**Job burnout: How to spot it and take action**

**Feeling burned out at work? Find out what you can do when your job affects your health.**

[By Mayo Clinic Staff](https://www.mayoclinic.org/about-this-site/welcome)

Job burnout is a special type of work-related stress — a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity.

"Burnout" isn't a medical diagnosis. Some experts think that other conditions, such as depression, are behind burnout. Some research suggests that many people who experience symptoms of job burnout don't believe their jobs are the main cause. Whatever the cause, job burnout can affect your physical and mental health. Consider how to know if you've got job burnout and what you can do about it.

**Job burnout symptoms:**

Ask yourself:

* Have you become cynical or critical at work?
* Do you drag yourself to work and have trouble getting started?
* Have you become irritable or impatient with co-workers, customers or clients?
* Do you lack the energy to be consistently productive?
* Do you find it hard to concentrate?
* Do you lack satisfaction from your achievements?
* Do you feel disillusioned about your job?
* Are you using food, drugs or alcohol to feel better or to simply not feel?
* Have your sleep habits changed?
* Are you troubled by unexplained headaches, stomach or bowel problems, or other physical complaints?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you might be experiencing job burnout. Consider talking to a doctor or a mental health provider because these symptoms can also be related to health conditions, such as depression.

**Possible causes of job burnout:**

Job burnout can result from various factors, including:

* **Lack of control.** An inability to influence decisions that affect your job — such as your schedule, assignments or workload — could lead to job burnout. So could a lack of the resources you need to do your work.
* **Unclear job expectations.** If you're unclear about the degree of authority you have or what your supervisor or others expect from you, you're not likely to feel comfortable at work.
* **Dysfunctional workplace dynamics.** Perhaps you work with an office bully, or you feel undermined by colleagues or your boss micromanages your work. This can contribute to job stress.
* **Extremes of activity.** When a job is monotonous or chaotic, you need constant energy to remain focused — which can lead to fatigue and job burnout.
* **Lack of social support.** If you feel isolated at work and in your personal life, you might feel more stressed.
* **Work-life imbalance.** If your work takes up so much of your time and effort that you don't have the energy to spend time with your family and friends, you might burn out quickly.

**Job burnout risk factors:**

You might be more likely to experience job burnout if:

* You identify so strongly with work that you lack balance between your work life and your personal life
* You have a high workload, including overtime work
* You try to be everything to everyone
* You work in a helping profession, such as health care
* You feel you have little or no control over your work
* Your job is monotonous

**Consequences of job burnout:**

Ignored or unaddressed job burnout can have significant consequences, including:

* Excessive stress
* Fatigue
* Insomnia
* Sadness, anger or irritability
* Alcohol or substance misuse
* Heart disease
* High blood pressure
* Type 2 diabetes
* Vulnerability to illnesses

**Handling job burnout:**

Try to take action. To get started:

* **Evaluate your options.** Discuss specific concerns with your supervisor. Maybe you can work together to change expectations or reach compromises or solutions. Try to set goals for what must get done and what can wait.
* **Seek support.** Whether you reach out to co-workers, friends or loved ones, support and collaboration might help you cope. If you have access to an employee assistance program, take advantage of relevant services.
* **Try a relaxing activity.** Explore programs that can help with stress such as yoga, meditation or tai chi.
* **Get some exercise.** Regular physical activity can help you to better deal with stress. It can also take your mind off work.
* **Get some sleep.** Sleep restores well-being and helps protect your health.
* **Mindfulness.** Mindfulness is the act of focusing on your breath flow and being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling at every moment, without interpretation or judgment. In a job setting, this practice involves facing situations with openness and patience, and without judgment.

Keep an open mind as you consider the options. Try not to let a demanding or unrewarding job undermine your health.