

BURNED OUT AT WORK

Burnout is an increasingly common issue for US workers. Here are **7 TIPS** to deal with it.



Have you become cynical or critical at work? Do you drag yourself to your job, have trouble getting started or struggle to concentrate? Are you feeling irritable, impatient, exhausted, or disillusioned about your work?

If you answered yes to any of these, you may be experiencing burnout in the workplace.

Job burnout is defined as “a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity.” Recent studies show that 76% of US employees are experiencing worker burnout.

Causes of job burnout include:

- **Lack of control** (*inability to influence decisions or not having a say in schedule or workload*)
- **Lack of resources**
- **Unclear job expectations**
- **Dysfunctional workplace dynamics** (*dealing with an office bully or micromanager*)
- **Extremes of activity** (*monotonous or chaotic*)
- **Lack of social support**
- **Work-life imbalance**

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COUNSELOR CORNER

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Q: Between work stress and family, plus the holidays, I'm feeling burned-out! What tips do you have?

A: The holidays can be a time many of us feel drained and overwhelmed. To prevent burnout and fatigue, the key is to recognize our individual patterns and implement these tips before and during the holiday season:

1. Make a self-care plan. It can be beneficial to be mindful of what you're feeling and to make a plan to care for yourself. The holidays can be a rushed season of checking items off the “to-do” list, leading us to not prioritize our own needs. Feeling “burned-out” is a state of emotional, mental, and often physical exhaustion that is brought on by prolonged stress.

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IS COMPASSION FATIGUE THE SAME AS BURNOUT?

Burnout is **not the same** as compassion fatigue. Feeling drained from everyday stressors like work and childrearing results in burnout. Compassion fatigue is the strain of feeling for another's pain. However, the symptoms are often similar for burnout.
—*Psychology Today*

COUNSELOR CORNER CONT.

We can begin to alleviate these feelings by noticing and attending to our overall wellness. Check in with yourself by taking this free self-care assessment and planning to strive for balance.

2. Be OK with saying “no.” The holiday season can bring about many activities and parties that quickly fill the calendar. When you receive an invitation, consider the number of other events you plan to attend, as well as your own personal capabilities to avoid feeling overwhelmed or even resentful. When you say “no” to events that you do not have the capacity for, it frees up more of your time and energy for the things that you do value.

Not sure how to respectfully say “no”? Try, “Thank you very much for the invite. I am going to have to miss this year. I am trying to spend more time at home with my family for the holidays.”

3. Maintain healthy habits. During times of stress, it is especially important to ensure we keep up on habits that keep us well, starting with getting a proper amount of sleep. Sleep is important in regulating our mood, and a lack of sleep can contribute to burnout.

Also, be mindful of your alcohol or drug use during the holiday season. With holiday parties and social events, it can feel easier to drink more than we would in a typical day, week, or sitting. If you notice that your drinking negatively impacts your sleep or mood, or you begin to drink more heavily to cope with stress, consider ordering a mocktail instead or limit the number of parties where you consume alcohol.

4. Ask for help. One way that some people attempt to cope with stress is to overperform and isolate from their support networks, leaving them feeling overwhelmed and sometimes even resentful. Practice asking for help from others in your life, whether that is asking a partner to wrap holiday gifts, delegating tasks in work or home life, or being clear about what you need from others. By clearly communicating our needs, it allows us to cope with our stress in helpful, effective ways.

If these feelings of burnout have taken a toll on your physical and emotional well-being, reaching out to a professional counselor can be beneficial. You do not have to go it alone. Going to counseling when feeling overwhelmed is a part of self-care, just as going to the doctor is when you have a cold or are feeling ill.

Through The Village EAP, you can schedule short-term, wellness-based counseling sessions at no cost to you. Call 1-800-627-8220 and say that you would like to access your Village EAP benefit through your employer.

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Burned-out workers may feel disengaged, helpless, hopeless, unmotivated, and unproductive. Not addressing burnout can have serious consequences. It's associated with alcohol or substance misuse, heart disease, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, and a vulnerability to illness.

It's important to take care of ourselves. Here are 7 tips for dealing with job burnout.

EVALUATE YOUR OPTIONS.

Discuss specific concerns with your supervisor. Find ways to work together regarding expectations, deadlines, and goals.

TRY A RELAXING ACTIVITY.

Listen to music, take a yoga class, or meditate.

EXERCISE.

Physical activity helps us cope better with stress.

GET SOME SLEEP.

Set aside time before bed to relax. Keep your bedroom comfortable, dark, cool, and quiet. Restrict caffeine intake 5 hours before bedtime and avoid alcohol, heavy meals, and nicotine for 2 to 3 hours beforehand.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS.

Be aware of your surroundings and what you are feeling without judgment.

SET BOUNDARIES.

Be clear about your limits. Recognize that other people's needs and feelings are not more important than your own.

SEEK SUPPORT.

Reach out to coworkers, friends, or loved ones. Ask for help when you need. Access services through your Village EAP benefit by calling 1-800-627-8220.

Information compiled from the training “Employee Burnout and Fatigue,” created by Nancy Boyle, EAP Trainer with The Village Business Institute

