

SIGN UP: Any employee may request a new issue be emailed each month by [subscribing to Leadership Notes newsletter](#).

APR 2018

## How Can I Prevent Getting Burned Out at Work?

Source: [ComPsych GuidanceResources®](#)

Worker burnout is often a function of how you react to large amounts of stress. You may react to negative stress by feeling overwhelmed, irritable and worried. The key to preventing burnout is to find ways to neutralize the stress or turn it into positive stress (where you feel motivated and excited). Here are some ways to prevent burnout:

- **Change how you view work:** Eliminate negative words, such as “I cannot do this” or “No way”. When you get the urge to use negative words, try to stop yourself and think of positive words instead, such as “Yes,” “I will/can,” and “I want to succeed.” Also, being bored can be just as stressful as being overworked. If you are bored or spend your time on repetitive tasks, try throwing yourself into whatever you are doing, and give it all of your concentration. You will find that time passes more quickly the more you are engaged with what you are doing and are improving the quality of your work. Another possibility is to volunteer for a new task that will challenge you.
- **Learn to manage your workload:** If your position allows you to decide which projects and tasks to undertake, try tactfully saying no to some requests. It is important to pitch in and help out when asked, but do not overextend yourself. For those tasks for which you are responsible, be sure to prioritize them and schedule them on a calendar. Plan each day so that you set realistic goals for getting your work done and meeting your deadlines. You can accomplish this by breaking bigger projects into smaller tasks. Also, try doing unpleasant tasks first so you can get them out of the way.
- **Seek out the positives in any situation:** If your responsibilities change or you find yourself in a negative situation, try to look on the bright side. What lessons can you take away from the situation? It may not sound easy, but if you can

do this, your mood and your outlook at work will improve.

- **Change your work environment:** Is your workspace arranged in a way that prevents you from getting your work done? Perhaps you need a comfier chair, more sunlight, more space, more privacy or a more comfortable work wardrobe. Come up with a list of reasonable suggestions for change, and ask your supervisor if he or she will allow you to pursue them. You can also hang a favorite art poster or bring a plant to change your environment.
- **Take better care of yourself:** You can improve your attitude by improving your health and nutrition habits. Ways to do this include eating healthier lunches and snacks (more fruits, vegetables and whole grains and less saturated fats and refined sugars) and exercising, even just a few minutes each day. Simple stretches and deep breathing at your desk can leave you feeling refreshed and ready to tackle more challenges. If you can, take short breaks to let off steam, or go for a walk at lunch to change your surroundings.
- **Make the most of your time away from work:** It can be a challenge, but do not think about work when you are not there. Try to spend a few minutes each day doing something just for you: exercising; reading; watching a movie; working on a craft or project; or exploring new parks, shops and restaurants in your neighborhood.
- **Vary your routine:** We all can get in ruts, such as taking the same route to work, having lunch at the same time every day or attending the same meetings every week. If your job allows for it, change your daily routine so you take in new scenery, meet new people and pass your time differently.

When you are a supervisor, it's important to take care of yourself so that you can take care of your employees.