

# How to ... avoid burnout

6 February 2009, By Alison Johnson

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Burnout - a state of mental, physical and emotional exhaustion -- leaves people feeling hopeless about the future. Here are tips from therapists on staying healthy:

- Lean on others. One symptom of burnout is thinking that no one else can do a job but you. Trust that work or chores will get done even if you don't do it all.

- Learn to say no. Instead of feeling guilty, realize that you'll be better able to say yes to things that are important to you.

- Reduce your load. Look at your everyday tasks and figure out what you could drop. A co-worker, child, spouse or neighborhood teenager may be able to pick up some work.

- Take a daily technology break. Turn off everything, including your cell phone, laptop and pager, even if it's just for a few minutes at a time.

- Set a schedule. Map out your weekdays with the goal of having a chunk of the weekend to rest and have fun. You'll be less likely to procrastinate.

- Take vacations. Being a workaholic isn't something to be proud of.

- Reward yourself. Remember why you work and what you like about your job or home life. Spend time with a loved one or buy something you want and can afford.

- Nurture your spirit. Do something just for yourself, whether it's listening to music, exercising, getting a massage, reading or writing in a journal.

- Don't isolate yourself. Share problems with family and friends.

- Take care of yourself. Healthy eating, regular exercise and plenty of sleep will give you the energy to deal with life's demands.

- Consider professional help. If you constantly feel hopeless, unmotivated and isolated from others, talk to a doctor, therapist or pastor.

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