



Burnout: Recognising the Signs and What to Do About It

Welcome back to our self-care series! In Part 1, we explored the foundations of well-being. Today, we're diving into a crucial topic that many of us face: burnout. It's more than just feeling tired; it's a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged or excessive stress.

Are You on the Brink? Recognising the Signs

Burnout can sneak up on you, so it's vital to know what to look out for. It's often categorised into three main areas: exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced efficacy.

1. Exhaustion

This isn't just a need for a nap. It's a deep, pervasive tiredness that sleep doesn't seem to fix.

- **Physical Exhaustion:** Persistent fatigue, low energy, frequent headaches, muscle aches, or even stomach problems. You might feel drained even after a full night's sleep.
- **Emotional Exhaustion:** Feeling emotionally empty, numb, or apathetic. You might find yourself easily irritated or overwhelmed by small things.



2. Cynicism and Detachment

When burnout sets in, your perspective can shift, leading to a negative or indifferent attitude towards your work, studies, or even hobbies.

- **Detachment from Activities:** You might feel a growing sense of negativity or resentment towards your responsibilities. What once excited you now feels like a chore.
- **Social Withdrawal:** A tendency to isolate yourself from friends, family, and colleagues. Social interactions might feel too demanding.



3. Reduced Efficacy

This refers to a decline in your perceived competence and achievement.

- **Decreased Performance:** Despite putting in effort, you might feel less productive or effective. Tasks take longer, and errors increase.
- **Lack of Accomplishment:** A feeling that your efforts aren't making a difference, leading to self-doubt and a sense of failure.



What to Do About It: Practical Steps to Take

If you recognise these signs in yourself, don't despair. The good news is that burnout is reversible, but it requires conscious effort and often a shift in perspective or routine.

1. Prioritise Self-Care (Seriously!)

This isn't just about bubble baths (though they can help!). It's about building healthy habits into your daily life.

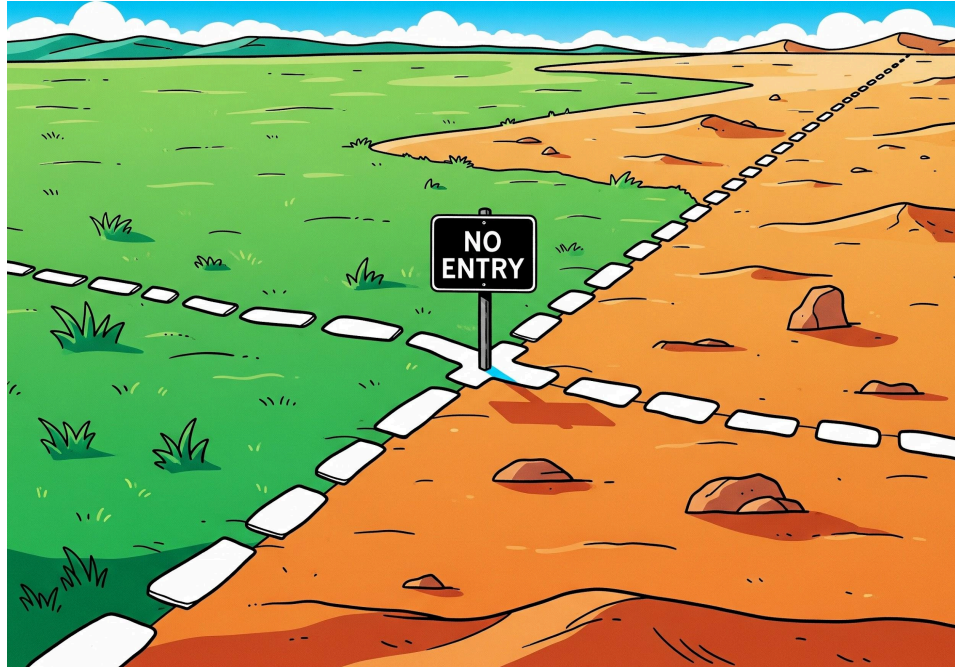
- **Adequate Sleep:** Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night. Establish a consistent sleep schedule, even on weekends.
- **Nutritious Diet:** Fuel your body with balanced meals. Avoid relying on caffeine or sugary snacks for energy boosts.
- **Regular Exercise:** Even a short walk can do wonders for your mood and energy levels. Find an activity you enjoy.
- **Mindfulness and Relaxation:** Incorporate practices like meditation, deep breathing exercises, or gentle yoga. Apps like Calm or Headspace can be a great starting point.



2. Set Boundaries

One of the biggest culprits of burnout is the inability to say "no" and setting unrealistic expectations for yourself. (We will be releasing a guide all around setting boundaries)

- **Learn to Delegate:** If possible, share your workload. It's okay to ask for help.
- **Define Your Working Hours:** Avoid checking emails or working late into the evenings or on weekends. Create a clear distinction between work and personal life.
- **Say "No" Politely:** It's empowering to decline additional responsibilities when your plate is already full.



3. Seek Support

You don't have to go through this alone. Reaching out is a sign of strength.

- **Talk to Someone:** Share your feelings with a trusted friend, family member, or colleague.
- **Professional Help:** If burnout is significantly impacting your life, consider speaking to a GP, counsellor, or therapist. They can provide strategies and support tailored to your needs.
- **Connect with Others:** Re-engage with social activities that you enjoy. Sometimes just being around people who uplift you can make a big difference.

4. Re-evaluate Your Priorities and Goals

Burnout can be a sign that something needs to change.

- **Reflect:** Take time to consider what truly matters to you. Are your current activities aligning with your values?
- **Adjust Expectations:** Be realistic about what you can achieve. Perfectionism often fuels burnout.
- **Take Breaks:** Schedule regular short breaks throughout your day, and make sure you take annual leave to fully recharge.



Burnout is a serious issue, but by recognising the signs and taking proactive steps, you can regain control and rebuild your well-being. Remember, self-care isn't selfish; it's essential for a healthy, fulfilling life.

Next in our series: In Part 3, we'll explore practical strategies for managing stress and building resilience.