



Tips to prevent burnout

Trying to do too many things at once can take a lot out of you. But sometimes it may seem like you have no choice. There's always so much work that needs to be done. Sometimes, however, you may take on too much. This is when burnout can happen. It's that feeling people get when they say "I just can't take it anymore."

How to tell if you're burned out

As a society of overachievers, it's not always easy to tell the difference between just-plain-busy and burned out. Answering these questions may help:

- Are you tired all the time?
- Do you have trouble sleeping?
- Do you ever have quiet time with your friends, your family or by yourself?
- Do you ever have fun?
- Do little things set you off?

Preventing burnout

It can be hard for some people to prevent burnout. It's hard to make time to prevent something when we don't know it's happening. But remember: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Relax at work

Take regular work breaks. It may seem hard to stop the flow of work, but regular breaks will restore you. Try getting away for a minute so you can:

- Fix yourself a cup of tea
- Stretch, breathe deeply or just rest your eyes for a minute
- Take a walk around the block for some fresh air

If you're self-employed, set a timer to remind you to:

- Listen to a favorite song
- Get outside and garden, or go for a walk
- Read
- Knit, draw or do a jigsaw puzzle

These little breaks will relax you and reduce stress. And they take much less time away from your work schedule than taking days off because you are too burned out.

Give yourself some limits

It's hard to admit that we can't do everything. But you know what? We can't do everything.

At work, know when to say "no." It's better to turn down weekend work than to do a less-than-your-best job. Tell your boss you're feeling stressed out. She should understand. Tell her you'll come back refreshed and ready to tackle anything on Monday.

In your personal life, if you want to see friends but can't face cooking, order food instead. If you're on a budget, a few pizzas won't cost too much. Make a salad and buy a gallon of ice cream and you're all set.

Take care of yourself

You can't take care of your job, your spouse, your kids, your home and your life without taking care of you first.

Rest, relaxation, exercise and a healthy diet are keys to burnout recovery and prevention. A fit body can better withstand life's daily stresses. A well-rested body and mind can better handle the everyday challenges of work and life. Talk to people. Be honest. It's not admitting defeat to tell people you're burned out or to get help.