feeling sad, hopeless, and worthless. You may start to isolate from others, even people you love.

If you recognize that you are experiencing symptoms of burnout, here are some tips to get back on track:

- **Write** down three things every day that you are grateful for. Gratitude has a profound effect on our outlook on life. Making a daily list helps combat negativity.
- **Go to the doctor.** Get all those physical symptoms, such as heart palpitations, headaches, and insomnia, sorted out. Feeling better physically will do wonders.
- **Spend time** with the things that bring you joy. Every day, do something that brings you joy. That may mean texting your kids or walking the dog. Giving yourself something to look forward to is a good practice to avoid burnout.
- **Meditate.** Daily meditation is known to boost the immune system and help restore a sense of well-being. Most adults don’t get enough quiet time. Give yourself 10 minutes a day to clear your mind of the clutter.
- **Set realistic expectations.** Most people try to do more than feasibly possible. Make a list of what you want to accomplish in a day, then cut it in half.
- **Stick to your priorities.** Remember what is important in your life and make that a priority.

If you feel like you need help avoiding burnout, be sure to reach out to your Employee Assistance Program. Counselors can help you develop a strategy to help you recover.

https://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/burn-out/en/

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