

How to Prevent Burnout Before You Get Scorched

As 2023 brings economic uncertainty and new pressure at work, it's becoming harder to maintain healthy work-life symmetry without the appearance of "quiet quitting."

Burnout may seem like an individual problem, but the sources are actually systemic. Long work weeks leave employees feeling drained, vacation days are spent on housework and child care, and remote jobs blur the lines between professional and personal life: Work is simply everywhere.

As if the pandemic weren't enough, 2021 [brought seismic labor movements](#) in the United States, and 2022 ushered in a [looming global recession](#)—with many people feeling first empowered by an employee-led market, then suddenly fearful for their job security. The resulting pendulum swing has left workers straddling two near-impossible feats: trying to proceed with business as usual and building a meaningful career amidst the fear of mass layoffs.

What's a person to do under all that pressure? According to an [employee engagement report from Gallup](#), at least 50 percent of the U.S. workforce turned to their job descriptions for inspiration—doing exactly what was expected of them, without going above and beyond.

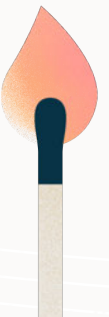
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Hi! I'm Keren.

As an organizational development program manager at Lyra Health, my job is to help you design the work experience so that you can reduce workplace-driven mental health distress and increase workplace well-being.



Enter “[quiet quitting](#),” a buzzword that stigmatizes employees’ push for more sustainable workloads and fosters unhealthy work environments for everyone. This is different from “[quiet firing](#),” which happens when managers nudge employees to leave their role by making their work life unpleasant or unmanageable.

You may be thinking, “These are all factors outside of my direct control,” and, while that’s somewhat true, there is good news. Burnout can be solved; in fact, there are many remedies, from the individual to institutional levels.

With a bit of curiosity and empathy, employees across the globe can learn how to support the mental health of their teams while also advocating for their own wellness in the workplace. This month, we’ll cover effective burnout prevention strategies for yourself and your colleagues.

What does burnout look like?

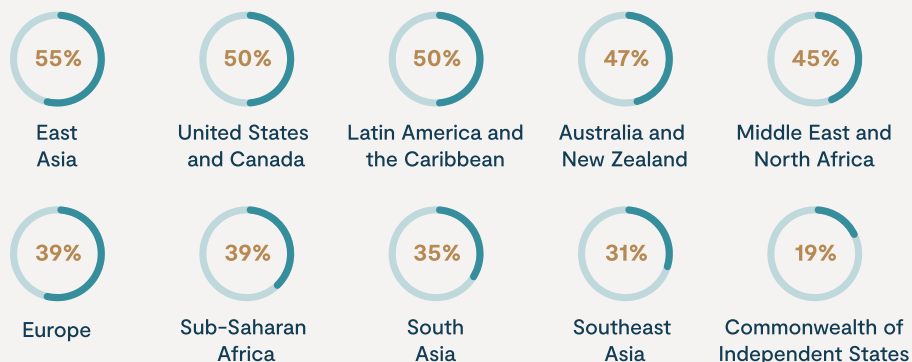
Burnout is a state of chronic, work-related stress. The term “burnout” is often used to describe any fatigue we feel, but not all stress qualifies as burnout. It has three specific components that must be present, all of which are related to work:

- **Exhaustion and fatigue:** feeling emotionally, mentally, or physically tired
- **Detachment or cynicism:** uninterested in tasks that used to feel meaningful
- **Feeling useless:** belief that you don’t make a difference



Burnout world-wide

Across the globe, workers are feeling more stressed than ever. When asked whether they experienced daily stress, 44% of all workers responded yes.



“[State of the Global Workplace: 2022 Report](#),” Gallup, 2022. Accessed October 12, 2022. www.gallup.com



What happens when burnout goes unaddressed?

While some workplace stressors come and go, burnout won't disappear by itself. And if it's ignored for long enough, burnout can result in severe mental health struggles.

Advocating for yourself can be uncomfortable, but letting your needs take a backseat to your work can lead to strained relationships, too. Below are a few examples of how unaddressed burnout can manifest into unhealthy or unwanted outcomes.



Struggling to manage your workload.

While good managers should be attentive to and perceptive of their team's needs, they're not mind-readers. Being honest about what you're experiencing can help your manager reimagine a more sustainable workload and could indicate more resources are needed.



Appearing like a low performer.

Needing a break doesn't make you weak—it just makes you human. Rather than getting to the point where you are completely out of steam, ask yourself if your workload is sustainable, and avoid comparing yourself to colleagues.



Internalizing the fear of layoffs.

Amidst an [economic landscape set for downsizing across the globe](#), it's natural to be afraid of getting laid off. But that fear shouldn't drive you to overburden yourself. Talk to your manager to align on what a reasonable level of output looks like, based on your available work hours.



Letting your team members down.

Working on a team should mean the load is shared equitably. If you're not upfront about your needs, you're giving your team a false sense of what to expect from you in the long run. Chances are, prioritizing your mental health might inspire them to reflect on their own needs, too.



Perpetuating mental health stigma.

Stigma fuels misconceptions about mental illness, such as the false idea that people with mental health conditions are irresponsible or incapable. Modeling healthy behaviors can empower others to take charge of their mental wellness.

If these outcomes cause concern, you're not alone. Burnout is avoidable, and there are things you can do to ensure a healthy and emotionally supportive experience with your work.

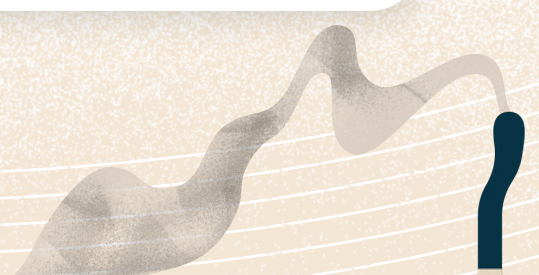


6 strategies to address your burnout

If you find yourself nodding along to the symptoms listed above, you may be burned out. Fortunately, there are many paths to recovery, including professional care. Here are some ways to get started.

- 1 Talk to someone you trust.** Reach out to someone who makes you feel safe. Let them know whether you're looking for advice or simply a listening ear. Being open can alleviate pent-up shame, stress, and guilt.
- 2 Recognize what's working.** Think of activities, people, or environments that bring you peace, relieve stress, and boost your mood. Which ones feel non-negotiable? How many can you incorporate into your current routine?
- 3 Decide what needs to change.** Audit and evaluate your work tasks to get a sense of what may be causing undue stress. Consider which projects you'd rather work on or new skills you'd enjoy learning.
- 4 Make a plan to tell your manager.** If you feel comfortable doing so, bring an outline of the items you identified in the steps above. You can even rehearse this meeting with the person from step 1 to practice what it might feel like to be vulnerable.
- 5 Come to a consensus on next steps.** Being aligned with your manager can help you prioritize or delegate tasks. They'll also be able to communicate your boundaries with other team members.
- 6 Access professional care.** Meeting with a mental health expert can help identify patterns contributing to your burnout. Mental health coaches and therapists can also help create a plan for addressing and preventing future burnout.

If these steps seem overwhelming, that's okay. You don't have to do them all at once. Talking to a confidante can help you identify which of these steps are right for you or which ones you need support to accomplish. You can always ask a mental health provider for their recommendations on a path forward, too.



Get access to the right kind of care

Preventing and addressing burnout may be one of the best investments you can make in your career, but it can't be done alone. The reality is, it takes a strong network to ensure you have time to care for yourself while also managing responsibilities.

Remember, everyone's experience is unique to them—the strategies that seem most helpful to you might affect someone else differently. If you're reading this on behalf of a colleague or loved one, check in with them to understand how you might be able to support them in a way that aligns with their needs, values, cultural practices, or circumstances.

To achieve balance, you may benefit from multiple types of support: a good relationship with your manager, candid conversations with loved ones about your needs, and meaningful support from a mental health provider who can help identify patterns and help you recover from burnout.

Don't know where to begin?

Working with a Lyra mental health provider can be a great way to access the support you need and take control of your emotional well-being.

[Learn more about Lyra, today.](#)

