

Managing burnout during peak year-end demands



Does it seem like your colleagues are frustrating you more than usual? Are you tired, distracted, and feeling like your workload just keeps getting more by the minute? If these symptoms sound familiar to you, you might be experiencing burnout.

WebMD defines burnout as "an ongoing state of feeling overwhelmed, fatigued, and emotionally drained due to consistent stress in your work, family, or social life."

You feel so exhausted that even menial tasks start taking all your effort to complete.

To make matters worse, the so called 'silly season' is upon us – a frenzied, festive time causing a shift in focus from everyday work tasks to holiday planning.

This increases the chances of employees rushing to finish tasks, or leaving tasks to the last minute, which increases their stress levels and in turn fuels their burnout. It is a vicious cycle, which makes you feel more overwhelmed just by thinking about it.

Luckily, there is light at the end of the tunnel. In this article we provide valuable tips to help you manage peak year-end demands while prioritizing your well-being.

What are the signs of burnout at work?

Before delving into mitigating burnout as far as possible, you first need to know if you are burnt out. Look out for the following signs:

- **Feeling exhausted:** Despite getting ample amounts of sleep, you still feel tired when you wake up. This leads to a loss of focus and energy at work.
- **Struggling to sleep at night:** Even when you go to bed at a reasonable hour, you stay awake as your mind races with worries of the day and tasks to do tomorrow.
- **Feeling useless at your job:** You start questioning your abilities to do your job, even if you finish tasks and get praise from managers.
- **Hating your job:** Your once-loved job starts feeling like a burden, and this feeling grows stronger as your burnout deepens.
- **Your mind wanders more than usual:** You struggle to concentrate and find your mind drifting to anything other than the task at hand.
- **Everything gets under your skin:** Things that usually don't bother you become big irritants, causing you to snap at your colleagues or loved ones.
- **You feel sicker than usual:** Stress can lead to physical ailments, such as headaches and stomach pain. Your immune system might also take a hit, which can lead to colds and other illnesses.
- **Feeling depressed:** Burnout can lead to feelings of deep sadness and hopelessness. You may feel disconnected from those around you. If the feeling persists, seek professional help as it may indicate the onset of depression.

Tips for surviving burnout:

Burnout mostly involves situations that are out of your control, but you can control the stress you feel because of it:

- **Prioritise sleep:** Having a good night's rest is the best way to fight burnout. Sleep helps protect your health while helping your body recharge to take on the next day. Mayo Clinic recommends that a healthy adult sleeps between 7 and 9 hours a night.
- **Look at your options:** If you feel overloaded with work, talk to your manager about your concerns. Find out what can wait and what needs to be prioritised to do first. Ask your colleagues for help if you need it. In most situations, two heads are better than one.
- **Seek support:** If something is bothering you, whether it is personal or work-related, having someone to talk to can help you feel more supported. Talk to a colleague if you feel it is needed. Sharing your experiences can also encourage your colleagues to share their feelings with you.
- **Move your muscles:** Physical activity regularly helps reduce stress. Exercising for at least 30 minutes a day is not only good for your body, but for your mind and overall wellbeing as well.
- **Practice mindfulness:** Mindfulness is living in the present moment and accepting your feelings without judging or reacting. Practicing mindfulness helps you deal with what is currently happening in your life. Examples of practicing mindfulness include being in nature, meditating, journaling, and practicing gratitude.
- **Stick to your routine and set boundaries:** Try to stick to your routine as far as possible. Try not to sacrifice regular exercising or your set time to relax. *Prioritise your work and downtime* and add it to your calendar. Before saying yes to everything that is asked of you, reflect on whether it can fit into your calendar without overwhelming you.
- **Give to others:** Simple acts of kindness, such as volunteering or helping a colleague, have been proven to boost mental health. It is a very rewarding way to spend time and will undoubtedly lift the spirit of others.
- **Make time to relax:** Protecting your mental well-being is of utmost importance, and having time set out in your calendar to relax can help you do so. Yoga, meditation, reading a book, or having a nap are all examples of ways to relax. Always be kind to yourself and remember that you cannot do it all, even if most of us believe we can.

Conclusion:

As the pressure of year-end demands approaches, it's easy to forget to care for ourselves amidst the festive chaos.

But by implementing even a few of these strategies, you can manage your stress and enjoy the season without burning out. Remember to take a breath, slow down, and prioritize your well-being. After all, you're only human, and you deserve a stress-free working environment just as much as anyone else.

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