

Beat Job Burnout

From Training and Development Magazine
by Pamela Ammondson

With fewer staff doing more work in nearly every industry, people are feeling the drain both mentally and physically.

If your work leaves you feeling tired, unfulfilled, powerless, or frustrated, you may be suffering from burnout. But before you do something drastic, such as quitting your job or switching careers, try a simple revitalization program to renew your energy and rekindle your spirit.

To renew your energy in small doses on a daily basis:

1. Evaluate and prioritize.

Understand why you are feeling so drained. Keep a log of your daily activities to identify what is causing burnout. Think about what you can do to free up energy.

- What are your priorities?
- Are there any tasks you can delete or delegate?
- Would anyone notice if you didn't attend a meeting or complete a certain task?

Many people take on too major commitments and drain nearly all of their energy. Start taking control of your time by realizing that you don't have to accept every invitation or tolerate every interruption. Learn how to tactfully say no and save your energy for more important matters.

2. Take care of yourself.

Keeping your body nourished with healthy foods will keep your energy level up. During times of stress:

- Cut back on caffeine, alcohol, sugar, fat, salt, and any foods that make you feel sluggish.
- Exercise regularly to help calm your nerves, increase your strength and stamina, and raise your energy level.

3. Value your sleep.

Lack of sleep weakens concentration, impairs decision making and creative thinking, and weakens the immune system. Assess your pre-sleep activities to make sure you are allowing yourself to relax.

- An hour before bedtime, read only soothing literature and watch only calming programs.
- Don't answer your phone if you think the caller might overtax you.
- Avoid heavy meals right before bed.
- Limit your beverage consumption, especially alcohol and caffeine.
- Make sure your room is comfortable and quiet.
- Try to go to bed at the same time each night.

4. Take seven-minute revitalization breaks.

- Many people experience a heightened awareness in nature. Visit a park or secluded place where you can enjoy the scenery. In hale and exhale slowly to clear your mind and relieve the chest tightness caused by stress.
- Listen to relaxing music. As you listen, breathe deeply and relax.

5. Plan a getaway.

- Get away from life's fast pace for a weekend or even a day. Pick a quiet, nurturing environment where you can rest.
- You can even plan a getaway weekend at home. Unplug the phone, turn off your pager, and spend a couple of days recharging your batteries.

6. Stop, think, and act.

Whenever you are panicked, feel out of control, or are facing a crisis, try using the scuba diver's motto: Stop, think, and act. Instead of viewing problems as a source of stress, look at each one as an opportunity for growth. Ask yourself, "What outcome do I want to achieve, and how do I envision myself achieving it?"

Many people who implement these techniques report a renewed sense of purpose without having to make a drastic life change. The key is to focus on yourself, your surroundings, and your energy level in order to keep burnout at bay.