

Avoiding Burnout

WORKBOOK



In avoiding burnout, it is necessary to spend time evaluating the nature of your stress and the structure of your busy life. Busting burnout requires balance. Which is why it is important to spend time reflecting on your needs and values so that you can take steps towards finding peace. This workbook will help you to develop the skills you need to combat burnout and feel more in control.

Identify stressors: Think about what has been causing you the most stress. The goal of this activity is to get very clear about what the problem is. Reflect on the following questions in the spaces below.

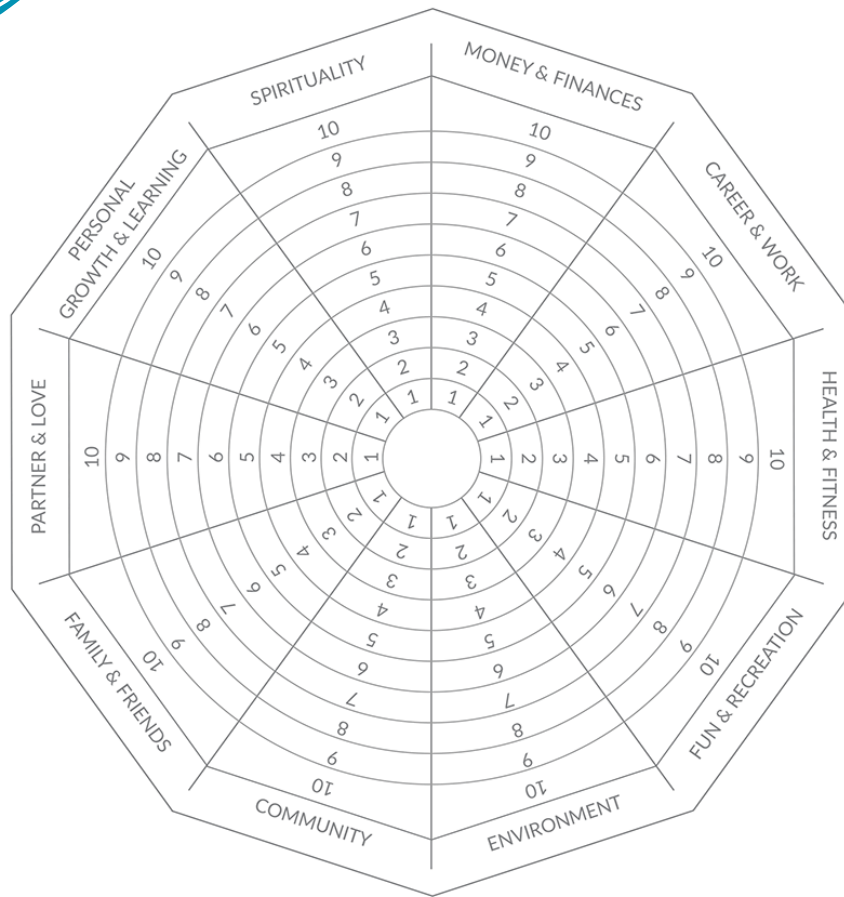
Is work the main cause of your feelings of burnout? Is it your work environment, amount of work, lack of control or duties? Do you feel overloaded like you have too many tasks to accomplish? What about work causes you the most stress and why? Maybe you feel underchallenged and exhausted. What might be missing?

Maybe burnout extends into other areas of your life too. Think about the decisions and personal choices you make. Do you have difficulty setting boundaries, or saying no? Perhaps you identify as a people pleaser, high achiever, or perfectionist? How might your actions, thoughts and decisions be contributing to your feelings of burnout?

Finding balance: Our lives move out of balance when we focus too much time and energy on one area of our lives leaving other areas to be neglected.

Filling out the wheel of life will help you to build awareness around your level of satisfaction in how you spend your time, and it will help you to understand where you may need to find more balance. Read the instructions below and fill out your life pie.

1. Review categories, remove add or change as needed
2. Score each category in level of satisfaction, 1=not satisfied, 10= fully satisfied, fill in like a slice of pie. (Remember: not all areas will have a score of 10 and that's okay, we are aiming for healthy balance based on our own personal values, not unattainable perfection).



3. Reflect on the following questions:

- a. When you look at the shape of the wheel, what are your thoughts? How does it make you feel? What surprised you the most?

- b. Which category would you most like to improve?

- c. Identify one activity that could improve your level of satisfaction in the area you would like to improve. What might you need to change or let go of to make room for this activity in your life?

- d. Could a single action improve more than one area? How so?



Positive work-life balance is attained by prioritizing job responsibilities and career ambitions alongside important life elements, such as family, friends, leisure, fitness, personal growth, and spirituality.

Think about what you truly value. What really lights you up? What makes you happy, gives you energy or brings you joy?

List activities and values that come to mind:

How often do you spend time engaging in these activities?

What prevents you from doing things you love and value?


Setting boundaries: A boundary is a personally held rule or limit a person establishes to protect their well-being. Our lives can drift out of balance if we have difficulty setting, maintaining, or reinforcing boundaries.

What is one boundary you can put in place that will help you decrease burnout? What challenges might you encounter in keeping this boundary?

It's common for people to struggle with maintaining and reinforcing boundaries. Many times, because they are focused on the wants and needs of others. If you are feeling burnt out it is especially important to tend to your own needs, to support and care for yourself. Below are some helpful thinking strategies to keep in mind when confronted with difficulty maintaining boundaries.

Saying "yes" to too many things? Try one of these:

1. **Think of your yes in terms of percentage.** Ask yourself "What percent of a yes, am I?" Feel into this. If you are not close to 100% yes. Maybe your answer should be no. If you cannot wholeheartedly commit 100%, it is a good sign there are other areas that need or want your attention.

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2. **Think about the cost of your yes.** When you say yes to one thing you are also simultaneously saying no to another. For example, if you say yes to staying late at work you might be saying no to quality time partner or time for self-care.

Consider these thinking strategies, how could you see yourself using them to maintain or reinforce your boundaries?

Combat chronic stress: Burnout is a result of prolonged and chronic stress. Every stressful experience you encounter initiates a stress response to prepare you for action. However, when you are continually confronted with stressful situations all day, it can be difficult for your nervous system to relax.

While we cannot always control the external stressors in our lives, we can control how we respond to them. This is your ticket out of burnout!

#1 Create a list of strategies to pick from to release stress

#2 Plan and **prioritize** practicing these skills regularly

Pick your strategies: Below are a list of strategies that will aid in soothing stress and provide relief from burn-out when practiced regularly. They help to sooth your nervous system giving you energy to keep going. Place a checkmark next to the skills that interest you. Skills are organized in length of time to complete the activity.

1 to 5 minutes

- ☐ **Deep breathing** – Practice long, slow, deep breathing exercises. Find ones you like and will use. Here is one example: Inhale for 5 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, exhale for 8 seconds. Do this at least 5 times or longer.
- ☐ **Mindfulness** – Practice being fully present with your senses. Notice 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell and one thing you can taste.
- ☐ **Meditation** – Practice a short, guided meditation. Hop on YouTube or the app Insight Timer for a free, quick, guided meditation break.
- ☐ **Crying** – Allow yourself to cry! We do this for a reason. It is soothing to our nervous system after stressful experiences. Don't hold back
- ☐ **Physical affection** – a 20 second hug with a safe person or pet releases chemicals in our brain that make us feel safe and loved.
- ☐ **Laughing** – Laughter releases happy chemicals which signal to your body you are safe. Watch a funny video, recall a funny story, take a moment to be silly with someone.
- ☐ **Disconnect completely from computer and phone.** Do nothing and be unreachable for a few minutes, allow yourself to just be.



10 to 30 minutes

- ☐ **Mindful walk or hike** – Physically removing yourself from stressful situations is helpful in relieving stress. Nature and sunshine also have positive effects on mental health. Avoid ruminating, focus on your breath, your surroundings, and physical sensations in the body.
- ☐ **Physical activity** – Dance, do jumping jacks, follow an exercise video on YouTube, run punch your pillow. Stress is held physically; physical activity completes the stress cycle.

1 hour or more


- ☐ **Get creative** – Creativity allows you to shift your focus away from daily life. Take on a creative endeavor and get lost in the flow of creating.
- ☐ **Cook a special meal** – Like creativity, cooking a special, nutritious meal can be a break from reality. Eating healthy is vital to optimal mental health.
- ☐ **Do something fun and new exciting** – break out of your normal routine and spend time enjoying the moment.

Plan and prioritize practicing these skills: Now more than ever it is time to prioritize yourself and your needs. This activity will help you develop a plan for successfully managing burnout by prioritizing moments to reset.

The 3M framework is an evidenced-based strategy for busting burnout. It suggests that you plan three types of breaks into your schedule. The first type of break is called a micro-break which is a break lasting a few minutes it is recommended that you take this kind of break several times each day.

Think about your daily schedule, when could you fit in micro-breaks? What time would it be most beneficial for you to pause and reset? Using the list of strategies you selected on the previous page, choose 5 strategies you would like to try and list times that you will practice.

The second type of break is a meso-break, a meso-break is a break lasting 1-2 hours. It is recommended that you take one meso-break each week. Look at your schedule for the next week, plan a date, a time and one or more strategies you plan to engage in during your meso-break. Do this for each week for the rest of this month.



The last type of break you should incorporate into your life to eliminate burnout is a macro-break. A macro-break lasts a half day to a full day. It is recommended you take one macro-break each month. Look at your schedule for the next month, plan a date, a time and one or more strategies you plan to engage in during your macro-break.

Take back control: Being skillful in managing burnout is about recognizing the difference between things you can control and things you cannot. If you spend enough time thinking about it, there is always an option within your control. Identify where you have control and take action there! This might look like having a conversation with your supervisor or expressing your needs to a loved one. Maybe it means spending more time on personal growth or being more selective about your commitments.

One step I will take to address burnout is...