

HOW TO WORK SUSTAINABLY



Avoid burnout and work well over the long term by caring for your mind

BURNOUT

Burnout isn't an illness itself, but a term for long-term challenges at work. It can cover a wide range of feelings, from demotivation to exhaustion, and is linked to mental health problems.

If you feel tired all the time, put off tasks, struggle to relax, lose confidence, or feel bored, cynical or overwhelmed, you could be burnt out.



There are **three different types of burnout**, each causing similar symptoms.

You might be **"frenetic"**, experiencing sustained stress and long working hours.

You might be **"underchallenged"**, lacking opportunities to learn or develop your skills and feeling like life is passing you by.

Or you might be **"worn out"**, feeling neglected, bullied or like nothing you do matters.

All three can lead to burnout.

SUSTAINABLE WORK

1 SET LIMITS

Working long hours can temporarily boost output, but after a couple of weeks your productivity will fall again. Resist the trap of long hours and focus on making the hours you do work count. Make sure you take regular breaks too, to recharge your mind. Resting isn't cheating.

2 PRIORITISE

Frenetic burnout is often a result of doing everything badly instead of important things well. Use the 3 Ds:

- **Delegate** what you can
- **Defer** non-urgent tasks
- **Drop** non-essential tasks

3 TAKE CONTROL

Stress and demotivation are often the result of feeling powerless or lacking control. You can't control everything, so focus your efforts on areas where you can make a positive difference, and try to let the other tasks go. You're only human, after all.

Burnout is **chronic workplace stress** that has not been successfully managed.

World Health Organisation

4 HAVE FUN!

Resting is productive. Find things that give you energy and help you relax, and make a habit of doing them even when you feel stressed or worn out. Plus make a habit of sleeping well, seeing people, and taking exercise.

5 ASK FOR HELP

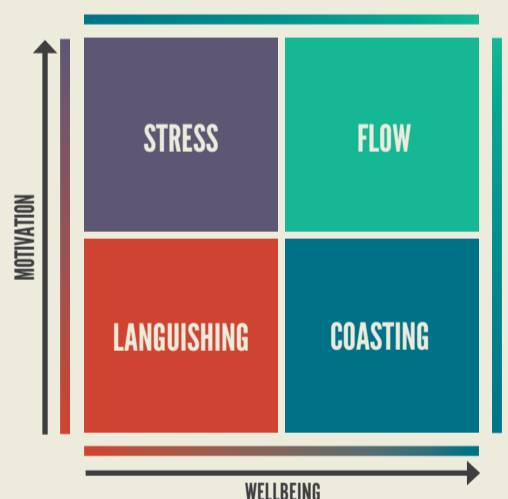
Chronic stress is often the result of not feeling we have the resources to cope, so asking for support and advice from friends, colleagues and managers is essential. Make time for people and keep talking - and try to ask for help early, not just in a crisis.

TIPS FOR MANAGERS

Sustainable work comes from **high motivation** and **high wellbeing**. Managers can help promote both by asking:

- Does it enhance people's **control and autonomy**?
- Does it increase **capacity and resilience**?
- Does it facilitate **participation and involvement**?
- Does it promote **inclusion and diversity**?
- Does it improve people's **relationships**?

If you consider these five factors in every decision you make, you can promote a **sustainable work culture**.



SETTING LIMITS

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Technology and virtual working have made it easier to work in ways that suit us, but they also make it harder to switch off from work.

If we want to make the most of the opportunities of hybrid working, we need to keep work and home life separate - which means disciplining ourselves to set limits around our work.

At the start of the day, find activities that shift you into work mode and **energise** your mind. At the end of the day, do things to **relax** your mind and wind down.

"Be kind to your future self."



GOOD HABITS

Good habits for maintaining wellbeing at work include:

- Taking **regular breaks** and time to eat and drink
- Making time for **exercise** and healthy activities
- Limiting your **work hours** and device use
- Achieving goals and reflecting on **progress**
- Staying **connected** and maintaining relationships

This free tip sheet was created by Mindapples to support people during the COVID-19 pandemic. To find out more about our apps, e-learning, webinars, face-to-face training and charitable work, visit www.mindapples.org.