



## 5 Signs You're Headed for Burnout at Work

### What You Can Do to Fix It

There are probably things you love about your job. On the other hand, co-workers that get on your nerves and long hours at the office every night can get old fast.

Your job can test your patience in a number of ways. You can't always control your work environment, but sharing space with certain people, and your long list of duties, can leave you physically and mentally exhausted. And sometimes, the paycheck doesn't justify the headaches.

It's one thing to experience normal everyday stresses. It's another thing to feel like you're on the brink of a burnout.

Job burnout is real, and it's important to recognize the red flags before it's too late. *How do you know it's burnout?* The answer lies in how work stress affects your life. Here are five signs you might be headed for a burnout at work.

#### 1. Everything about your job starts to annoy you

When you're excited about work and bad days are few and far between, you might approach each day with an enthusiastic attitude. Your optimism shines from a mile away, and you're ready to take on the world. It's a different storyline when you're near a burnout.

If you're headed toward burnout, you might lose interest in meetings, teamwork, and everything in between. You may perceive your contributions aren't appreciated and feel trapped at your current job.

If any of this sounds familiar, burnout is knocking on your door. Your negative attitude goes beyond an isolated bad day. It carries from week to week or month to month without letup.



## **2. You have zero energy to give**

When you stop caring about your job, your job performance takes a hit. You still need a paycheck, of course, but you've mastered the art of doing just enough to get by. The days of going beyond the call of duty and giving the company 200 percent of your energy and time are long gone.

You might skip work or arrive late. Burnout zaps your zest. You can't concentrate and you're unmotivated, and as a result you begin coasting through assignments.

## **3. Work/life balance is nonexistent**

If you're getting paid the big bucks, some employers think it's their right to demand all your time and attention, and you shouldn't complain.

Regardless of your position or how much you earn, you shouldn't let a job control every aspect of your life. Working around the clock benefits your paycheck, but it does absolutely nothing to help your sanity. Putting everything important to you on the back burner is a recipe for burnout.

An occasional hectic week at the office is normal. But if your job just leaves you tired and stressed, and if you can't remember the last time you ate dinner with your family or worked a normal shift, you might want to make changes as soon as possible to avoid burnout.

## **4. You eat, sleep, and dream work**

There's good stress (short term) and there's bad stress (long term). While good stress releases chemicals that help you perform better and boosts brain power, bad stress — the stress responsible for burnout — puts you at risk for health problems.

Some people don't admit when their jobs begin to affect them physically or mentally. But it's important to keep an eye on changes to your health, as these can be a sign that you're headed



for burnout. If you wake up thinking about work, go to sleep thinking about work, and dream about work-related problems, your mind never gets a break. It's as if you're always in work mode. Whether you realize it or not, this can wreak havoc on your health, causing:

- [high blood pressure](#)
- frequent colds
- weight gain
- [insomnia](#)
- [depression](#)

## 5. You're an irritable mess

If you're unhappy at work and on the verge of burnout, this unhappiness can trickle down into your personal life. You may be short-tempered or crabby with your co-workers and in danger of becoming a less friendly version of yourself outside the office. This can put you at odds with friends and family. Remember, no job is worth compromising your personal relationships.

## Job burnout recovery 101

Now that you know the signs of burnout, what can you do about it?

### Put your health first

When you're overworked and overwhelmed, you might skip lunch, stop exercising, and sleep only a few hours at night. Living at this pace isn't healthy and can cause burnout sooner rather than later.



Take control of your health. Regardless of what's happening during the day, make sure you take a lunch break and eat healthy snacks. Ditch caffeine and sugar — these can make you nervous and increase anxiety. Stick with healthy fats and proteins to regulate your blood sugar and keep you calm.

Plan for at least 150 minutes of physical activity a week. And most importantly, don't let work rob you of the right to enjoy seven to nine hours of sleep a night.

Make these simple changes and you'll start to feel better.

### **Be realistic**

Identify work stressors that make your life unbearable. Despite what your boss might think, you're not a robot. And pretending to be superhuman can kill you slowly.

If you've been feeling overwhelmed and anxious for a while, don't expect the problem to miraculously disappear. It might be time to have a talk with your boss.

If you're putting in a lot of overtime or working outside your job description, discuss transitioning back to a normal schedule. Your boss might assign 10 hours of work to be completed in an 8-hour day. Naturally, you want to make a good impression, but it's not your job to single handedly solve the company's problem of being short-staffed.

### **Should you stay or should you go?**

Only you can make this call. Your employer might not care about prioritizing your health, putting you in a tough spot. When all is said and done, you control whether the job pushes you over the edge. Resigning from a job is scary and intimidating, and there's no guarantee that you'll have a better experience elsewhere. Of course, you won't know until you consider other options.



**Take a vacation** Some people leave paid vacation time on the table. For whatever reason, they don't feel the need to escape the office. If you're one of these people, this might explain why you're headed toward burnout.

Contrary to what you may think, your workplace won't fall apart in your absence. Not to undermine the role you play in the office, but unless you "are" the company, your boss can probably spare you for a few days.

It's commendable that you feel a sense of loyalty to your employer, but you should also be loyal to yourself. Even if you don't take a trip somewhere, use your time off to relax, sleep, or rediscover your creative side on a staycation.

### The bottom line

Recognizing the signs of burnout can be difficult, and you might chalk up symptoms to normal stress. But burnout is more than a bad day or a bad week. It affects the way you feel about your job, your life, and how you deal with others. Try some of the above practices for overcoming burnout. If nothing helps, it might be time to move on.

3 sources

Healthline has strict sourcing guidelines and relies on peer-reviewed studies, academic research institutions, and medical associations. We avoid using tertiary references. You can learn more about how we ensure our content is accurate and current by reading our [editorial policy](#).

- Mayo Clinic Staff. (2015, September 17). Job burnout: How to spot it and take action [mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642)
- 7 red flags of job burnout, and what you can do. (2016, April 14) [health.clevelandclinic.org/2016/04/7-red-flags-of-job-burnout-and-what-you-can-do/](https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2016/04/7-red-flags-of-job-burnout-and-what-you-can-do/)
- Smith, M., Segal, J., Robinson, L., & Segal, R. (2016, December). Burnout prevention and recovery [helpguide.org/articles/stress/preventing-burnout.htm#exercise](https://helpguide.org/articles/stress/preventing-burnout.htm#exercise)