

Burnout: check in **before you burn out**

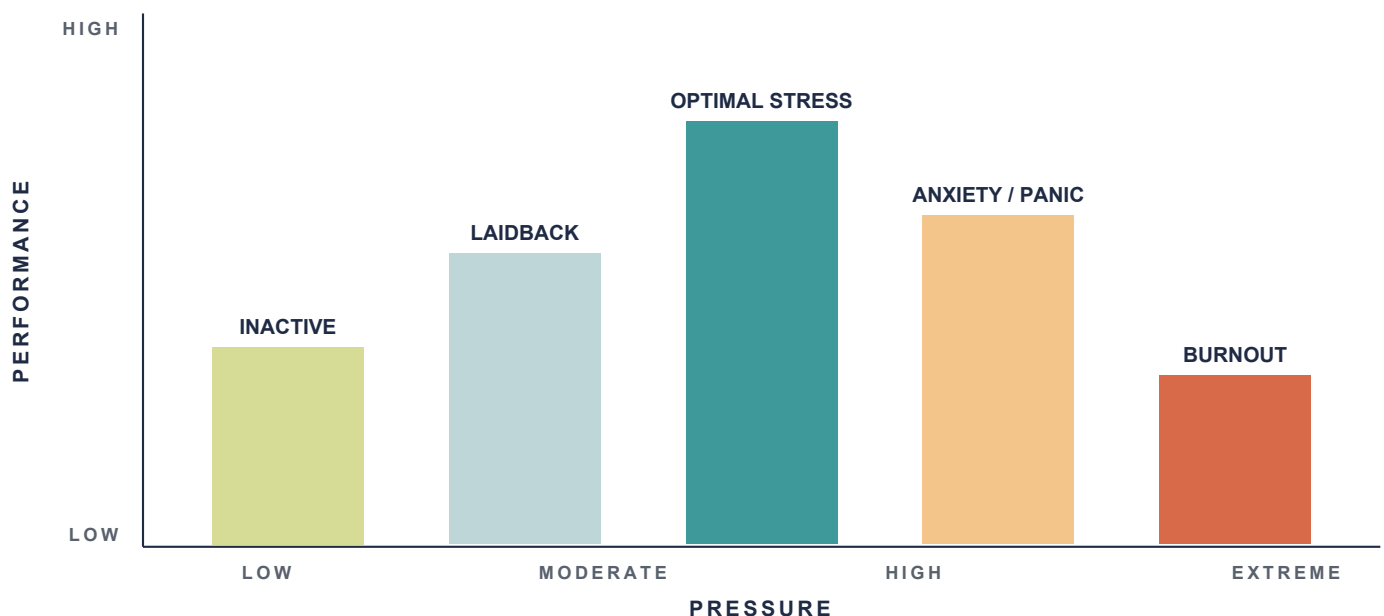
What burnout is, how it builds, and where you are on the curve

Burnout is characterized as a state of chronic emotional exhaustion coupled with feelings of detachment from your work and doubts about your competence and the value of what you do. Essentially, when you've reached the point of burnout, it can feel like you've had the life sucked out of you. You no longer feel capable of caring about what's important to you, making any effort, or staying motivated.

Burnout is a state of mental and physical exhaustion caused by excessive stress. It can lead to more severe problems like depression and anxiety, so seeking help is essential if you are experiencing burnout.

It is essential to recognize the symptoms of burnout so that you can put plans in place to help yourself before it worsens.

THE STRESS CURVE · CHECK IN WITH YOUR STRESS LEVELS BEFORE YOU BURNOUT



How to read it. Some pressure is good: that is the middle of the curve. Performance drops on the far right, where pressure has turned into anxiety and then exhaustion. Mark where you are today, then come back to this page in a month.

WHERE AM I ON THE CURVE TODAY?

☐ Inactive ☐ Laidback ☐ Optimal stress ☐ Anxiety / Panic ☐ Burnout

What is pushing me to the right at the moment?

What has pulled me back toward the middle before?

The burnout iceberg

What others see, and what sits underneath

The iceberg theory is a model that represents the idea that, although burnout is displayed outwardly, other emotions may be hidden beneath the surface, just like an iceberg, you can't see the full magnitude of what is hidden below the surface.

The behavior you see is "the tip of the iceberg"-- what you don't see are the emotional, social, and other factors that lie beneath the surface and cause that behavior.



Why it matters. People tend to respond to the tip: the irritability, the withdrawal. The exhaustion, shame and panic underneath are what need care. Page 3 asks you to fill in your own.

Which of these would the people around me notice first?

Which ones do I keep below the line, and from whom?

Fill in your own iceberg

Above the line: what people notice. Below: what you feel. Use the word bank or your own words.

WHAT YOU SEE

WHAT YOU DON'T SEE

The diagram consists of a large light blue rectangle representing the water. A smaller, darker blue polygon representing the tip of an iceberg is positioned above a horizontal line that divides the rectangle. The area above the line is labeled 'WHAT YOU SEE' and the area below is labeled 'WHAT YOU DON'T SEE'. The polygon is wider at the top and tapers to a point at the bottom, with its base resting on the horizontal line.

WORD BANK

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------|
| Sleepiness | Suicidal thoughts | Memory problems | Crying | Numb |
| Fatigued | Hopeless | Low appetite | Giving up | Grief |
| Low energy | Loneliness | Big appetite | Poor hygiene | Anger |
| Lack of concentration | Shame | Withdrawal | Low confidence | Insomnia |
| Self harm | Guilt | Addiction | Anxiety | Tremors |

The 12 stages of burnout

Stages one to six: it starts with doing well

1 The compulsion to prove oneself

People with the compulsion tend to work harder and take on more to prove and demonstrate their worth. They are not the best at setting boundaries because they're always willing to go above and beyond.

2 Working harder

This is an escalation of the first stage. Individuals have an inability to stop working, they accept more tasks than they can manage. However, their excessive ambition and compulsion to prove themselves drive them to complete all their work by themselves.

3 Neglecting needs

Daily tasks and personal needs are sacrificed or ignored, such as eating well, sleeping enough, and social interaction, become less important. Individuals may lose their sense of humor, become easily irritated, and start self-medicating with alcohol, food, or coffee.

4 Displacement of conflicts

This is a critical stage when one becomes conscious of the rising problems and conflicts related to working harder. At this stage, concerns may be dismissed, and the first signs of physical symptoms, such as exhaustion, feeling threatened, panicky and anxious behavior appear.

5 Revision of values

Values are skewed, friends and family dismissed, and hobbies are seen as irrelevant. Work is the only focus. One's work achievement is fused with one's perception of self, and to stop achieving in work is to stop surviving. This is irrational, but rational thought was an early casualty of the burnout process.

6 Denial of emerging problems

Individuals start becoming intolerant of social interaction. They increasingly view others negatively. For instance, colleagues may be labeled stupid, lazy, or demanding. In addition, individuals view problems in life as stemming from work and view time as a minimal resource.

The 12 stages of burnout

Stages seven to twelve: when the strain shows

7 Withdrawal

At this stage, an individual's social life is reduced to a minimum; it may even be non-existent. Socially isolated, individuals may therefore turn to alcohol or drugs to relieve stress or to try to regain one's "old self." Feelings of hopelessness increase.

8 Odd behavioral changes

Changes in the individual's behavior become apparent. Their family, friends, and colleagues are increasingly concerned. One's behavior becomes erratic or manic and may be hard to control. One's decisions in this time bear the brunt of projections from inner chaos, like a relationship that is suddenly ended.

9 Depersonalization

A person fails to see themselves or others as valuable, accompanied by a failure to acknowledge their or others' needs. As a result, one has lost the ability to recover autonomously and needs help because one can no longer understand what one's self-needs are.

10 Inner emptiness

By this stage, individuals feel empty inside, and to overcome this, they look for activities such as overeating, sex, alcohol, or drugs; activities are often exaggerated - anything to numb the empty feeling.

11 Depression

Individual suddenly feels lost and unsure, exhausted, with a bleak worldview and no enthusiasm for the future. The individual is overwhelmed with feelings of indifference and hopelessness. The individual begins to feel like life has no meaning.

12 Burnout syndrome

By this point, individuals collapse both mentally and physically. An individual's immune system is compromised, and may also have suicidal thoughts. Medical attention is needed.

If you recognise stages 10 to 12. Please tell your therapist or doctor this week. The later stages respond to help, but they rarely improve on their own.

Recognizing burnout

Tick True for each statement that fits the last two or three weeks.

STATEMENT	TRUE?
1. I feel constantly exhausted, tired, or fatigued	☐
2. I haven't been making time for people, even family, and friends	☐
3. I have been finding it hard to concentrate	☐
4. I have been feeling a sense of hopelessness, like "Why bother?"; "Who cares anyway?"	☐
5. I have been experiencing regular sleep disturbance, wakefulness, never enough sleep	☐
6. I find it hard to say 'no'	☐
7. I have lost my enthusiasm or enjoyment of work	☐
8. I feel burdened by responsibilities and pressures	☐
9. The relationships in my life are starting to suffer, or break down because of my work load	☐
10. I feel like I start the day fatigued, even before I leave the house	☐

If you answered True to more than five questions, you may suffer from burnout. Reflecting on your answers and considering your true feelings and stress levels is essential, as your burnout could lead to more significant problems.

REFLECTION

Have you felt run down and drained?

Can you talk about your energy levels in the past 2-3 weeks and explain what might be affecting them?

What takes up most of your energy?

What self-care do you practice, and how often?

Ways to prevent, identify and **beat burnout**

Four places to start

Below are some simple tips that you can implement into your life to help ease your stress levels and help you gain better control over your life.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Social connection is a fantastic way of preventing burnout. Social interaction means having loving, healthy, and supportive relationships. It makes us feel appreciated and gives us a sense of belonging.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP

There is a close connection between sleep and mental health as inadequate sleep is associated with an increase of frequent mental distress. A good night's sleep helps foster both mental and emotional resilience. It is recommended that healthy adults need between 7 and 9 hours of sleep per night.

NUTRITION AND EXERCISE

Exercise helps strengthen one's mental health. Exercise releases chemicals like endorphins and serotonin that improve your mood. Additionally, better-quality diets are consistently associated with reduced burnout risk.

WORK LIFE BALANCE

Managing a healthy work-life balance is an essential step for reducing stress and avoiding job burnout. Positive work-life balance is attained by prioritizing job responsibilities and career ambitions alongside important life elements, such as family, friends, leisure, and spirituality.

REFLECTION

Which of the four is weakest for me right now, and what is one small change?

Who could help me with it?

My prevention plan

Fill this in while you are well. It is for the weeks when you are not.

MY COPING SKILLS

POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF SELF-CARE

OUTCOMES OF BURNOUT

MY SOCIAL SUPPORT

OBSTACLES I MIGHT FACE

TRIGGERS

The self-care wheel

Six spokes. Rate each one, then pick the spoke that needs the most attention.

Self-care is an essential survival skill. Self-care refers to things that we practice or engage in on a regular basis to reduce stress and maintain or enhance our physical health and mental well-being. Self-care is really, anything you do for yourself that makes yourself feel better or cared for can be considered self-care.

This self-care wheel identifies various aspects of self care that offers a simple action plan to manage stress and help you lead a more balanced everyday life.



- Sleep.** There is a close connection between sleep and mental health as inadequate sleep is associated with an increase of frequent mental distress. A good night's sleep helps foster both mental and emotional resilience. It is recommended that healthy adults need between 7 and 9 hours of sleep per night.
- Nutrition / exercise.** Exercise helps strengthen one's mental health. Exercise releases chemicals like endorphins and serotonin that improve your mood. Additionally, better quality diets are consistently associated with reduced depression risk.
- Hobbies / Interests.** Spending time doing something that you enjoy such as painting, art, knitting, crochet or any activity that brings you pleasure will help increase your moods and lower your stress levels.
- Boundaries.** Setting personal boundaries is an important part of your own self care and can help you honour and respect your own emotional, psychological and physical needs.
- Gratitude.** Gratitude is a highly effective resource for self-care. Practicing gratitude is one way we can take time to reflect on the things that we value and appreciate. Research indicates that by practicing gratitude daily you can increase your mental well being.
- Social interaction.** Social connection is a fantastic resource for your self-care. Social self-care means having loving, healthy, and supportive relationships. It makes us feel appreciated and gives us a sense of belonging.

MY WHEEL THIS WEEK · 0 = EMPTY, 10 = FULL

Sleep

Nutrition / exercise

Hobbies / Interests

Boundaries

Gratitude

Social interaction

The spoke I will tend first, and how