

# Ways to avoid burnout

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress.

Learn to recognise if you are at risk for the possible onset of burnout by observing the following conditions:

- **Physical** — such as frequent headaches, breathlessness or chest pain, fatigue, muscular twitching, or becoming tense easily.

- **Mental** — such as muddled thinking, unnecessary worrying, having nightmares, making irrational decisions, or difficulty in remembering things.

- **Emotional** — such as becoming increasingly irritable, feeling depressed, exhibiting apathy, being quarrelsome and unreasonable, or having mood swings.

- **Behavioural** — such as becoming more accident prone, losing appetite or overeating, restlessness, insomnia, or increased intake of alcoholic beverages or smoking.

If you are having, or experiencing the progressive worsening of, some of these conditions, it is time to pause to evaluate your ability to cope with stress.

If you are not coping well, consult your family doctor or a medical practitioner, who can refer you to a trained counsellor or even a psychologist or psychiatrist if necessary.

The key to coping well with stress includes the following

actions:

## **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR LIFESTYLE**

You need a healthy balance between work or study and leisure.

Make time for recreation with loved ones and friends. These are people who can be supportive, share your challenges, and help you reframe your problem in a positive light.

## **ENGAGE IN SOCIAL CONTACT APPROPRIATELY**

Connect with people whose company you enjoy, whether at school, at work or in a club.

This will develop social interaction, which helps to fulfil your needs to be liked and loved, and enhances your self-image and self-esteem.

## **HAVE PEOPLE WHOM YOU CAN TRUST**

Bottled-up emotions and feelings can "explode" in an undesirable way, such as imagining unrealistic consequences and having frightening thoughts. This can lead to frustration and stress, and may finally end in a burnout.

So, it is important to have someone or a small group of people you can go to with your problems and worries, such as family members, friends, teachers, colleagues or religious leaders.

Pouring out your concerns



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and problems to a confidant may be the first step in reducing stress levels.

## **REVIEW YOUR LIFE FROM TIME TO TIME**

Problems can arise when you feel that your life is not satisfying and fulfilling.

Many people overlook that, at different stages of one's life, one's needs, wants and aspirations are different.

So, review what your goals in life are, and whether you are taking steps to achieve them. Most importantly, be grounded in reality and be realistic in the demands that you make on yourself.

## **BE AWARE OF HOW YOUR MIND AND BODY INTERACT**

If your diet, sleep and exercise

are neglected and inadequate, both your body and mind will suffer.

## **BE AWARE OF PROBLEMS AND TAKE STEPS TO RESOLVE THEM**

A regular evaluation of how your life is progressing is integral to ensuring that a shortcoming is addressed early.

For example, persistent tiredness and irritability are the earliest symptoms of a potential burnout. If necessary, seek help from an appropriate source to ensure your mental health is kept healthy.

## **LEARN TO LIVE WITHIN YOUR MEANS**

If you take on a job that is very demanding or you are not suited for just because you

want to pursue wealth, perks or status, it may cause debilitating stress.

Living modestly, thriftily and frugally can stop you from making unnecessary stress-causing demands on yourself.

You can learn more about managing stress or being assertive by attending appropriate courses and conferences or reading books and articles, where you can discover suitable ideas and adapt them to your situation.

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