



Signs of burnout and how to tackle it

Stress is and always will be present in our lives. No matter how much we may wish for a stress-free life, stress is a natural human response that is necessary and ever present. In small amounts, stress can improve mental well-being, by boosting productivity, alertness, and energy levels.

However, when our experience of stress becomes prolonged or greater than our ability to cope with, it can be physically and mentally draining. Chronic stress can have overwhelming consequences on your mind and body and can lead to burnout.

Burnout is a state of complete mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion. If you are experiencing burnout, you may notice it is difficult to engage in activities you normally find meaningful. You may no longer care about the things that are important to you or experience an increasing sense of hopelessness.

Burnout is not caused solely by stressful work environments or too many responsibilities. It can be experienced by anyone with prolonged levels of chronic stress and pressure causing situations, such as taking care of an elderly parent who is suffering from a prolonged illness,



or being unable to find suitable housing for your family.

Common signs include trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, losing interest in your favourite activities, and getting sick more often. Awareness about how you are feeling is key to not getting to a point where you suffer from burnout.

Now is the time to pause and change direction by learning how you can help yourself overcome burnout. If you recognize some of these warning signs starting to creep into your life or may already be present, finding ways to regain a sense of well-being again may include:

- Turn to other people for support: friends, colleagues, or community groups.
- Reframe the way you look at work or your home life by finding value, meaning and balance.
- Reevaluate your priorities by taking time off or regular breaks during the day.
- Nourishing your creativity by doing something interesting.
- Make physical activity a priority to boost your mood and energy.
- Support your body with a healthy diet and quality sleep.

Remember, it is always wise to talk with a trained professional, especially if feelings of hopelessness and loneliness start to take over every aspect of your life. You are not alone and you can ask for help.

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Why sweating is good for you

Sweating is a natural bodily function that often gets a bad rap. However, it serves a vital purpose in regulating body temperature and maintaining overall health. Beyond its cooling effect, sweating provides numerous benefits that can contribute to your well-being.

Here are a few of those benefits:

Thermoregulation

One of the primary functions of sweating is to help regulate body temperature. When the body heats up due to physical activity, exposure to warm weather, or an increased metabolic rate, the sweat glands produce moisture that evaporates from the skin, resulting in a cooling effect. By dissipating heat, sweating prevents overheating and helps maintain the body's core temperature within a safe range.

Detoxification

Sweating plays a crucial role in detoxifying the body. The skin is the largest organ and serves as a major avenue for toxin elimination. Sweating helps expel harmful substances such as heavy metals, pollutants, and alcohol from the body. Through the sweat glands, toxins are released, cleansing the skin and reducing the burden on other detoxification organs like the liver and kidneys.

Skin health

Sweating can have a positive impact on the health and appearance of your skin. As you sweat, your pores open, releasing trapped dirt, oil, and bacteria. This process helps unclog pores and reduces the likelihood of acne breakouts, blackheads, and other skin blemishes. Additionally, sweating promotes blood circulation to the skin, delivering oxygen and nutrients that contribute to a healthy complexion.

Immune system boost

Regular sweating can give your immune system a natural boost. Sweat contains an antimicrobial peptide called dermcidin, which helps fight off harmful bacteria, viruses, and fungi that may be present on your skin. These antimicrobial properties of sweat help protect you from infections and promote overall immune system resilience.

Kidney function

Sweating can also support kidney function. When you sweat, it encourages increased blood flow throughout the body, including the kidneys. This enhanced circulation helps improve the filtration process and promotes the elimination of waste products and toxins from the body. By supporting kidney function, sweating aids in maintaining overall renal health.

Solve common digestive ailments

The discomfort and embarrassment of indigestion, or painful heartburn, can really throw a wrench into our plans. Some people begin to avoid social situations involving food because of the unpredictability of their digestive system. Don't let this happen to you. The Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) has some simple, natural solutions to address two common digestive issues Canadians face – heartburn and intestinal discomfort due to bloating and gas.

Heartburn, also called gastric reflux, is a common gastro-intestinal symptom with a number of dietary triggers. This burning sensation in the chest area (close to the heart) is the result of stomach acid backing up into your esophagus.

There are several food triggers that can make heartburn worse. These include coffee and other caffeinated beverages, alcohol, citrus fruits, tomato products, fatty foods and spicy foods. Identifying and removing trigger foods from your diet can immediately reduce this symptom.

Taking antacids for heartburn can provide short-term relief, but they can also lead to other digestive complications. Instead, try adding more fibre to your diet, which keeps your digestive tract moving and prevents back up. Also, eating five or six smaller meals throughout the day, rather than three large meals, reduces the chance of overloading your digestive tract. Lastly, try to stay upright for at least two to three hours after your meal to let the food move down through your system. This also means you should avoid eating right before bed to allow your body time to start digesting before lying down.

When it comes to excess bloating due to intestinal gas, over-eating and inadequate chewing of food are common causes. Taking your time with meals and chewing food thoroughly can contribute to less swallowed air.



Publisher & CEO: Stefan Dreesen

Editor: Kate Van Hoof-Peeren

H&S Communication Specialists:

Alan Haycroft, Liz Slobodin,
Kevin Harvey

TOLL FREE: 1-888-655-4800

Mailing Address: 2010 Winston Park Drive, Suite 200,
Oakville, ON L6H 5R7

www.smartworkplace.ca | info@smartworkplace.ca

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How people with self-discipline behave

Sometimes, the easiest way to discover how to improve self-discipline is to recognize what strong self-achievers don't do. The behaviours and habits they avoid say a great deal about their success in getting more done and practising tenacity. Individuals with healthy self-discipline don't engage in these behaviours.

Put off disliked tasks

People with super self-discipline know they'll achieve their goals and have more energy if they manage tasks they dislike fast. As such, they tackle them first and reap the rewards from their endeavours.

Not procrastinating means they are free from unnecessary worry about unwanted chores looming over them all day. Moreover, ticking disliked tasks from their to-do lists helps them feel positive and puts a spring in their step. Wiping out what you least enjoy is well worth the effort.

Wait for motivation

Everyone enjoys tasks when fuelled by motivation. If you're enthusiastic about doing something, you do it with good humour, and it's a pleasant experience.

However, self-discipline gurus recognize they can't wait for the right moment to strike when their motivation's high. If they did so, they'd rarely accomplish their goals.

To get ahead, ditch the notion that you must wait for (or even need) the motivation to tackle tasks.

Most jobs feel more manageable when you get on with them rather than strive to summon the enthusiasm to do them.

Focus on outcomes

Disciplined folks think more about the process required to reach goals than their ultimate target. Naturally, you need to know your aims, but don't focus on the end result. Know what you hope to do, then concentrate on the steps to reach your objective.

Make the process more meaningful and absorbing than the outcomes you have in mind. That way, you can live in the moment, enjoy more flow states, and stop worrying about what you've not yet achieved.

Believe self-talk

Individuals who display good self-discipline understand that self-talk isn't a reliable commentary on what's really happening. If their inner voice says they are not good enough, they realize they need not take the message to heart. Everyone experiences self-doubt at times, but disciplined people rise about their qualms, and this helps them achieve their goals.

Alternatives to meditation

While meditation is considered by many as the most effective way to calm your mind, it's not always option when you're incredibly tired. According to psychcentral.com, there are alternatives to meditation such as doing things that naturally focus your mind outside of yourself and guide yourself to a calmer state of mind.

Here are several ways to calm your mind that don't require as much mental energy as meditation but can have the same effect on your mood.

1. Do something complex, but not too difficult

When we're tired or anxious, our minds wander more than usual, which makes us more tired and anxious. The alternative to meditation to avoid mind wandering is to engage in a complex task. Pick something you regularly do, like drawing, sports, creative writing, or a work project and just increase the difficulty slightly. With drawing, for example, you can try and draw something that is more of a challenge, or with a sports or writing, you can try setting a timer and complete a task in a limited time period.

2. Get some exercise and take a long sleep

Exhaustion and anxiety impact our ability to wind down before bed, which is a critical part of good quality sleep. Unconscious worries can also wake us in the night and stop us from getting into the deep states we need. This isn't a suggestion to oversleep, but if it's been a while since you got some deep rest, it could be exactly what you need. It's also useful to create a pre-sleep ritual that involves calming down and not looking at any screens for two to three hours before going to bed.

3. Do something social

This goes for introverts as well as extroverts. It's a common belief that introverts are drained by social interactions, but typically this is only when interacting with people they're not comfortable with. If you're an introvert, make the effort be social with someone who you always have fun with. When we're engaged in a social situation that is fun, and not anxiety-inducing, we naturally get out of our own heads and begin to recharge our batteries.

Meditation can help calm our minds, and if it has helped you before, keep trying to meditate even through rough periods. These solutions can help you get your energy back and help you return to your meditation routine.



Ways to minimize your food waste

Every year, billions of tons of food are being discarded in landfills where they sit, decompose and produce methane gas. By choosing not to waste food, you can make a positive difference to the environment. If you want to minimize your food waste but aren't sure where to start, here are a few easy and helpful tips to get you started.

Properly store your produce

Unfortunately, many people purchase food without understanding the proper way to store it. Purchasing a bunch of fruits and veggies while you're shopping only to come home and store them improperly, is essentially like throwing money in the trash.

A common mistake people make is to put all their fruits and veggies inside the refrigerator. While some fruits and veggies require refrigeration, for others it's simply too cold. Tomatoes, garlic, onions, and potatoes for instance should never see the inside of your fridge.

Eat leftovers

When you store your leftovers, store them in a transparent container, where you can see them when you first open

the fridge. You're more likely to eat the leftovers instead of fixing something new if they're the first thing you see when searching for a meal or snack. Cover leftovers, wrap them in airtight packaging, or seal them in storage containers. These practices help keep bacteria out, retain moisture, and prevent leftovers from picking up odours from other food in the refrigerator. Leftovers can be kept for three to four days in the refrigerator. Be sure to eat them within that time. After that, the risk of food poisoning increases. If you don't think you'll be able to eat leftovers within four days, freeze them immediately.

Utilize Your Freezer

If you have excess produce you know you won't use before it spoils, freeze it. You can use it for smoothies later down the line. You should also freeze foods like soup, which is normally made in bulk and therefore more likely to get discarded. Not only will freezing your meals or veggies cut back on waste, but you'll have convenient, healthy meals at the ready whenever you need them.

What are blue spaces and do they benefit mental health?

Spending time in natural water environments, known as blue spaces, may offer benefits for your mental well-being.

According to recent research, incorporating blue spaces into your life may help reduce stress and improve your mood. They provide not only a calming space for introspection but also opportunities for recreational activities such as swimming, boating, and fishing, which can promote physical fitness and relaxation.

Blue spaces include lakes, rivers, oceans, and even artificial water features such as fountains and ponds. The term "blue spaces" was coined to emphasize the positive influence water environments have on human health, drawing a parallel to "green spaces" like forests, gardens, and grassy parks.

Numerous European scientists are pioneering the scientific research behind urban blue spaces. Funding from the European Union has been allocated since 2020 to an initiative known as BlueHealth. Simply being near blue spaces can induce a sense of calm and tranquility, according to researchers. Studies show exposure to blue spaces lowers blood pressure by promoting relaxation and fighting stress.

Blue spaces offer refuge from the constant stimulation and digital overload that characterize our modern lifestyles. The calming effect of blue spaces can also be attributed to the visual sensory experience they provide, the sound of water, and the opportunity for recreational activities.

Looking at the gentle lapping of waves on the shore and the vast expanse of the ocean is sure to soothe the mind. In this state, you can rest and recharge mentally, which is vital for your well-being. Kayaking on a calm lake, swimming in a pond, or fishing on a river provide an auditory experience that stimulates and relaxes the brain.

The allure of aquatic environments goes beyond their aesthetic appeal; they've been scientifically linked to better physical and mental well-being. Take advantage of the healing power of water by exposing yourself to blue spaces on a regular basis. Whether you take your workout to the beach or enjoy a picnic by a lake or pond, these serene blue spaces can reduce stress, boost mood, and enhance overall well-being.



Daily quiet time and your health

Finding moments of tranquillity and solitude has become increasingly important for maintaining our overall well-being. Daily quiet time dedicated to silence, mindfulness, and self-reflection, can help can enhance our physical, mental, and emotional states. Here's how:

Stress reduction

Amid the constant hustle and bustle of modern life, stress has become a common companion for many of us. Daily quiet time provides an opportunity to disconnect from external distractions, allowing the mind to relax and unwind. Engaging in activities such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, and simply sitting in silence can significantly lower stress levels, reduce anxiety, and promote a sense of calm.

Improved mental clarity

Our minds are constantly bombarded with information, tasks, and stimuli, leaving little room for focused thinking and mental clarity. Regularly setting aside quiet time helps declutter the mind and improve concentration. By giving ourselves the space to think without interruption, we can enhance problem-solving abilities, creativity, and decision-making skills.

Enhanced emotional well-being

Daily quiet time encourages self-reflection and introspection, fostering a deeper understanding of our emotions and thought patterns. This practice enables us to develop emotional intelligence, improve self-awareness, and gain better control over our reactions. By allowing ourselves to acknowledge and process our feelings in a peaceful environment, we can cultivate a greater sense of emotional well-being and resilience.

Boosted productivity

Contrary to popular belief, taking time out for quiet reflection can enhance productivity. By stepping away from the constant demands of work and technology, we allow our brains to rest and recharge. This restoration process improves focus, concentration, and cognitive function, leading to increased efficiency and productivity when we return to our tasks.

Improved sleep quality

Creating a consistent routine of daily quiet time, particularly in the evening, can greatly contribute to better sleep quality. Engaging in relaxing activities like reading, journaling, or gentle stretching before bed can signal our bodies that it's time to unwind. This practice promotes better sleep patterns, deeper rest, and overall improved sleep quality, resulting in more energy and vitality during waking hours.

Reduced physical health risks

Chronic stress and its associated health risks, such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and weakened immune function, can be mitigated by incorporating daily quiet time into our lives. The relaxation response elicited during quiet periods helps balance hormone levels, reduce inflammation, and enhance the functioning of the immune system, contributing to better overall physical health.

Enhanced self-care and reflection

Daily quiet time is an opportunity for self-care and nurturing oneself on a deeper level. It encourages self-reflection, self-compassion, and self-discovery. By dedicating time to understanding our needs, desires, and aspirations, we can make better choices aligned with our values and pursue a more fulfilling life.

What to know about hemorrhoids

Many have dealt with hemorrhoids, but few of us discuss it. Yet up to 70% of Canadians will experience flare-ups at some point in their lives.

For those too embarrassed to ask, here is what you need to know:

What are hemorrhoids?

Hemorrhoids are cushions of tissue filled with veins in the anal canal and are a normal part of the body. They act as cushions to protect anal skin from the passage of stool and aid with the closure of the anal canal.

What causes hemorrhoidal flare-ups?

Hemorrhoidal flare-ups occur when there is too much pressure on the veins in the rectal area. Straining when passing stool can increase this pressure. This pressure on the veins can cause hemorrhoids to swell, which may lead to pain, itching and bleeding.

What about sitting too long?

Prolonged sitting can increase one's risk of having flare ups. Certain jobs can increase your risk of hemorrhoids. These are jobs that require prolonged periods of sitting and at times, of heavy lifting.

Prolonged sitting doesn't just increase your risk of hemorrhoids, but also of other chronic conditions like heart disease. That's why health experts recommend taking frequent breaks from sitting especially if your work requires hours of being on your chair. For every hour of sitting, take a few minutes to stand up and stretch. This will help improve your blood flow, make you feel more energized, and decrease your risk of hemorrhoids.

Will hemorrhoidal flare-ups go away on their own?

Recurrence is common if steps are not taken to treat flare-ups. That's why it's important to take action and treat symptoms to prevent them from getting worse.

How are hemorrhoid symptoms treated?

A good start is drinking water and eating plenty of fibre. Exercise can also help stimulate bowel function and prevent straining.

Hydration is vital in the prevention of hemorrhoids. Staying well-hydrated can keep your circulatory system in good health, reducing the chances of increase pressure in the veins near hemorrhoid-sensitive areas.

Food high in fibre but low in fats and refined carbohydrates can help in keeping your bowel movement regular. The less you strain during your bowel movement, the less risk you have of developing hemorrhoids.

If you are experience bleeding and continuous pain, consult with your healthcare professional.

Ways to beat exercise boredom



Doing just one kind of exercise is a bit like eating only one kind of food. It gets the job done, but it can also lead to boredom and imbalance.

This is especially true if you are living with arthritis, which requires a good mix of flexibility, strength and endurance to combat symptoms. **Here are a few tips from the Arthritis Society:**

1. Flexibility

Stretching is Job One if you want to maintain or improve range of motion in your joints and cut down on stiffness.

Yoga, tai chi and simple stretches like reaching your arms up and then reaching for your toes are all good choices.

2. Strength

When you make your muscles stronger, you also make your joints more stable. Plus, your bones get stronger and become properly positioned. Using resistance bands or tubing, light weights or even soup cans are great ways to strength train. You can also do Pilates or exercise in water.

3. Endurance

Aerobic exercise improves your endurance because it works your heart and lungs. The payoff? Decreased inflammation, as well as better mood, stamina, metabolism and energy. Walking, swimming, cycling and aquatic exercise are all excellent ways to build endurance.

Tips for choosing wellness apps

Now more than ever, online tools are being used to build resilience and wellness. While such apps should not be seen as a way to replace clinician-based mental health interventions, they can be a great starting point for those who aren't comfortable seeking in-person support right away, according to occupational therapists from the University of Alberta.

Here are a few tips for choosing apps to help you with your wellness goals:

- Pay attention to reviews of apps. Recommendations can go a long way when they come from others who might be in a similar situation.
 - Look for apps that include deep or diaphragmatic breathing, mindfulness strategies, visualization techniques and progressive muscle relaxation and sleep strategies.
 - Seek out apps that provide ways to practise mental health strategies and techniques. These can take time to be effective, so it's important to make sure you're following the proper directions.
 - Check the app's developer to make sure it was created by a reputable source. Reliable apps should be researched and tested carefully for effectiveness.
 - Look for features that make you feel most comfortable. Many of the available apps use the same general concepts but can present their information in different ways. If you're a visual learner, choose the app with more diagrams and videos. If you learn by reading, pick the app with more text.
- Remember, a reliable app can help you maintain feeling well, but if you are having constant feelings of anxiety and depression, seek help by contacting your health care professional.

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Chia seeds are small round seeds, and can be black, brown and white in colour. They are harvested from a flowering plant in the mint family known as *Salvia hispanica*. It's native to parts of Mexico and Guatemala. Edible chia seeds are closely related to the chia plants made popular by Chia Pets, but they are not the same seed.

Chia seeds are high in omega-3 fatty acids and fibre. Fibre can improve heart health, reduce cholesterol levels and promote intestinal health. Fibre takes longer to digest and makes you feel satisfied longer, which is how it can help with weight loss and decrease your risk of developing diabetes or heart disease.

One serving of dried chia seeds is about 2.5 tablespoons. This has 140 calories, 5 grams of protein, 10 grams of fibre, 12 grams of

Nutritious chia seeds!

carbohydrate and 9 grams of fat, of which 8 grams are heart-healthy fats. Try adding whole or ground chia seeds to smoothies, juices, milk, yogurt, oatmeal, pancakes or a granola bar recipe. Try them sprinkled on salads or cereal.

