

# Burnout from Work? 7 Research-Backed Strategies To Recover

If you are experiencing burnout from work, here are 7 research-backed strategies to help you recover and get your life back.

Are you exhausted mentally, emotionally, and physically, probably due to long-term, unresolved stress? Have you lost your drive to become productive?

Have you experienced changes in your sleep habits? Do you find it hard to focus?

Perhaps you are losing meaning in your work, and you are becoming pessimistic about life.

What you are experiencing is called 'burnout.'

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## What is Burnout?

Here is how Mayo Clinic defined it:<sup>[1]</sup>

'A state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also includes a loss of personal identity and a sense of reduced accomplishment.'

Mayo Clinic also reiterated that burnout is not a medical diagnosis. A lot of experts believe some underlying conditions such as depression are responsible for burnout.

In addition, a report by Gallop shows that about 44 percent of employees think they are suffering from burnout. Sixty-three percent of the surveyed employees will take sick leave due to Burnout.<sup>[2]</sup>

## **What Are Some Common Symptoms of Burnout?**

1. Showing a pessimistic perspective to life or work
2. Physical, emotional and mental exhaustion
3. Lower immunity to diseases or sicknesses
4. De-motivation
5. Lower productivity
6. Depleted energy levels

If you are having any of these symptoms, you might need to read further as I will show you seven researched-backed strategies to recover when you are burnout from work.

But before that, is there a connection between stress and Burnout?

## **What Is the Difference Between Burnout and Stress?**

Burnout may emanate from long-term, unrelenting stress, but it is not the same as stress.

Stress incorporates overbearing pressures that take a toll on you mentally and physically. People who are stressed can feel better if they can bring everything into balance.

Burnout, on the other hand, is a state of feeling empty, absence of motivation, and mental exhaustion. When you are suffering from burnout, you do not see any hope in your situation.

While excessive stress is being drowned in responsibilities, burnout is a state of complete depletion.

Here is another side to it.

While you are mostly aware when you are going through a lot of stress, for burnout, you do not realize when it occurs.

So how do you know when you are experiencing burnout?

You can follow these five stages.

## **What Are the Five Stages of Burnout?**

Anyone can suffer from Burnout at any point in life. However, research conducted by NCBI indicated that the symptoms of burnout varied according to different stages of life among working men and women. Young men and women between the age of 20 and 35 years, as well as 55 years and above, are prone to burnout.<sup>[3]</sup>

The symptoms of burnout, just like any illness, differ from person to person. Nevertheless, in general, these are the five stages of burnout.

## **1. Honeymoon Stages**

What is the honeymoon stage like?

At this phase, you are very excited about your work, and you are not experiencing any stress-related symptoms.

Do you remember your first day at work? Or the beginning of your new start-up?

Your job satisfaction level was high, and you were super-committed, energetic, and highly creative.

While you may notice predictable stresses on the job, you may discard implementing coping strategies to help you achieve a full life. You are super enthusiastic about your work, and you are trading off other aspects of your life.

Here is the theory behind this stage.

If you can establish coping strategies and maintain a work-life balance, you can live all your life in this honeymoon stage without end.

Here are some common symptoms to track:

1. Unconstrained energy levels
2. Job Satisfaction
3. High level of commitment to a task
4. A steady stream of creativity
5. High levels of productivity

## **2. The Awakening Stage**

What is the Awakening Stage of Burnout?

The awakening stage is when you begin to lose steam on your optimism. It is that stage when reality finally sets in. Your high expectation about that business or job is crashing down.

Not only that, but your needs are not also met, and you start to feel disconnected from your teammates. Starting with this disappointment, you will begin to see other symptoms.

Here are some of them:

1. Lack of Focus
2. Dissatisfaction on the job
3. Lack of social interaction
4. Lower productivity
5. Insomnia or reduced sleep quality
6. Irritability
7. Fatigue

8. Anxiety
9. Loss of memory
10. Headaches
11. Unusual heartbeats
12. Trading off of personal life
13. Change in appetite

You may also start feeling bored with your work or unusually tired.

### **3. Chronic Stress Stage**

The third stage is the chronic stress stage. during this stage, you will experience a notable change in your stress levels – from losing motivation to frequent tiredness.

These are some common symptoms:

1. Continuous tiredness early in the morning.
2. Lack of hobbies
3. Anger
4. Transfer of aggression
5. Loss of interest in hobbies
6. Social withdrawal
7. Escapist activities
8. Repeated lateness at work
9. Absenteeism
10. Apathy
11. Physical illness
12. Missed deadlines on project milestones
13. Decreased sexual desire
14. Increased alcohol or sugar intake
15. Increased caffeine intake
16. Fear of being panicky
17. Feeling overburden or out of control

### **4. Burnout Stage**

This stage is where all symptoms become severe. This is the exact stage people refer to when they talk about being burnout. At this stage, you will feel like it is just not possible to continue with your life.

Here are some symptoms:

1. Feeling empty on the inside
2. Self-doubt
3. Behavioral changes
4. Social Isolation
5. Getting obsessed about issues at work or in your life
6. Chronic headaches
7. Social isolation

8. Pessimism
9. Total neglect of personal needs
10. Increase in physical symptoms
11. Development of escapist mindset
12. Urge to disconnect from society
13. Desire to isolate from family and friends.

## **5. Habitual Burnout**

This is the final stage. At this stage, the symptoms of burnout have become ingrained in your life to the extent that you may start experiencing physical or mental issues.

Here are some symptoms:

1. Depression
2. Chronic sadness
3. Chronic physical fatigue
4. Chronic mental fatigue
5. Burnout syndrome

So is there any hope if you find yourself in any of the stages?

While Burnout is curable, it demands that you accept your present reality and make a decision to change your lifestyle and mentality. You need to see your darkest moment as that phase that will enable you to discover your purpose in life.

If you are experiencing Burnout from work, here are ten research-backed strategies to help you regain your focus and productivity:

## **7 Strategies to Help You Recover After Experiencing Burnout From Work**

### **1. List Everything That Overwhelms You**

It will amaze you that making a list is very therapeutic. The act of listing enables you to capture every negative thought and organize them in a form that you can better assess and understand.

Take an inventory of what you need to do daily, and then write those to-dos to avoid stressing yourself when you want to recall them. Highlight possible ways in which you can make each item less burdensome.

For instance, if you are writing a book, you can collaborate with other content writers to help prepare the table of content and proofread and edit the book so you do not overload yourself with excessive work.

Moreover, listing helps you maximize your resources by delegating tasks to the best hands.

### **2. Learn to Take a Break**

What you do not take a break from will eventually break you.

According to Len Robinson:[4]

'Burnout does not happen all of a sudden. It usually develops over months or years. Therefore, you will need considerable time to develop coping strategies to recover from Burnout. If you can have fun as you make progress towards your goals, you will experience a happy-work life.'

So, as much as possible, have fun while you work.

### **3. Focus on Your Capabilities**

You will always get tired when you work on tasks that do not match your skills.

Dr. Jim Harter, Ph.D. of Gallup, says that 'workers with the highest level of engagement spend an average of four times as much hours performing tasks they excel at in comparison to what they don't have skills for.'<sup>[5]</sup>

You enhance your capabilities when you spend time on activities that align with your skills. On the other hand, you will eventually get burned out from tasks that are beyond your strength.

### **4. Accept Your Weaknesses**

It is not enough to focus on what you can do; you also need to accept that there are things you cannot do. You can lose your self-esteem and have your energy depleted when you undertake tasks that you are less qualified or trained for.

So do you have some tasks that you are less qualified for? Outsource them instead.

### **5. Establish a Formidable Support System**

How do you outsource your weaknesses when you do not have a formidable support system? A strong support system such as your friends and colleagues at work can advise and encourage you when you are at your low ebbs.

BJCEAP recommends six steps to establish a strong support system:[6]

1. Review your network and identify who can help
2. Attempt new activities to meet new people
3. Enroll in a book club
4. Appreciate important people in your life and let them know
5. Join a local association or work-related group.
6. Be willing to request for support.

Also, it is not enough to simply seek support. You should also strive to become your own best friend.

### **6. Learn to Say No**

When you start to feel the symptoms of burnout from work, do not be timid in rejecting new commitments.

If you have established a strong support system, your team members will most likely understand when you are not capable of taking more jobs.

## **7. Control Your Usage of Devices and Internet**

This is another factor that can make you experience burnout from work. You do not have to reply to all notifications on Facebook.

Is your smart device causing you to get burned out?

Find the time to unplug from the digital world and focus on more critical activities. You cannot get adequate sleep when you are too addicted to your smart devices. Sometimes, you need a rest from your gadgets so you can get back your life.

There is this story of a man who visited the Doctor to get tested for COVID-19 because he was showing symptoms.

Guess what the outcome of the test was?

The Doctor said, 'Your test did not come out positive to Coronavirus, but you tested positive to Corona bad news.'

What you expose yourself to can impact your mental health. You need to prioritize your mental health as you engage your digital devices and the internet.

## **Conclusion**

Do not say that you cannot. Do not say that it is not possible.

Now is the time to regain your focus and productivity if you are experiencing burnout from work.

## **More Tips for Dealing with Burnout**

1. How to Find Motivation When You're Totally Burnt Out
2. 5 Antidotes for a Burnout
3. 11 Simple Ways To Avoid Burnout
4. How to Recognize Burnout Before It's Too Late

## **Reference**

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