**Workplace wellness: let’s beat burnout**

You probably know the term “work-life balance”. But what does this really mean? And, more importantly, are you achieving it?

Work-life balance is just that – a balance between work activities and your personal life. This balance is important for overall health, happiness and productivity. And while this may sound simple, properly managing and prioritising your time and energy across these two worlds can be a challenge.

*... Especially in today’s hybrid work-from-home environment where the two worlds are harder to separate.*

Get it right and you can find harmony between your professional responsibilities and personal interests like family time, social events and hobbies. Get it wrong and you could find yourself doing too little at work and underperforming or doing too much at work and burning out.

**Signs of burnout**

Burnout is classified as an occupational event rather than a medical condition and is defined by the World Health Organization as “a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed[[1]](#footnote-1).”

According to Dr Seranne Motilal, Senior Health Insurance Specialist at Vitality Global, research suggests that burnout is a 3-component event made up by[[2]](#footnote-2):

* **Exhaustion:** physical, cognitive and emotional fatigue that affects your ability to work effectively and feel positive about that work
* **Cynicism:** a sense of detachment from work which is often coupled with negative emotions
* **Inefficiency:** feelings of incompetence and a lack of achievement and productivity

If left unmanaged, burnout can lead to serious health issues including excessive stress, insomnia, alcohol or substance abuse, heart disease, high blood pressure and even Type 2 diabetes.

**How to prevent burnout**

One of the biggest obstacles when it comes to burnout is the stigma that surrounds it. People often feel ashamed for asking for help, slowing down or taking a break. You may have experienced this yourself, and felt that you needed to be a ‘hero’ in the workplace rather than put your own health needs first.

But, this is exactly what needs to happen for a more successful and sustainable work-life balance.

Everyone’s experience with burnout is unique, so it’s important to find what works for you. We recommend trying these strategies:

1. **Seek support**: talk to friends, family, colleagues or professionals about your feelings and concerns – a solid support system can help reduce stress.
2. **Set boundaries:** stick to a routine and establish clear boundaries between work and personal life that you stick to – avoid working late and over weekends.
3. **Prioritise your mental health:** make time for the things that matter to you – like spending time with loved ones, getting quality sleep, hobbies and practising mindfulness.
4. **Build in breaks:** include short breaks in your day to rest and recharge – avoid long stretches of work.
5. **Exercise:** regular physical activity can boost your mood and reduce stress – even short bursts throughout the day are effective.

*For more information about Vitality’s evidence-based approach that encourages and rewards members for healthier living, visit the*[*Vitality Global*](https://www.vitalityglobal.com/)*website.*

1. WHO. Burn-out an ‘occupational phenomenon’. [Link](https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. #  National Library of Medicine. Understanding the burnout experience: recent research and its implications for psychiatry. [Link](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4911781/)

 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)