March/April 2021

Remote Work Newsletter

EMPLOYCO USA
The Power to Compete

5 Ways to Beat Work-from-Home Burnout

For many workers, their new "normal" routine consists of getting out of bed and logging on to work. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in thousands of employees working from their kitchen tables or living rooms rather than the office.

If you're working remotely and feeling burned out, you're not alone. A survey by Monster, an online employment platform, revealed that 69% of remote employees are experiencing burnout.

According to the World Health Organization, you may have burnout if you experience the following symptoms:

- Increased exhaustion or energy depletion
- Decreased engagement at work
- Increased feelings of job-related negativity or cynicism
- Reduced productivity or efficacy

The negative effects of burnout can extend beyond the workplace and into your home and personal life. Burnout can also increase your risk of getting sick and developing chronic conditions.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to reduce your stress and risk of burnout while you work from home. Here are some strategies to try:

1. **Create a schedule.** When you're at home, it can be difficult to step away from work when your day is done. This can cause you to work longer hours than normal. As such, set a schedule and only work the hours you normally would if you were in the office.
2. **Plan and prioritize.** When you're feeling stressed out, don't panic. Make a list of the tasks you need to complete, and set realistic deadlines.
3. **Focus on what you can control.** Stressing out about the pandemic, the news and your household mental load can add to your workplace stress. Take a deep breath and focus on the tasks you can control.
4. **Use available mental health resources.** Many employers have expanded their mental health resources to include employee assistance plans, telemental health coverage and discounted or free virtual counseling to help employees cope with the stresses of pandemic life.

This newsletter is intended for informational use only and should not be construed as professional advice. © 2021 Zywave, Inc. All rights reserved.

5. **Ask for help.** Sometimes the best way to overcome your workplace stress is to ask your peers or superiors for help. Also, consult your friends or family for insight on how to reduce your stress.

Implementing healthy coping mechanisms—such as exercising, hanging out with friends or taking time off from work—can also help alleviate your stress. If you feel like you're burned out, you should talk to your supervisor or manager, as they may be able to help you reduce your job stress or direct you to valuable workplace resources.

Building Strong and Meaningful Virtual Connections

Building relationships on any team isn't easy—and working remotely can make it that much harder. But, with some thoughtful planning, you can start building strong relationships with remote co-workers and strengthen overall team dynamics.

Remote work doesn't need to come at the cost of human connections. Consider the following tips:

- **Be mindful of word choice.** When relying on written communication, words should be used carefully, since there are no nonverbal cues to pick up on. Co-workers may need additional context in emails to prevent misunderstandings, especially if the topic is critical or sensitive.
- **Use video features.** Take advantage of technology and encourage teammates to use their webcams during meetings instead of only using audio. Not only can this help meeting engagement, but it can also foster deeper interpersonal connections. Video chatting can provide the visual cues that are often missing from written and verbal communications. Also, getting a glimpse into your co-worker's home office can help you see who they are as people or offer a good conversation starter.
- **Respect everyone's time.** Meeting fatigue is increasingly cited as a top workplace complaint, especially now that all meetings are conducted on computer screens. If you're a meeting organizer, include an agenda and invite only the people necessary to complete the objective. Also, consider sending out meeting notes to inform the larger team. Do your best to avoid unnecessary meetings. If you're typically a meeting attendee and you're not sure if you'll have an active role in the meeting, ask for more details. Lastly, it's OK to respectfully ask to leave when the meeting no longer pertains to you.
- **Don't be all business.** Random conversations happen often in the office, but there are ways to encourage casual virtual conversations as well. Ask your co-workers open-ended questions and give them a chance to talk as much or as little as they'd like. Personal and casual conversations can help create bonds with your co-workers.
- **Plan team-building activities.** Socialization is a big part of the workplace. When employees are separated, they need new ways to decompress and get their minds off work. Plan or ask for team-building activities or similar events. Some ideas include virtual trivia, virtual board games and virtual happy hours.

Additionally, if you are a manager or team leader, consider holding virtual office hours or creating an accessible way for employees to check in. Provide opportunities for employees to virtually connect and discuss what's on their mind. Without dedicated time

slots for these talks, other employees may question whether their topics are important enough to warrant a meeting and may never bring them up.

Remote working has not eliminated the need for social connectivity in the workplace. If anything, it has only increased this need. Luckily, there are many virtual opportunities for employees to stay connected in a remote work setting. Remember, regardless of location, you are still part of a team.