

77 Tips for Beating Burnout

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1. Deal with problems when they occur, if you can. Don't let them pile up.
2. Go to bed to sleep, not to worry or brood. If you find you're in a bad mood at bedtime, take a walk, read a chapter of a book that you enjoy, talk to someone you love about the good things in your life, watch David Letterman or Jay Leno.
3. Find a tension outlet that works for you, and use it when you need to. Consider crossword puzzles, card games, running, dancing, playing in the town band. (But stay away from those outlets that work only at the moment, that only add up to bad news, like eating, drinking and drugs.)
4. Build fresh air and exercise into your daily life. Park a half mile from work or get off at a bus or train stop a half mile from work and walk the rest of the way.
5. If you don't own a dog to take for a walk, borrow one. Your neighbors will love you for it and it will do you more good than the dog.
6. Stay away from the coffee pot.
7. Turn on the radio to some zippy music when you're alone, and dance around to it. Don't look in the mirror - just let yourself feel good.
8. Study something far afield from your subject - take a course or just use the library. It doesn't have to be useful, although it can be, as long as you find it engrossing and fun.
9. Try not to get caught up in daily exchanges of complaints with colleagues. It doesn't do any good and makes everyone feel worse.
10. When you get home after a bad day, get into a hot shower and sing. It's almost impossible to feel rotten when your voice sounds so great.
11. Practice good nutrition by eating balanced meals and by avoiding too many sweets, too much junk food and foods that don't agree with you.
12. Volunteer to be a guide at your local museum or historical attraction.
13. Take a good book into the library at lunch time. Choose a comfortable, isolated seat and enjoy the peace and quiet.
14. Clean out your attic, your basement or that overloaded closet.

15. Spend more time with your own children. Don't just chauffeur them around; learn about the activities and sports they enjoy by staying to watch that soccer practice or attending that band concert.
16. Get in some big-muscle action: saw wood, dig up the garden, chop down trees, scrub the floor.
17. Breathe slowly, and pay attention to the air going in and out.
18. Take a hike; ride a bike.
19. Keep a diary faithfully, focusing on the positive aspects of your life and on your positive plans for the near future.
20. Walk in the rain or snow without worrying about getting your shoes wet or catching cold.
21. Never eat dinner while you're still stewing about work.
22. Schedule a time for airing grievances; stick to it. Don't talk about your grievances at other times.
23. Be especially good to your spouse.
24. Keep in touch with your friends.
25. Make a list of all the things you can't stand about your job. Put it away. A week later, write it again. Do this for four weeks and find out what the real problems are. Then try to find ways to overcome them.
26. Start a support group among your colleagues - not to gripe, but to share ways of coping.
27. Consider your alternatives. If you think you're trapped, look for a way or ways out, and figure out how to get out. Then figure out if you want to do it. If the answer is yes, do it. If the answer is no, look for ways to change your daily work environment.
28. After work on a cold day, enjoy a mug of hot cocoa (with marshmallows, of course) while taking a steaming hot shower. On a hot day, sip a glass of cold lemonade or juice while you sit in a tub of cool water.
29. Try to keep other people's problems separate from your own.
30. Go to a newsstand once a week and buy a different magazine each time. You will expand your horizons and find lots of new topics for conversation.

31. Learn more about your ethnic heritage. Join your nationality organization and become involved in traditional activities and festivities.

32. Be careful not to schedule all your leisure hours.

33. If you see the need for change, figure out how to lead others toward that change. Work in the local chapter of your professional organization, get involved in politics or run for the school board.

34. Don't stew.

35. If you're popping aspirin, antacids or tranquilizers, cut down on the number you take, stop taking them, or get some professional counseling.

36. Think about what you can control in your work life and what you can't. Let go of the things you can't affect.

37. Laugh.

38. Go see a sad movie and let yourself cry a lot. Then figure out why you cried a lot.

39. Try not to take a lot of work home with you.

40. Smile and speak to everyone you see on the street. See how they smile back!

41. Go to a bookstore and buy a novel you've always wanted to read. Take your time reading it and enjoy every page.

42. Take up that hobby you've been thinking about for years. Set up that aquarium; teach yourself to develop film; research your family tree; learn to weave or refinish a piece of furniture. Start off small, though, so you don't get discouraged too quickly.

43. Join a community pool and go to it often. Set a reasonable goal of the number of laps you'll swim each time and do them all. Increase your goal by a few laps each time you go.

44. Look for things to praise in yourself and others.

45. Find people you can like and care about. Keep in contact.

46. Develop the skill you had as a kid -- selective inattention -- and use it to keep from drowning in a sea of petty irritations.

47. Bring a picnic lunch to work to share with others. Take it outside to a secluded grassy area to eat. Try not to talk about work-related matters. Take turns preparing the lunch whenever convenient.

48. Go out to dinner at one of your favorite restaurants with a friend, a relative or your spouse every Friday night for a month.
49. Clean out your desk or the cabinets in your office if they need it. If they're already spotless, let them get messy for a week or two.
50. Get up 15 or 20 minutes earlier than usual in the morning to read the newspaper, jog, take a short walk or give your garden a little special attention.
51. Be honest with yourself about your work. If it's rotten because you feel rotten, set some goals and get going on them: daily ones, weekly ones, then longer periods.
52. Take up a new sport. Learn how to play tennis, take scuba diving lessons, join a community softball team or start ice-skating.
53. Schedule time to be alone.
54. Schedule time to be with people you care about.
55. Create a new bulletin board display just for fun. Make it big, bold, and colorful.
56. Take a weekend excursion to the mountains, the beach or your favorite hideout. Make sure the place you choose is relatively free from everyday hassles. Leave after school on Friday, and come back on Sunday afternoon in time to relax before Monday.
57. Choose a quiet, calm environment with as few distractions as possible in which to relax. Close your eyes and concentrate on relaxing all your muscles, beginning with your toes. Doing this for 10 to 20 minutes a day can do wonders for a tired, overworked mind and body.
58. If you live in an urban or suburban area, plan a day trip into the country. Bring a picnic lunch and go fishing, explore a historical town that's off the beaten path or browse through a flea market.
59. Don't fret silently if you don't get a particular task completed by the time you planned for it to be done.
60. Reward yourself for all the good work you've been doing. Buy a record or a new outfit; go to the theater or a baseball game.
61. Take an exercise or dance class in the evening. Really put an effort into stretching and movement. If the weather's bad or you feel too worn out to even make it to the class, force yourself to go anyway. You'll be glad you did.
62. Write a letter or send a card to a faraway friend who you haven't heard from in awhile.

63. Get plenty of sleep.
64. If you have a disagreement with someone you work with, look at the situation from both sides. Remember that the other person may be having a bad day. Try to work out the problem instead of letting it bug you.
65. If you live in a rural area, go to the city for a day to shop, visit museums and galleries or take in a show.
66. Go to your local library and leisurely explore alternative careers you've been mulling over or that you once considered. Find out about the salaries, opportunities for advancement, and working conditions. Talk to people in those fields.
67. Get a new hairstyle; shave your mustache or grow a beard.
68. If you feel you can't face the same job every morning, try to do something else.
69. If you feel that no one cares about anything you have to say, try to find out what they really do care about. Meet them where they are.
70. Get out and look up some Senior DeMolays. Find out what they're doing.
71. Take a day to straighten out your personal filing system. Then schedule the same time every day to keep up with paperwork. Don't let it become Mt. Everest.
72. Avoid going home and sitting in front of the TV or lying on the couch.
73. Get up early enough to prepare a healthy breakfast every day before work.
74. Experiment with some gourmet recipes - try making a soufflé, egg rolls or baklava. If the dish turns out a flop, just laugh and try it again some other time.
75. Volunteer some of your time to be with someone who needs you. You'll feel good about making others feel good.
76. Take three long breaths, hold, and let them out slowly before you begin work.
77. Invite some of your friends to your home for dinner or a barbecue sometime. Talk to them - find out about their hobbies and interests, their dreams and goals. Tell them about yours, too.