
Burnout Self-Test

Checking Yourself for Burnout

Anois Wellness Pty Ltd

Burnout occurs when passionate, committed people become deeply disillusioned with a job or career from which they have previously derived much of their identity and meaning. It comes as the things that inspire passion and enthusiasm are stripped away, and tedious or unpleasant things crowd in.

This tool can help you check yourself for burnout. It helps you look at the way you feel about your job and your experiences at work, so that you can get a feel for whether you are at risk of burnout.

15 Statements to Answer	Not at All	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1 I feel run down and drained of physical or emotional energy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2 I have negative thoughts about my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3 I am harder and less sympathetic with people than perhaps they deserve.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4 I am easily irritated by small problems, or by my co-workers and team.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5 I feel misunderstood or unappreciated by my co-workers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6 I feel that I have no one to talk to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7 I feel that I am achieving less than I should.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8 I feel under an unpleasant level of pressure to succeed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9 I feel that I am not getting what I want out of my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10 I feel that I am in the wrong organization or the wrong profession.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11 I am frustrated with parts of my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12 I feel that organizational politics or bureaucracy frustrate my ability to do a good job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13 I feel that there is more work to do than I practically have the ability to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15 Statements to Answer	Not at All	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
14 I feel that I do not have time to do many of the things that are important to doing a good quality job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15 I find that I do not have time to plan as much as I would like to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Score Structure:

Not at all: 1 point
 Rarely: 2 points
 Sometimes: 3 points
 Often: 4 points
 Very Often: 5 points

Score Interpretation

Score	Comment
15-18	No sign of burnout here.
19-32	Little sign of burnout here, unless some factors are particularly severe.
33-49	Be careful – you may be at risk of burnout, particularly if several scores are high.
50-59	You are at severe risk of burnout – do something about this urgently.
60-75	You are at very severe risk of burnout – do something about this urgently

Recovering From Burnout

Finding Passion for Your Role Again

When Ron first started with his organization, he loved his job. He went into work every day filled with purpose and passion, and he was excited about the difference he could make in his new role.

Three years later, however, it's hard to recognize him. Now, Ron dreads going to work. He feels as if his work is meaningless, he's always stressed, and he calls in sick frequently.

These are classic symptoms of burnout. If you've experienced this yourself, it's essential that you know how to recover from it, before you experience lasting damage to your sense of well-being and your career.

In this article, we'll look at what burnout is and how you can recover from it.

What is Burnout?

Burnout is a state of physical and emotional exhaustion. It can occur when you experience long-term stress in your job, or when you have worked in a physically or emotionally draining role for a long time. You can also experience burnout when your efforts at work have failed to produce the results that you expected, and you feel deeply disillusioned as a result.

You might be experiencing burnout if you:

- Feel that every day at work is a bad day.
- Feel exhausted much of the time.
- Feel no joy or interest in your work, or even feel depressed by it.
- Feel overwhelmed by your responsibilities.
- Engage in escapist behaviours, such as excess drinking.
- Have less patience with others than you used to.
- Feel hopeless about your life or work.
- Experience physical symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, sleeplessness, or heart palpitations. (Make sure that you see a physician about these!)

Studies show that people who experience burnout early in their career often find it easier to recover than people who go through it later in life. However, it's important that you know how to recover effectively, whatever stage you're at in your career.

Recovering from Burnout

Burnout doesn't go away on its own; rather, it will get worse unless you address the underlying issues causing it. If you ignore burnout, it will only cause you further harm down the line, so it's important that you begin recovery as soon as possible.

Recovery from burnout is a slow journey; not a quick dash to some imaginary finish line. You need time and space to recuperate, so don't rush through this process.

The recovery strategies that we've outlined below are all useful in different situations. Some of these strategies will work for you, while others won't, so find a balance of strategies and best practices that feels right to you. If you believe that something isn't working, don't be afraid to try something new.

Think About the "Why" of Burnout

You first need to identify why you've experienced burnout. In some situations, this will be obvious. Other times, it will take time and introspection to uncover this.

First, look at any resentment that you feel towards your work. Often, feelings of resentment point to something important that is missing.

Here's a good example: Jennifer manages a team halfway around the world, so her workday often starts at 6 a.m. She doesn't mind this because she likes her team and her job. But she feels resentful when her boss forgets that she works so early and repeatedly asks her to stay late, which causes her to miss important time with her family.

In this example, burnout didn't occur because Jennifer disliked her job; in fact, she loved what she did. She experienced burnout because she hated missing out on family time in the evenings.

Take time to think about any negative feelings that you have about your role. Once you've identified the cause of your burnout, write down at least one way that you can manage or eliminate that source of stress or unhappiness.

Another useful method for identifying underlying causes of burnout is to keep a stress diary . Each day, write down what causes you stress and record why the event stressed you. Stress diaries can be illuminating, so long as you keep up with them for a reasonable period of time.

Once you discover the root causes of your burnout, look at what you can do to resolve it. This might involve delegating some of your responsibilities to others, adding more autonomy to your job, working from home one day a week, or even changing roles.

Focus on the Basics

If you've experienced burnout, your body may be in need of attention. This is why it's important to think about the basics of good health and well-being.

Start by getting plenty of exercise. Countless studies have shown that this offers many physical and mental benefits; not only does regular exercise help reduce stress, but it also boosts your mood, improves your overall health, and enhances your quality of life. Next, make sure that you're getting enough sleep, eating well, and drinking plenty of water throughout the day. These might sound obvious, but busy professionals often ignore their most basic needs. Instead, they take care of others and their responsibilities far more than they take care of themselves. This can contribute to burnout.

Take a Vacation or Leave of Absence

One good way to start your recovery is to take a real vacation. Time away from work gives you the distance you need to relax and de-stress.

While the stress and problems that you're experiencing at work may still be waiting for you when you get back, taking time off is essential for getting the rest you need and coming up with long-term solutions to burnout.

Reassess Your Goals

Next, take time to reassess your personal goals. Burnout can occur when your work is out of alignment with your values, or when it's not contributing to your long-term goals. You can also experience frustration and burnout if you have no idea what your goals are.

Start by identifying your values and thinking about what gives you meaning in your work. Then use this to craft a personal mission statement. This self-analysis will give you a deeper understanding of what you find most important, and it will show you which elements, if any, are missing from your life or work.

Next, look at how you can tie your values and mission to your current role. This could mean crafting your job to fit you better, or even just changing the way you look at your role.

Positive psychologist Martin Seligman says that all of us require five essential elements in our lives in order to experience well-being. These elements – positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and achievement – are described in his PERMA Model. Use this model to discover whether any of these elements are missing, and to think about what you can do to incorporate them into your life.

Say "No", Politely

Try not to take on any new responsibilities or commitments while you're recovering from burnout.

This might be challenging, especially with colleagues who need your help. Our article on "Saying 'Yes' to the Person, 'No' to the Task" has useful tips for saying no, diplomatically.

Practice Positive Thinking

Burnout can cause you to slip into a cycle of negative thinking. This negative thinking often worsens over time.

You can combat this by learning how to think positively . Affirmations, which are positive statements about the future, also help you visualize and believe in what you're doing.

When you're in recovery from burnout, it can be a challenge to develop the habit of positive thinking. This is why it's important to start small. Try thinking of something positive before you get out of bed each morning. Or, at the end of the day, think back to one great thing that you did at work or at home.

You deserve to celebrate even small accomplishments. These celebrations can help you rediscover joy and meaning in your work again.

You can also bring more positivity into your life by practicing random acts of kindness at work. A basic part of our human nature is to help others. Being kind to others not only helps spread positivity in the workplace, but it also feels great. Our article on [Winning by Giving](#) has several ideas that you can use to help others in your workplace.

Key Points

While there are many causes of burnout, people are more likely to experience it when they work in a physically or emotionally demanding role, or when their efforts at work don't produce the results that they expected.

Symptoms of burnout include depression, hopelessness, feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities and using escapist behaviours to cope.

It's important to make the effort to recover properly from burnout. To do this, try the following strategies.

- Think about the "why."
- Focus on the basics.
- Take a good vacation or a leave of absence.
- Reassess your goals.
- Say "no."
- Practice positive thinking.

Warning:

Stress is a strong contributor to burnout. Stress can cause severe health problems and, in extreme cases, can cause death. While stress management techniques have been shown to have a positive effect on reducing stress, they are for guidance only, and readers should take the advice of suitably qualified health professionals if they have any concerns over stress-related illnesses or if stress is causing significant or persistent unhappiness. Health professionals should also be consulted before any major change in diet or levels of exercise.

Ready for a Real Vacation?

Preparing to Make the Most of Your Precious Time

Learn how to get the most from your time away.

It's been a productive year of early mornings, lengthy commutes, and long, focused sessions at the office.

Are you looking forward to a wonderful two weeks of doing as you please, with no more pressing decision to make than what to order for dinner?

So fast forward to vacation time: imagine you're sitting on your towel-sized rectangle of real estate on the beach, surrounded by a swarm of other holiday-makers. Not much different, it dawns on you, than the cubicle you occupy at work. Suddenly, the ringing of your cell phone cuts through the crowd's din. It's someone from work, calling with "urgent" business that you can't do anything about.

If this scenario fills you with horror, how do you go about taking a real vacation this year? Well the truth is, it takes a good deal of planning and preparation; And some planning and preparation *now* will be a great investment!

Plan for the Trip

Do you relish the idea of leaving the office for your vacation and simply taking off into the sunset? Completely spontaneous; minimal baggage; no fixed plans. Sounds great, if time is no object, or you are traveling alone.

The chances are, your vacation will have constraints. You probably need to fix the dates, and coordinate with other people. If you have school age kids, you need to fit in with school vacations. Where will you go and what will you do? You'll have numerous factors and needs to consider: Will it be active or relaxing? Beach or mountains? Will it be fun for everyone involved? And then, of course, there's the budget to think about too.

Leaving your vacation plans to the last minute sometimes can save you money – but it can also lead to an unwise choices that fall short of your ideal vacation. Whether you're booking ahead or at the last minutes, it's always a good idea to thoroughly consider your vacation needs, and it's fun to do so with the other people involved.

DIY or Professional Help?

The chances are, like millions of other people, you'll use the internet for vacation research. And you may book flights, hotels and countless other vacation arrangement at the click of a button. But don't underestimate the time it will take you to find information, make bookings, print the paperwork and so on.

If your vacation plans are anything but simple, it's worth considering using a travel agent. Yes, they still exist, and finding an agent who's expert on your destination or type of vacation could be just the ticket to get your plans off to a smooth start.

Relaxing or Refreshing?

For many of us, vacation is the time to unwind, rest and do very little. For others, it's the time to explore or to experience something new. If you aim to de-stress on vacation, it's important to make sure your vacation plans can deliver.

For some people, a week on the beach is a great de-stressor – for others it just creates time to dwell on the worries of work. For some, a long journey on vacation helps physically 'get away from it all', whilst for others traveling creates major stresses of its own.

There's a lot of truth in the saying a change is as good as a rest. But do make sure your vacation is going to be a change for the better for you, so that you come back relaxed or refreshed and ready to go.

Plan for Time Away. And for Your Return.

Just as soon as you know when you're taking your vacation, get the date your diary, write it on the year planner, and make sure everyone you work with knows it too.

Now look at your regular schedule and appointments before and after the vacation, and work out what needs to be done. Your aim is to be ready to leave the office – and return to it – without creating stress or chaos for yourself, or those around you.

When you're planning time away for the office, you need to consider exactly how the work you normally do will get done. There are three options: do it before you go, do it when you get back, or get someone else to do it. Even though the most attractive-sounding option is perhaps to get someone else to do it – don't forget that that, too, will take preparation and effort to arrange. Whichever option is right for each of the various tasks that make up your role, you need to plan and give clear instructions to everyone else involved. Here are some tips for this all-important planning:

- Identify what can be delegated⁺, and plan sufficient time to prepare and handover to the people you're delegating to – consider the resources and information they'll need, and what they'll do if things don't go quite to plan.
- Schedule tasks you can do before you go – block out the time, so that you can cope with the extra work before you go.
- Leave some extra contingency time in your schedule just before you go, so that you can cope with over-runs or last minute crises, and still get away when you need to.
- Schedule catch-up tasks for your return – and make sure you block in some more contingency time for unplanned tasks that will inevitably arise, as well as extra time to deal with the backlog of email and paperwork.

- Make sure your boss and colleagues – and customers, if appropriate – know how to solve problems in your absence, for example, where to find important documents and so on. That way they'll know what to expect when you're away, and will be less likely to pick up the phone to disturb you in your country retreat.
- Set up your out of office message on email and phone to provide details of exactly how to get help in your absence.

As well as work related matters, plan ahead for things at home. Who's looking after the pets, or watering your garden? Do you need someone to look in on your home? When will you do the shopping on your return? The better the preparation, the smoother your vacation will go, and the longer lasting will be the effects of your relaxing and refreshing break.