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RECOGNIZING A BURN-OUT

More than 60 symptoms



Why this e-book?

We've seen a great number of burnout symptoms over the years we've been coaching and guiding people with burnouts.

We noticed that many people have doubts about whether they are burned out, or perhaps believe something else might be going on (such as physical issues).

We see the number of burned out people strongly increase, which is why we want to shed light on this condition.

With this e-book we try to achieve two major goals:

1. Show people they're not the only ones with certain complaints. We notice this is a common belief among people suffering from a burnout.
2. We want to timely warn people once they (start to) recognise certain complaints. Prevention is better than cure, and this is especially the case in burnouts. A major burnout could easily ruin two years of someone's pleasure in life, not even including the long road towards full recovery.

Nice to meet you!

My name is Ruud Meulenberg. Owner of two companies. Meulenberg Training and Coaching is renowned on the Dutch market. Over the past five years I have - together with my team of over 35 coaches - helped thousands of people struggling with stress and burnouts.



Rest assured, we have the experience and expertise to help you with these problems.

No false promises, no fuss. A pragmatic and clear view on stress, burnout and personal development.

My personal story

I was 19 years old when I was struck by a burnout. Two studies, working twenty hours a week, playing sports at a national level, a protein intolerance (physical issue) and a will to always keep going and be there for people saw me ending up in the hospital with heart problems and limb numbness.

The **road to recovery** took me two years, and the fear of falling sick again still remains. These two years were filled with **falling, getting back up, falling very hard again**, and so on. But my landings got increasingly softer and I started to understand everything wasn't going the way I wanted it to.

I hope this e-book will help you a lot. You don't have to suffer from every symptom in order to suffer from a burnout. The list is a summary of the symptoms we've seen in our clients. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Ruud Meulenberg

What is a burn-out?

Burnout is a condition in which hormones eventually take control over the body in order to recover. The body reacts and the mind experiences the consequences: There are many symptoms that point towards burnout. We have listed and written them out for you.

Physical and mental symptoms

Burnout can be divided into psychological symptoms and physical symptoms:

Mental Burnout Symptoms

You may suffer from mental/psychological symptoms in the run-up to burnout. These are difficulties that are not always noticeable at first, but they can cause serious problems. You can experience symptoms such as memory problems, feeling lethargic, depression, being emotional, crying or getting angry quickly.

They are simply signals that the energy limit has been reached. Your system can no longer keep up with certain things because you have wasted too much energy in many other situations. Mental struggles easily lead to a vicious circle of problems..

Memory loss, for example, leads to uncertainty. Being listless or falling back into addictions such as eating or drinking do you no good when it comes to your self-confidence. So you end up going round in a negative vicious circle if you are not careful. Make sure that you seek professional help in good time. Simply to prevent things from getting worse.

Physical Symptoms of Burnout

Burnout can also be recognised in physical symptoms. An important indicator is fatigue. Your energy tank is simply empty or practically empty. When you keep reaching and exceeding your limit, this also manifests itself in symptoms such as headaches, muscle aches, neck pain and other discomforts.

Tiredness also makes you more susceptible to illnesses such as flu and colds. After all, your immune system is less resilient.



Blurred vision

When you have to deal with excessive stress your vision may become blurry. Often this starts with subtle signals. Over time, however, this can lead to more serious problems in which you only notice the differences between light and dark.

Driving a car and other things are then no longer possible. In addition to this, blurred vision also leads to headaches and fatigue for example. By the way, blurred vision occurs because your eyes extremely are tired.

Adrenal Fatigue

Adrenal glands are small organs that lie on top of the kidneys. These adrenal glands have an important task. They protect you when difficult and stressful situations arise. More specifically, the adrenal glands have an important function:

- ✓ Regulating the stress reaction "fight or flight"
- ✓ Regulating your blood sugar level
- ✓ Disease and inflammation control
- ✓ Regulating the balance between water and salt in your body
- ✓ Production of testosterone and oestrogen's



Adrenal fatigue is caused by having to release too much cortisol for a long period of time due to: stress, anger, fear, etc.

Adrenal gland insufficiency occurs because stress is continuously present.

No control over your own body

A characteristic symptom of burnout is having the feeling that you are no longer in control of your body. Your body has a reaction and you can hardly understand why.

Ghost images like: 'I have a tumour', 'it's not possible that stress is doing this to my body', 'there is really something wrong with me', often loom up when someone is just burned out.

Hypochondria is very common. It's not surprising: the body has taken over control because it has become more and more exhausted. In fact, it's a survival strategy to stay alive.

Constant fatigue/feeling overtired

The fatigue you feel with burnout cannot be explained to people who have never been burned out. The feeling that you are extremely tired, your supplies are empty, you have completely lost your strength and your energy. The feeling is inexplicable.

You may even be ashamed of your symptoms. At first you could do everything and now almost as if nothing works anymore and you have to ask for help from your surrounding circle of friends to get things finished. The people surrounding you think it's weird: You look healthy and yet you don't do anything. You already notice the constant fatigue when you get up in the morning: feeling that you have run a marathon when you wake up.

The realisation that you still have to run a marathon throughout the day makes you feel despondent. Maybe you have children, work, your own company, etc., which makes you feel you have to carry on. The fatigue ensures that nothing is fun anymore and that everything takes a huge amount of effort.

Total exhaustion

The feeling of total exhaustion is seen in people suffering from severe burnout. One result can be that people, exhausted, collapse in the street and lie there for up to an hour not being able to do anything at all.

People don't want to climb stairs anymore, the supermarket is too crazy and having a cup of tea in town is hardly attractive. Usually, total exhaustion is accompanied by suicidal feelings, which is understandable.

The degree of exhaustion differs in burnouts and depending on the type of burnout. For one person the burnout manifests itself in physical ways, for another, it is psychological and mental difficulties.



The loss of limb function

Also, the body can react in very strange ways to total exhaustion. For example, limbs may start to function less or stop functioning completely. Also examples that pain is no longer present have been recorded.

Personally, when I was 19, I was pushed until I burned out. Hospitalised and closely monitored because of heart problems and loss of limb function (legs), my body was forced to recover.



Accepting burn-out

Perhaps, the most difficult thing with burnout is accepting the current situation.

A lot of people have trouble accepting that it's just not going to work out for a while. It is precisely the acceptance of burnout that ensures the beginning of the process to recovery.

Wanting to go on, despite all the physical and psychological complaints that burnout entails, is common. It's also a common trait in people who are suffering from burnout. It is the very strongest who fall the furthest.

People who are talented, who can do a lot, people who have just got too much on their plate. All in all, they just took too much on. Many other people would have given up before them because of physical symptoms and pain.

To transition from the 'overactive mode' to a mode characterised by rest and recovery is very difficult for many people with burnout to accept.

Puffiness under the eyes

Although burnout is often difficult to see from the outside (you'd better break a leg), you often see solid, dark bags under the eyes.

Often, the extent of how dark and deep the bags have become is only noticeable once someone compares photos from (for example) a year ago.

Not only are they striking, but also the grey, pale skin colour is.



Making unnecessary mistakes

Pushed to exhaustion when you're burned out, a lack of concentration and a head full of cotton wool can also be the cause of many stupid mistakes. Errors you wouldn't have made if you had taken the time to think things through.



Of course, all those little mistakes can quickly lead to frustration. You don't have the time you need to spend on solving them, let alone the energy and attention to devote to solving them.

You're upset: you don't have the energy, but your moral values still make you feel obliged to solve them, even though it's impossible for you to do.



Shame

As crazy as it sounds: many people are ashamed of burning out, despite a total feeling of exhaustion.

Shame also comes from comparing ourselves to others, or to our environment and our standards of how happy or successful we should be. What plays an important role in shame is the fact that people have high expectations of themselves and are afraid to show the vulnerable side.

People who are subject to burnouts especially, always feel (or have had the feeling) that they have to be strong, serve society and not show weakness. It's remarkable how few people want to tell their immediate family and social circle that they are burning out.

Often only a few people know and admit that 'things haven't been going so well lately'.

Not being able to enjoy oneself

We see a lot of people who have lost their enjoyment over the years. Life's worries ensure that people continue to do everything that needs to be done.

They can't see the big picture anymore. The time and space for enjoyment is no longer a priority.

A direct consequence is an overcrowded mind where the beautiful things no longer have the space to exist. A 'hunting attitude' describes people with

burnout. Everything has to be dealt with, and people hunt these achievements down until this is actually the case.

This quickly creates a 'fire-extinguishing behaviour' in which all sorts of things are chased behind the scenes, out of the way, and they only arise on the day itself. This takes a lot of energy.

Conscious enjoyment specifically ensures a solid mental recovery. Absolutely necessary when recovering from burnout!

Can we help you?



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Feeling depressed

One of the symptoms associated with burnouts are depressive feelings. It is not unusual that someone who's suffering from burnout is affected by depressive feelings.

Often the shutting down phase is quite sudden. When before you used to be able to give as much as you could, suddenly nothing works at all. You would prefer to crawl into your bed. The good will is there, but it's just impossible, because the contrast between the period before burnout and becoming ill is very noticeable. Depressive feelings quickly arise.

Many of these feelings have been expressed:

- ✓ What's the matter with me?
- ✓ The feeling of not being worth anything anymore
- ✓ Feeling like you're worth a lot less than anyone else
- ✓ The fear of dying
- ✓ Being afraid that you'll never overcome burnout
- ✓ What am I going to do with the rest of my life?

The depressive feelings are often linked to the physical discomfort. As physical recovery improves more and more, many depressed feelings will disappear. Still, a burnout can turn into (permanent) depression.

That is why it is good to pay much attention to your feelings and let yourself be coached when you are suffering and feeling depressed.



Suicidal thoughts

Many people who burnout have a high performance drive. Whether this is fed by insecurity, low self-esteem, or that someone simply sets the bar very high. A large part of the self-esteem is linked to the performance and level that a person achieves.

The social circle and the person him/herself acknowledge and appreciate their efforts because of all the work they do. This gives you a good feeling, it shows everyone what you can do and it makes you who you are. You put yourself on stage through all your hard work and you enjoy the appreciation that you get from it.

When burnout happens, the life-line to this appreciation is roughly cut. When the body takes over control and you are burned out, the hormonal system is completely disrupted.

This creates emotions that you normally do not experience. Suddenly you experience feelings, of which it seems, are not your own and you would prefer to hide in a corner, waiting for something to give without even knowing what it is.



The huge gap between your past performance and your present state of mind, along with a body that is completely disrupted, can sometimes cause suicidal thoughts.

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- ✓ Available day and night

Discover

Lots of sweating

It's as if you can sweat from any part of your body, for any reason. You're already sweating just from the thought of something happening. In the doctor's waiting room, when you're in bed, at a big party, etc.

With a bit of tension it gushes out of your body. Also a clammy feeling (your back for example) from the sweat is common with burnout. The sweating can be caused by two things : first of all the body is 'exhausted' and everything takes so much effort, as if you were running a marathon.

Secondly, the thought that causes stress is so disturbing that it makes you sweat. You can sweat a lot in these areas of the body :

- ✓ Back
- ✓ Armpits
- ✓ Forehead
- ✓ Belly



Don't feel like doing anything anymore

You don't feel like doing anything anymore (depressed): 'I can't do it anymore' has been heard a lot. You would preferably crawl into your bed, or lie on the couch watching TV.

It's as if the power you used to have is gone. For ages, you could do and achieve anything and suddenly you just don't have it in you anymore. First there was the thought, and at first, you manage to 'make sense of it', but now your body wants to stop and it just doesn't work anymore.

You pity yourself, you see yourself as someone that does nothing and performs poorly. It feels as if all the meaning to life has been pulled out of your body and mind.

Not wanting anything anymore is a sign that your mind and your body both need a rest.

Poor performance

You don't want to perform once you've burned out. These performances apply both mentally and psychologically as well as physically. You once put all your efforts into something, but it simply does not work anymore.

There are no results coming out of your hard work, so you are inclined to step it up a bit, which is all the more unacceptable during burn out. Also physically, you notice a decline. Running around like you were used to doing is suddenly difficult.

Heavy legs, rapid acidification and a mind that simply seems to want to resist are common complaints when someone gets to breaking point. When someone is burned out, even the smallest achievements are no longer possible.

Especially shopping in the supermarket, a birthday or a wedding and crowds of people cost you quite a lot of effort and energy. Afterwards, you have the feeling that you are completely empty.

Poor recovery

Once burned out, the body recovers very badly. From a simple walk, you can suffer from muscular pain and tired legs for up to three days. Alcohol is poorly processed by the body and a simple glass of beer or wine can have a strong impact.

Also, recovering from flus/colds and physical discomforts is more difficult. If you have the energy to do some sport, this is often characterised by strong, prolonged muscular aches and pains. The recovery takes much longer than usual.



Good days and bad days

Recovering from burnout has its ups and downs. At the beginning of a burnout, some days are worse than others and you are often happy that the day is over without having had any panic attacks or sweating profusely.

Recovery is very frustrating when the body has energy one day and is completely empty of energy the next.

This is particularly frustrating in a social environment. Explaining that you can do something one day but nothing the next is very difficult. You can hardly make arrangements or plan ahead. You can only live through these moments (unfortunately).

As the burnout phase progresses, the good days increase, but the irritating ones remain. Frustrating 'off days' during which, it seems, you have start the entire recovery process all over again.

Irritated skin/Eczema

In the event of burnout, you can observe high cortisol levels in the blood. Prolonged high cortisol levels are harmful to health. It pushes the body to exhaustion, empties your energy reserves and causes physical deterioration.

As a result, we are much more likely to notice and suffer from inflammation because our bodies cortisol response is no longer effective.

People with a sensitive skin type are prone to eczema during burnout. It is just that extra drop that makes the glass overflow. Stress also often leads to sleepless nights. It is precisely at night that your skin recovers.

Poorly functioning immune system

The immune system has two important tasks. Firstly, it defends your body against invaders such as viruses, bacteria, fungi, etc. Secondly, it takes care of cleaning up and repairing not only your body, but also your brain.

Cortisol regulates and suppresses inflammation in the body. These inflammations are meant to clean up the mess. However the body remains in a fight or flight mode, and not in recovery mode.

Prof. Dr. Cobi Heijnen, professor of psychoneuroimmunology (University of Utrecht):

“We do know that stress influences our body, but we do not realise that when we get excited, frightened, scared or angry, almost all cells in our body undergo a change.

We notice that the heart beats faster, we get warm, but we don't notice that cells of the immune system also react with changes in their activity'."

Problematic sleep patterns

Problematic sleep patterns can be divided into three types:

- ✓ Not falling asleep
- ✓ Sleeping badly
- ✓ Waking up early

Not falling asleep:

Not being able to fall asleep is very strange because your body is very tired, and it seems like you could sleep all night long. Nothing could be further from the truth: you almost fall over as a result of the fatigue, but when your head hits the pillow, it seems as if a herd of hamsters has been released into your head and that they're going to keep all of the cogs running.

The result? You don't want to fall asleep. The cause is mainly the amount of cortisol still present in the body, this amount should actually be at its lowest at the end of the day. The body is in an active 'survival' mode in which sleep is not a primary need.

Het lijf staat in een actieve 'overleef' stand waarbij slapen niet een eerste behoefte is.



Not sleeping through:

Another possibility is that falling asleep can be achieved, but not sleeping through the night. In the middle of the night you wake up and again, all the cogs in your head start to turn.

After that, sleeping soundly again is not an option: your body is in an active mode. Due to the amount of cortisol in your body, a peak in a 'sleep phase' has caused you to wake up.



Waking up early:

You feel like you could sleep for a few days, yet you wake up very early. The cortisol in the body ensures that you are alert again very early. When you wake up early, you also feel like your body is in overdrive. The body is getting ready for a new day full of activity, but unfortunately the necessary physical energy is not there to achieve this.

Oversleeping

There are also situations in which someone in burnout phase sleeps a lot. The body is 'exhausted' and the body wants to recover. Recovering through sleep is a very good way to regain energy. This energy will help you recover from burnout.

A lot of sleep during burnout is often only possible when someone has accepted their current situation and is no longer in 'fighting mode'. The body comes to rest and is able to recover. The production of cortisol is lowered in this way, which ensures a good night's sleep as well as a long night's sleep.



Finding it difficult to get out of bed

Many people suffering from burnout have trouble getting out of bed in the morning.

Soon the sleeping schedule is modified and the person doesn't get out of bed until around noon. The feeling that you're already exhausted in the morning, that your body has run a marathon, makes you get up late.

Once you finally get up, it certainly doesn't feel good at all and it takes a lot of effort to get your body moving.

Deteriorated physical condition

Everything requires more effort on your behalf. At the top of the stairs you're suddenly tired and exhausted.

You don't want to run and you don't feel like making the effort anymore. You don't want to play sports either. It's as if you can't put one leg in front of the other, your breathing is disturbed and rapid, you can't perform.

A reduced physical condition often makes you want to make an extra effort to get back to your previous level. This often results in extra strain and exhaustion.

Feeling hasty



Burnout symptoms are often recognisable by a hasty feeling. The feeling that you are out of control and that you simply can't stop. You have to keep going, you're in the boat and you just can't stop thinking and acting. It seems as if literally collapsing is the only way to stop.

Just like the image that you can only deal with a runaway horse by jumping off it, to save your feeble body. If you have this feeling, you can recognise it through a huge maelstrom of thoughts, tense muscles, a restless belly and tingling / trembling fingers and toes.

Adrenaline junkie

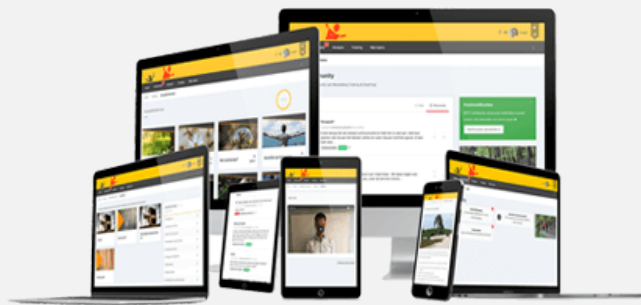
Some people with burnout are constantly looking for new stimuli, new sources of stress. The adrenaline and cortisol that are released provide a temporary revival in energy.

However, this is a very self-destructive way of creating energy. Eventually these hormones will continue to deplete, resulting in worsening the state of burnout. People who are constantly looking for new stimuli to regain energy are called 'adrenaline junkies': addicted to the kick that adrenaline gives them.

Online Course

Recovering from a burnout

In this package we bundled all strong points from
our 1-on-1 coaching.



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Colds / laryngitis / bronchitis

Many burnouts start with a cold / laryngitis / bronchitis that doesn't seem to go away.

After weeks of having a cold, a visit to the doctor often follows, who then prescribes antibiotics.

More often than not, a course of antibiotics is just the push needed to get you completely physically exhausted. Many remedies do not work, or not enough.

This is because the antibiotics support the physical recovery capacity.

Unfortunately, the recovery capacity is exhausted, and even a supportive drug can't help it recover.

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Having flu-like symptoms (often repeatedly)

People with (an approaching) burnout often have flu-like symptoms. Not so surprising of course: the resistance and strength is gone. In terms of energy, the body has hit the bottom and has insufficient strength to control intruders.

You realise this when you see that if someone is sick, you catch it immediately. No intruder is kept out and every flu that is circulating affects you too. Furthermore, mentally, you can't control a bad flu, so that flu quickly creates negative feelings.

Headache/migraine

Many recurrent headaches/migraines herald an approaching burnout (combined with other discomforts). Often migraines stem from muscle tension in the neck and back, or from hormonal fluctuations. Both originate in a stressful situation.

Stress causes muscle tension in the neck and back, causing a migraine. Stress also causes hormonal fluctuations. Medication often does little to help with tension-related headaches or migraines.

A better remedy is a healthy lifestyle in which stress is strongly reduced. Therefore in this case : a healthy recovery from burnout.



Tinnitus

A very common symptom of tinnitus is that you hear a sound that comes from within and not from outside. The environment cannot perceive this sound either.

Several kinds of sounds are heard: noises, whistling, squeaking, etc.

If you are curious about the sounds a person hears with tinnitus, you can listen to them on the Dutch Society for the Hearing Impaired website. The sounds that are heard can also differ in strength, regularity and pulsation.



Sometimes it's loud, sometimes soft and quiet, sometimes monotonous, sometimes it goes and sometimes it continues for a very long period of time.

This research shows that tinnitus occurs 2.5 times more often in people who have high stress levels. Stress also aggravates tinnitus in people who already suffer from tinnitus.

Worry

Thinking many worrying thoughts is characteristic for burnouts. Worrying about everything. Soberly you realise that dwelling over these things gets you nowhere, but we often meet people who worry about the small things and then blow them out of proportion.

An abdominal pain becomes a tumour, itching in the toes becomes a need for an amputation and a troublesome child soon becomes a project for youth care and foster family placement.

Seeing dangers everywhere on the road is typical for burnout. It is no longer possible to maintain a healthy distance with the worry, to the point that you are overly emotional and can no longer face reality. Where at first you seemed to be the king/queen of putting things into perspective, now you simply worry about everything.

Indifference

A tendency to distance oneself from everything, from the things that used to be very important. An indifferent attitude is a well-known symptom of burnout. You are suddenly indifferent when thinking about your work, your family, your hobbies, your sport, etc. 'Whatever may catch my interest/attention', you often hear.

Yet this indifference is unstable. It is often alternated with periods of fear and obsessive restlessness. Being indifferent or detached is a way to create more distance between things and yourself because the hard, motivating work mode simply doesn't function anymore. Many people with burnout start by doubting themselves as a result of this indifference because their self-image becomes very shaky.

They don't feel like themselves !

Moreover, the social environment begins to look at you strangely (judge you) when you have suddenly become a distant, indifferent person as opposed to an engaged, passionate colleague.

Being cynical/Cynicism

People with burnout can be very cynical. Being cynical leads us to make annoying/unkind remarks, to distrust other people. We do not trust another person's actions or, on the contrary, we distance and detach ourselves from our own actions.

This behaviour is often expressed by an uninterested attitude. The person no longer cares. The reality, however, is that the person is simply no longer capable of meeting their own expectations.



Fear of failure

Many people associate the fear of failure to the causes and symptoms of burnout. Fear of failure is the fear of ruining something that is important to you. You doubt yourself, your own abilities. Many people with burnout are seen as high performers and are very sociable and involved in whatever they do. This is often nourished by high morale.

This high morale often results in sky-high expectations of one's own performance. Once you have burned out, you are no longer able to live up to these (unreasonably) high expectations. Yet, until now, this always made you feel good about yourself. You were heard and seen thanks to everything that you did. This strengthens the feeling of not doing well enough and you force yourself to work harder and do it well anyway.

This is even more exhausting and is not constructive when recovering from burnout.

Anxiety

Many people with burnout suffer from anxiety. Sometimes the anxiety is so strong that even anxiety attacks occur. A huge windmill of thoughts is set in motion which raises questions like:

- ✓ Will I ever get better?
- ✓ Will I ever be able to work again?
- ✓ Will I always be the person I am now?
- ✓ Who am I now? And what can I do to change?
- ✓ What's happening to my body?

Fear has a number of phases: When you become ill, the fear is far greater because the body suddenly starts to protest and it often seems as if there are terrible physical changes going on. It is always good to have physical symptoms medically examined.

But when there are no concrete results from medical examinations, there is a big chance that stress/ burnout is the culprit. During a burnout there is often the fear that you will never get better. The recovery seems to be such a terrible time, that the light at the end of the tunnel never seems to be in sight. It's also possible that in the years after burnout recovery, discomforts still regularly arise. "Will I never get rid of these feelings"?

You hear that a lot. The fear of never getting better, or never recovering from burnout completely, is present in a lot of burnout patients.

Fear of being alone

Some people with burnout are afraid to be alone. Afraid something will happen when they're home alone, for example.

Afraid that they can't take care of the children anymore, or afraid that they'll faint and no one will find them. As a results, it feels safer to have someone around who can keep an eye on them all the time. Someone who can call a doctor when something really bad happens

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Afraid of being seriously ill

Many people with a severe burnout are afraid that they will become seriously ill. This is understandable!

During our many conversations we have seen several worrisome complaints that resembled serious illnesses: Extremely bloated abdomen, swelling in the chest, chest pain, loss of limb function, eczema that takes on a bizarre form, etc.

The reaction we then hear, is that it seems almost impossible for stress/ burnout to cause these kinds of symptoms. We always encourage a thorough medical examination and for someone to be closely monitored.



Usually no serious physical problems are discovered during these examinations, which increases the chance that stress/ burnout is the culprit. Therefore, we see many of these symptoms disappear as people recover from burnout. It's good to know that burnout often manifests itself through the weakest part of someone's body.

For someone it is a skin problem, for another their abdomen, for another their muscles and for yet another, their back.

Fear of being physically active

Physical activity often equals fatigue in people's minds. When you are burned out, it especially seems unwise to become physically active.

But being physically, moderately active leads to the production of endorphins which reduces the predatory hormone cortisol. Moving in a smart, sensible way will contribute very positively to the recovery from burnout.

Depending on the severity of the burnout, it is advisable to start walking, followed by jogging. For more information you can watch the video below.

Panic attacks

Panic attacks are included in the symptoms of burnout. Remarkably, many people are diagnosed with a panic disorder, when the panic attacks are actually a result of burnout.

Panic attacks are incredibly discomfoting and make someone who has a panic attack incredibly insecure about their own body.

Confidence in one's own body, and in being able, can slowly disintegrate, due to panic attacks. The unbridled fear that turns into panic does not help the recovery, but rather causes deterioration.

Medication is quickly taken to suppress the panic attacks. Often 'the old feeling' is a trigger for a panic attack to come on. 'There I go again' you think, and the panic attack actually occurs.

Fortunately as we recover from burnout, the number of panic attacks drops until they disappear and, with the right guidance, they even stop completely.

Having difficulty driving

Many people have trouble driving when they are suffering from burnout. This is often caused by fear and panic attacks.

It's logical: a panic attack behind the wheel creates very dangerous situations for both the driver and others. Difficulties when driving are also often caused by the fact that the overcrowded mind is unable to keep up with the speed.



Although there has been no conclusive investigation into this, there is a good chance that the need to stay in control and keep on top will lead to the panic attacks.

It is advisable that, if you have a lot of trouble driving, you drive little, or no at all, during the burnout and start driving again when you are fit to do so.

Simply to prevent stressful (and in a later stage incriminating) situations.

Uncertainty

Your emotional and physical difficulties stop you from carrying out your normal routine. It makes you insecure because you can't react in the way you normally do.

Feeling as if your body has abandoned you also makes you insecure. The body does not react in the way that you are used to. In addition, you often fall into a particular pattern of behaviour that makes you socially desirable. This did not just happen over night.

You probably didn't feel confident in yourself and practiced compensating social behaviours in order to be seen, heard and appreciated.

When suffering from burnout you are no longer able to show socially desirable behaviour and you are thrown back to being yourself, your true self. Continuous adaptation to other people's wishes and desires is characteristic in the preliminary phase of burnout. It is not strange that insecurity is a much discussed topic in coaching.

Can we help you?



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Crying / not being able to stop crying

A common symptom of burnout are crying episodes. Especially in the beginning, when someone has just burned out, crying episodes occur regularly.

The body comes to rest, the emotions take over and the tears are no longer controllable.

There doesn't have to be an immediately apparent reason for someone to start crying. Sometimes the tears just flow and you have no reason / no power to stop them.

The reasons can also vary. Sometimes an emotional advert, a sweet reaction of a child, or a dog's crazy mood can make you tear up again. People find it hard to recognise themselves in the many crying episodes and doubt sometimes arises when it is no longer possible to stop crying.

Usually the crying fits stop after burnout has been recognised and accepted



Feeling emotionally numb

Contrary to the crying fits described above, there are also people who are just numb and feel no emotions at all.

The body has entered a survival mode in which emotions are tucked away. They are simply not important for survival.

Not being able to concentrate

Concentration problems are often a consequence of a shortage of BDNF. BDNF is the abbreviation of Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor. This substance plays a crucial role in recovery processes in the brain, especially in the hippocampus. You could compare the effect of this substance on the brain with what 'Pokon' does for flowers and plants.

Two important factors of chronic stress are:

- ✓ Problems concentrating
- ✓ Short-term memory problems.

Both of these symptoms are the result of changes in your brain that take place when you have been under stress for a long time and have not been able to relax enough during this stressful time. These changes in the brain can even be visible when undergoing a scan, especially in the hippocampus.

This part of your brain is responsible for processing information, among other things.

In the event of prolonged stress, the hippocampus shrinks under the influence of the stress hormone cortisol (the ability to concentrate deteriorates).

Cortisol is a neurotoxic substance, which is harmful to the brain. The nerve endings of brain cells retract and neurones of the hippocampus also simply die when they are exposed to high levels of cortisol in the blood for a prolonged period of time.

Easily irritated/annoyed

It seems like everyone deliberately tries to irritate you when you're burned out. It also seems as if all stimuli from the outside are having a neighbourly quarrel:

- ✓ the boring neighbour,
- ✓ a screaming child,
- ✓ an elderly man at the checkout who can't find his change or a simply a squeaky,
- ✓ annoying noise in the neighbours garden.

It seems as if everything gets on your nerves and as if you can suddenly hear every detail. Your head is overflowing with everything that happens and you are annoyed by all those little things put together.



The strange thing is: at first you could deal with quite a lot, but now it seems as if you get annoyed by everything far too quickly. That irritation soon turns into anger.

A short temper. Anger

Anger has a lot to do with defining boundaries. Setting and respecting boundaries is very difficult. Sometimes you feel irritated, but you can't see that this has something to do with crossing a boundary. So being aware of boundaries is very important. People with burnout often respect few boundaries, including those of anger. Feeling irritated is the first manifestation of anger.

It is worth knowing what your underlying needs or desires are. If this gets in the way, you quickly feel irritated, which can grow into annoyance. From feeling annoyed you slip into anger, to not being able to control your temper.

Resisting against anger is increasingly hard, you feel a growing pressure, to the point that you 'explode'. If you are burned out and very tired after doing (or having to do) too much for too long, you are physically, mentally and emotionally empty. The stress system is working overtime!



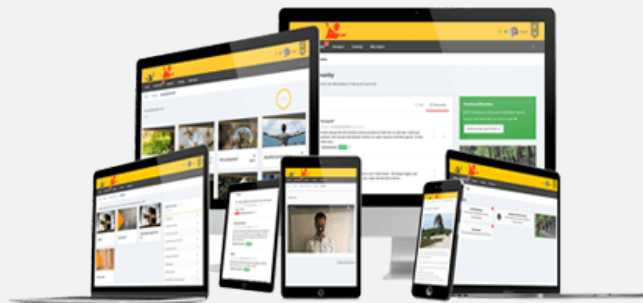
You will survive and have to, and it is important that you stay very alert, otherwise there will be certain risks for your health. This is why you experience a lot of things, for example, people or work, that come at you as negatives. Your system thinks that it is better to react to a threat once strongly than too weakly!

This sharpness of your stress system makes you feel threatened sooner than usual and, as a reaction to that, you can also lose your temper sooner in order to fight for survival. In addition, your stress system works physically hard. Your stress/reaction ratio is a bit lower than usual in the event of an emergency, at least that's what the stress system thinks. Your reactions are more 'raw', less subtle, angrier.

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More aggressive/quick aggression

Irritation and a short temper turn into aggression when you have been fighting for too long against anger. All the hormones in the body accumulate and by becoming angry the hormones are released and other hormones are created which makes you feel calm again for a while. It is only a solution for the short term, because it is a vicious, negative circle.

Many people are ashamed of their aggression. We spoke to a man who, during his burnout, slammed his caravan door shut too hard because he had hurt himself badly in the caravan. Unfortunately, the result was that the caravan has to be taken to be demolished.



The man was not aggressive at all before (and after) his burnout. The hormones in his body, disrupted by burnout, caused the uncontrollable anger/aggression.

An overcrowded mind

An overcrowded head is often caused by worrying about everything you still have to do: taking care of children and elderly parents, the groceries, and a lot of simple things you just don't know how to fit in to your schedule.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to cancel these activities, which puts you in a hard position: on the one hand you want to get some rest by getting it done and out of the way, on the other hand your body screams that it just can't do it!

Even if you do very little as a result of your burnout, it is quite possible to have an overcrowded, foggy head which means you can't get things straight. No matter how frustrating it is, the fog doesn't go away by doing less. The overcrowded mind often causes memory problems and forgetfulness:

Memory problems/ forgetfulness

Forgetfulness is common in burnout. The head is overflowing with thoughts when you're burned out. Many people complain about 'a foggy head' or a 'head full of cotton wool'.

The overcrowded head with all the positive and negative thoughts doesn't allow any headspace anymore. A direct consequence is that you forget things a lot.

You can be in the supermarket and be completely lost, thus, having no idea of what you had to get in the first place.

Of course it can be overcome with a good shopping list, but that doesn't take the annoying forgetfulness away. As you recover from burnout, the degree of being able to remember and absorb things increases again.

Wanting to recover as quickly as possible

Anyone with a burnout wants to recover as quickly as possible. Often, not one, not two, not even three helpers are enough to get rid of the symptoms as quickly as you would like to.

All kinds of interventions are used, counsellors are rounded up, psychologists and self-help books are consulted. Everything you need to recover. But it is the rest and the acceptance that will ensure that the body and ultimately, the mind, will recover. Wanting to recover at rocket speed is wanting to get out of the burnout the same way you went in.

You don't want that!

Indecision

It's as if you can't make choices when you're burned out. Not surprising when you consider that your whole body feels different than it did before. It's completely (hormonally) upside down with burnout.

There are also many doubts and questions about burnout: Who am I? And: what can I do?

A logical consequence of this is the indecisiveness. Your body often forces you to make bad, unsuitable choices at these moments. We often advise against radical choices during burnout.

Especially when this has a major impact on your work/life. First physical and mental recovery is the advice.

Lots of delaying / procrastinating behaviour

In the event of burnout, the body takes control over the recovery process. You can recognise this (as described above) in a total feeling of exhaustion and uselessness.

You just can't do anything anymore. Everything seems to be too much, causing you to postpone things that entail a lot of stress. Eventually all these things will accumulate and the stress will increase over time. Anyone who has suffered from burnout will recognise this: at that moment things simply don't work and the almost destructive method of 'putting your head in the sand' is the only solution.

Procrastination unfortunately often causes extra stress in the long run. More stress meaning extra exhaustion and fatigue. The advice is to ask the environment for help when you are putting too many things off and procrastinating too much.

Difficulty with social contact

Social contact sometimes causes 'emptiness moments', 'cold sweats' and panic. You probably don't experience it everywhere, or with everyone, but some people, or groups of people, really drain all the energy out of you.

This is often caused by the typical trait of wanting to please others in people who suffer with burnout. For years you've tried to please everyone and bent over backwards to do well and succeed (in the other person's eyes). In the end, this resulted in burnout because you crossed every boundary.



The moment you interact with people, you quickly fall back into old social habits during your burnout (trying to please). Your body recognises this and quickly pulls the emergency brake.

Your body wants to be and remain in control. By wanting to please others, you give the control over to the other person. During the road to recovery with a coach or a psychologist, this subject absolutely has to be explored! It is advisable to not avoid social contact during burnout, but rather to try and embrace social contact in your own unique way.

If this takes effort, shorten the amount of time spent in a social environment (but don't avoid them).

Mistrust

Mistrust is one of the symptoms of burnout because the world seems a lot darker during your burnout phase. During the years before your burnout you made everyone happy, worked hard and were ready for everyone/everything. More often than not you now realise that you're ill, you're on your own and no one is looking after you anymore.

Colleagues don't want to share their opinions or advice, and family and friends are disappointed. The mistrust in people grows, partly because you have no grip on them.

The confidence in your body's ability also fades. As described above, the body has taken over control and is therefore provoking quite a lot of changes. You no longer have control over your own body and that causes mistrust in your own physical ability, for the present moment and the future. We also see cases where people have been deceived by others and have had to fight for years to obtain the truth and justice.

Trust in people is often hard to find and therefore, the suspicion is much greater.

Feeling powerless

A powerless feeling arises in the event of burnout, both at the beginning, halfway through and at the end. At the beginning the mind haunts you with things that you can't control.

The of powerlessness and not having any, or little connection between body and head, frustrates you enormously. During the recovery process and the accompanying relapses, the doubt that things will ever turn out well again, regularly causes a feeling of powerlessness.

Even when a burnout lasts for a very long time (more than 1.5 years), people often feel powerless. This is not surprising because it often seems as if there is nothing you can do about the recovery process. The danger then lurks, you become too cautious, afraid to relapse again.

Change of behaviour

Fatigue, hormonal fluctuations, total exhaustion, depressive feelings, fear and everything that happens in your body causes you to (temporarily) behave differently.

It may well be that you don't recognise yourself at all for a while. The contrast is often radical : from busy bee to greenhouse plant. In addition to that, the body has indicated that the previous behavioural habits are no longer possible.

During a burnout phase you are really thrown off course completely.

So a change in behaviour can be necessary to find your way out of burnout and not stay in this state forever.

An important indicator of behavioural change is the physical feeling and the belief in this possibility.

It is important, before working on your behaviour and searching for a lasting, sustainable behavioural change, to first make a full physical recovery.

Once physically recovered, it is highly recommended that you start dealing with questions such as: 'Who am I?' and 'What am I actually capable of' and 'What am I very good at?'

Feeling hasty/agitated

Many people can relate to feeling hasty or hectic as a symptom of burnout. The agitated feeling is caused by the amount of cortisol and adrenaline in your body.

The same hormones that ensure your survival in emergency situations. When you have been in a modern day emergency situation for too long (traffic jams/work pressure/ a family member's illness/concerns about finances, etc.),

there comes a point when you get the feeling that your body is going crazy. That it is almost impossible to slow down and that it always wants to carry on.

Bad sleep, restlessness, the feeling of not being able to relax (both physically and mentally) are characteristics of this agitated feeling.

More smoking

Smoking is often used to relax and to get rid of stress. By smoking you create endorphins that give you a brief feeling of well-being.

On the other hand, smoking is similar to a 'pit stop': taking a break from work, taking a breath of fresh air and concentrating on something other than your worries. But unfortunately smoking also causes stress.

Smoking reduces the physical condition of the heart, blood vessels, lungs, etc. A lower physical condition causes physical difficulties that, in turn, cause extra stress.



Drinking more (alcohol)

Drinking is often a habit that's used to forget your worries for a moment.

To relieve the stress for a while and to retreat into a rush of contentment. Alcohol is also used as a nightcap to get a good night's sleep.

That's why many people reach for alcohol when they are going through burnout.

Unfortunately, alcohol leads to reduced sleep, which ultimately increases the stress symptoms instead of briefly decreasing them. So control yourself when you are suffering from burnout.

It's best not to drink any alcohol at all during your burnout, because processing the alcohol in your body will also cost you much needed energy.



Drug use

A lower class kid: use drugs when you're burning out.

In the run-up to burnout, a lot of people use drugs. Not because they are addicted or because of the kick it gives, but simply to stay on their feet. Drugs then help to stay sharp, to succeed and to perform.

A remarkable group of users are young, often highly educated professionals who use Ecstasy (or any other drug). Ecstasy is expensive and therefore requires a solid income to provide for the habit.

Ultimately, it is never a solution, but only a means to get rid of stress for a while and to not be confronted with the daily worries. Drugs are therefore never a solution to problems, both before and during burnout. In the end you battle with your difficulties more than ever.

Sore muscles

Anyone with burnout has experienced sore muscles. The hormones cortisol and adrenaline require the body to remain in an active (fight/flight) state.

This requires sugars that are stored as glycogen in the muscles. For athletes this is very useful for performance, but in burnout and stress situations this is very exhausting.

The stocks are often not replenished (or converted into fat around the abdomen), there is too little movement during burnout because of fatigue, this means that fats and toxins are thus poorly disposed of. The consequence of painful muscles is that there is often even less movement and more fat and waste accumulate in the muscles.

Drinking properly, moderately intensive exercise and massages are good therapies to use during burnout.

Neck and shoulder pain

When under stress, a lot of people shrug and slouch their shoulders. Not so strange: a stressful situation calls for a fight or flight reaction. Stand in a 'boxing position' with your fists clenched in front of you.

You also pull your shoulders up and hide your head behind your fists (and between your shoulders?) The muscles pull together, around and over your head to protect it (in the tiger situation: it's better to lose an arm than your head).

The nerve channels run from the forehead to the neck, often causing neck and shoulder pains. You will notice this in pain between the shoulder blades/in your neck, just below your skull, the areas under your ears and in your shoulder joints.

All are points where the muscles are attached to the bones, they become overburdened and cause extra muscle tension. The result being that the muscles contract more than usual and your neck and shoulders become painful.

Tense jaws / grinding your teeth

The unnoticed clamping of the jaws is often caused by muscle tension. At night, this results in grinding teeth and jaw clenching. The next morning you wake up with a painful, tense jaw.

Clamping of the jaws often occurs when teeth become sensitive or gums even start to inflame. The annoying thing is that, as with a lot of muscle tension, it goes unnoticed.

Clamping of the jaws is underestimated: pieces of teeth can even break off by clamping your jaws.

Difficulty speaking

Some people find it difficult to speak as a result of burnout and of the stress it involves. Also, the tongue has many muscles.

These muscles strongly influence speech. You can notice this in very unclear, nonsense murmuring, which is not, or very difficult for the other person to understand. The person with burnout has to repeat his/her sentence, which causes all the more frustration.



Lower back pain

Lower back pain during burnout is often caused by muscle tension, combined with incorrect posture.

You often notice low back pain when you get out of the car or when you just get out of bed. It is an annoying pain, caused by the attachments just above your buttock muscles. It gives an annoying feeling of inertia / tired legs.

The pain can turn into a stabbing pain through which you no longer know how to sit/stand or lie down.

Abdominal pain/heavy stomach

Abdominal burnout pain is a symptom that is caused by stress. It causes the metabolism to come to a partial, or even complete standstill. During burnout, the body is surviving (fighting or fleeing) and uses the nutrients stored in muscles and organs. The burning of food in the stomach at that moment is equally unimportant. The body goes for self-preservation. This can be recognised by one of these characteristics:

- ✓ Lots of urination, or stools
- ✓ Belly fat
- ✓ Busy, rushed feeling
- ✓ Messy bowels
- ✓ Cramps



Roughly speaking, there are two types of problems due to the stress reaction in an abdomen:

- ✓ Food that is not digested
- ✓ Recovery after a stressful situation

After a stressful situation your body wants to recover. It then demands a lot of food in order to be able to send as much food as possible back to the muscles and organs. The result of this is that people gain weight due to stress or lose weight because the metabolism is very high.

High, accelerated heart rate

An abnormal, accelerated heartbeat is often caused by the fighting reaction during a stressful time. The body wants to flee. Away from danger, away from anything that hurts.

For that you need more oxygen in your muscles. Blood transports the oxygen to your muscles. To pump the blood around, the heart rate is increased. You often notice this by the pounding of your heart and sometimes by palpitations.

Slow heartbeat

This other symptom of burnout, a slow heartbeat, can be very noticeable. The rhythm becomes a slow, very palpable beating of the heart. Often this is a sign that the body is in a flight response. It is important to listen to every symptom concerning your heart.

It can be a sign that the body is giving up the fight. During burnout, always take problems with your heart seriously. A medical specialist is the only qualified person who can give an appropriate opinion about this.



High blood pressure

As described above, the heart is working hard to keep the body upright and to recover from a (prevent an approaching) burnout.

The heart pumps hard and this causes high arterial pressure resulting in high blood pressure.

A high blood pressure can be expressed by symptoms like: often having a nosebleed, extra fatigue, dizziness, headaches, blushing of the cheeks, etc.

High blood pressure often disappears when the patient is recovering from burnout.

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Hormonal fluctuations

When there is danger (e.g. tension, an emotional event, an accident) your body produces a lot of adrenaline to be able to fight or flee. Your body is on edge to ensure that it's able to react. In addition to adrenaline, it also rapidly produces another substance: endorphins.

This is a narcotic that makes you experience less mental or physical pain. Endorphins also help the recovery of wounds, and give you a happy, calm feeling. Endorphins can make you feel happy even when you are injured. Visualise the example of a mother with a broken leg comforting her baby after an accident.

Endorphins are known as the natural morphine. A pain reliever that makes you feel happier. During exercise (running / cycling etc.) endorphins are produced, which ensures that you often feel very calm and relaxed after exercise. Ultimately, this creates a natural predominance, which means that the body naturally produces less endorphins.

In the event of burnout, your body continues to produce endorphins until it is exhausted. This has a negative domino effect: An exhaustion that leads to a total stand still.

(L)even tussendoor: een inspirerende metafoor



There once was a lady who kept getting ahead of herself. After waking up she was already thinking about the afternoon. During her lunch she was already thinking about what to eat for dinner.

And when she finally went to bed at night she would worry about what the next day was going to bring.

Whenever she was walking outside, she was running so fast that people said: "That one is always in a rush, she forgets to live..." The woman also always talked to herself. She simply didn't have the time to talk to other people. That was also a part of her "disease". And do you know what she kept saying?

"I just have to... Let me just do this real quick..."

"I could just manage to..."



"Just" had become her filler word, and now also her nickname. There happened to be a doctor in the land, a very wise man.

When he saw the lady and heard her talk, he said; "Miss, you are very ill and I know what's wrong with you." "Just tell me doc, because I really have to..."

"See, there it is again", the doctor said, "You are always in such a rush, you're forgetting to live."

"Forgetting to live?" she asked.

"Yes, forgetting to live. You just have to live."

"Alright, doctor, I'll make sure to do that," she replied and she took off. But whenever she wanted to 'just' do something, she remembered the doctor's words.

"I just have to..., Let me just..., I could just do this right now..." Astonished, she fell back into her chair and realised she just needed to live.

And from that moment on, she no longer got ahead of herself. She became aware that her 'just' was getting in the way of her 'living'. She decided that from now on, she would LIVE and stay herself. She found her inner peace.

To everyone who rushes through life and needs to 'just' do all sorts of things;

Thinks of miss 'just', find the time and the peace to live.



Irregular respiration/fast breathing

The way you breathe can tell you a lot about the state you're in and the stress you're under right now. How does this work? When you see something or are worried about something, your body reacts to it. You notice this by an increase in your heart rate, blood pressure and an increase in breathing. You then breathe relatively quickly with your chest and with a much more rapid frequency.

This way of breathing (hyperventilation) is very useful when you have to take action (fighting or fleeing) because more oxygen has to be absorbed and more carbon dioxide has to be expelled. But if you also notice such breathing at rest, it is important to do something about it, to prevent this disordered breathing from becoming a structural energy leak. Breathing in is done by means of muscle power. Muscles expand your diaphragm and oxygen fills your lungs.

Breathing out, on the other hand, is based on relaxation. That means that it happens by itself, you don't have to use muscles for it.

When in the burnout phase, a symptom that can be seen is that there is too much muscle tension. This muscle tension ensures that the diaphragm that normally retracts on relaxation no longer does so. The result is a small lung capacity that is no longer able to use its total potential. You notice this by being short of breath, often breathing with your chest. The lack of oxygen then causes extra fatigue.



No appetite for sex/ weak libido

When a tiger jumps out of the bushes you have roughly three survival reactions: Fighting, fleeing or connecting (Carien Karsten).

This means that when you see a tiger ready to spring, you can run away very fast (or climb a tree) or, when there is someone with you who can run faster, or can fight better, he or she often offers to solve this problem for you.

One thing is for sure, when a tiger jumps out of the bushes, you definitely don't think about your sexual desires! Your body produces cortisol and adrenaline to work in harmony.

Cortisol and adrenaline are stress hormones that prepare you for action. Nothing wrong with that: this enables you to react appropriately to the situation. However, sex is a status of relaxation and surrender, not really something you think about when you have to fight or flee. Burnout is almost a permanent fight/flight situation which puts sexual feelings on a low priority (unimportant) level.

Feeling guilty

People with burnout often feel a great sense of guilt. For years the bar was set very high. The person knew how to get and reach everything and therefore felt appreciated by their social and work environment. This appreciation is often returned, creating a kind of dependency.

A high morale is often the basis: being a good employee, not wanting to walk away, achieving goals, maintaining success (also in the family). This leads that someone with (incipient) burnout symptoms to forget what he should actually do: take a rest and recover.

Feeling guilty becomes very unhealthy. For example, when you feel guilty for something you didn't do wrong, but still try to correct that mistake, or avoid it

from now on. Feeling guilty arises when people who are going through burnout think they should have done things differently or let things go, even though they simply can't do anymore than they already have.

Relationship problems / divorce

Relationship problems easily arise in stressful situations. Anyone who is burned out is not the most sociable person on earth. The intense fatigue makes you gloomy, cranky and depressed. You are not the most ideal partner during your burnout.

The over tiredness of one partner easily leads to the burnout of the other, due to the stress that occurs within the family. And a divorce seems imminent. That's when it comes down to this. How much love, energy, patience and understanding is left?

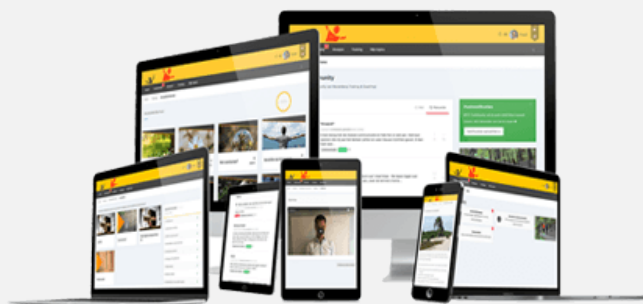


How easily do the partners give up the battle of who is suffering the most? How possible is it to be open minded and to really listen to each other? And above all, to hear what is being said. If it doesn't happen, a marriage can't be saved and what often began beautifully, ends in a divorce.

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Weight loss

If you are suffering from burnout, your body is working hard to recover. In the meantime, every effort uses a lot of energy, which means that you run out of supplies faster than usual.

Another reason for losing weight is that being in stressful situations the body keeps the muscles on edge, ready to take action. The muscles store energy in the form of glycogen. This is a form of energy that is rapidly available (in case of an emergency for example).

An exhausted supply of glycogen is characterised by a feeling of hunger, trembling and being rickety. For athletes this looks like a hunger knock. Muscles then feel unable and painful.

Because stress continuously stimulates the muscles to be ready for action, it eats away at the supplies. The result is simple: an enormous need for energy which, when not rested, leads to weight loss.

Constant hunger / overeating

The body's reserves are empty. There are three ways to recover: Eat well, move well, sleep well. When eating, the body asks for extra nutrition. Nutrition that the body needs to regain strength to win the battle for recovery.

Sometimes the body wants to overcompensate and wants to build up an extra supply to prepare for upcoming events and not end up in such an exhausted state again (see also 'gaining weight').

The body gives signals that it wants to recover by wanting to take in more food. This leads to a feeling of hunger and sometimes overeating if the signals are not correct due to hormonal fluctuations in the body.

Gaining weight

So, as you can see, all bodies are unique and react differently. Besides the fact that there are people who lose a lot of weight as a result of their burnout, there are also people who gain weight because of burnout. In short, reacting with stress is the body's choice to stay alive.

So it is a survival strategy. When concentrating on survival, converting food into energy is not a priority. The body uses the reserves it has stored in muscles and organs. (Unfortunately: these are not fat reserves).



These reserves are meant to act for a short period of time. The body expects you to recover after this. Studies have shown a link between increased cortisol levels, a feeling of hunger, a craving for foods high in carbohydrates and/or fat, and weight gain.

The biggest negative effect of cortisol is that the fat can move from the energy reserves to fat deposits deep inside the abdomen (the notorious abdominal fat). In women this results in 'rolls around the waist' and in men, in a 'beer belly'. So gaining weight through burnout is actually quite logical.

Eating unhealthily

Many people with burnout fall into 'easy eating' habits. Many prepared-meals, pizza's, snacks and fast food will become part of the daily menu.

These habits start in the run-up to the burnout and continue because we often lack in energy to get a healthy, full meal on the table, or to do the shopping for it. Food is the fuel that we put in the physical stove.

If you want to get a lot of energy out of the stove, good nutrition is important. Good, healthy food ensures a better recovery and more energy.

Bowel complaints

Adrenaline increases your metabolism. You produce adrenaline when you're anxious, or just excited. That way you can burn a lot of energy because of stress. However, stress can be a real fattener.

The stress hormone cortisol likes to attach itself to receptors in the abdominal fat so that fat increases in that area. Cortisol also triggers the release of glucose (in preparation for fighting or fleeing). In the absence of this reaction, however, this glucose is stored as fat.

Many intestinal complaints can be recognised by accelerated bowel movement (a lot of urination/ often little bowel relief) or a very slow bowel movement (relieving yourself once every 2-5 days).

Hair loss

Burnout increases the adrenaline in the body and can therefore exacerbate hair loss. Normally, adrenaline is broken down in the body after heavy exertion or by the lymph nodes.

When adrenaline comes into contact with sebaceous glands in the scalp, lactic acid is produced. Lactic acid is bad for the scalp and hair growth. It is bad for hair growth because it damages the hair roots, blocks the lymphatic flow and makes hair porous and fine, making it more prone to damage.

Acne/ pimples

Similar to the case of hair loss, lactic acid is bad for the skin. It causes the capillaries to become clogged, inflamed and then acne develops. An annoying side effect is that the burnout makes your body less able to recover, often resulting in nasty scars on the face.

Dizziness

When your body is tense, your brain is often overactive. You then react in a stronger way to signals and stimuli. In a burnout situation the signals sent from the brain to the body (and vice-versa) can be disturbed.

These disturbances (however small they may be) cause dizziness. Your brain doesn't know how to help you body regain it's balance again. Your brain tries to process the different signals it receives into one usable signal. This experience can be identified as dizziness. Furthermore, tinnitus can lead to losing your balance and dizziness.



Phases of burnout

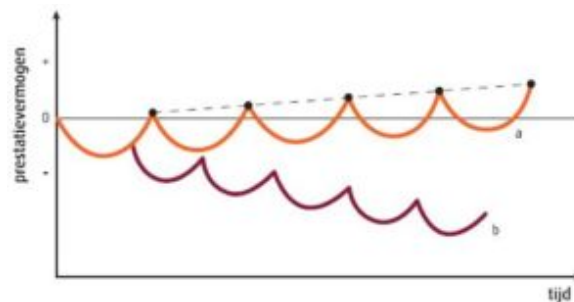
The process of burnout can often be broken down into phases. In the first phase there are often 'vague symptoms'. You are more likely to suffer from fatigue, gloominess, headaches or other troubles. It is a sign that your energy tank is slowly draining. It is very important to take action in this phase.

Simply because you can still be partly ahead of the problem. If you do not take notice of these signs and end up in the next stage of burnout, we are already talking about exhaustion. You are always tired, experience depressive feelings, sleep badly or hardly get out of bed. People around you notice that you are 'in your own world'.

How does burnout occur?

Burnout is caused by a long period of (considerable) depletion of your body's energy reserves, without paying attention to your recovery.

It is caused by a long-term, disturbed relationship between what you can realistically take on and what you force yourself to take on. So you overload your body for too long and too hard.



How do you come to suffer from burnout?

Your body can be overburdened in several ways:

- ✓ Physical: Through excessive exercise / overtraining
- ✓ Mental: For example, because of a busy job for which you have to think a lot

- ✓ Psychological : Due to stress from targets or relationship problems
- ✓ Immunological: By having a (chronic) disease

The difference between being burned out and overworked ?

We see in practice that there are misunderstandings about a burnout in relation to being overworked. In short, these are the differences:

If you are overworked you feel tired. Maybe even intensely tired. Overexertion is caused by a period of overburdening such as:

- ✓ Extra work due to maternity leave
- ✓ A deadline that has to be met
- ✓ Caring for a family member with an illness

In the event of overexertion, you have to be careful not to continue because you will still, eventually, end up burning out.

The difference between being overworked and burnout

Burnout means that you are completely, physically, mentally and emotionally grounded. Even if you really do your best, you can be on the road to recovery for up to 2 years. Being burned out means that you can relate to (among other things):

- ✓ 5- 15 panic attacks a day
- ✓ Too tired to get up in the morning
- ✓ Complete loss of control over your body and your mind
- ✓ Being totally alienated and not recognising yourself
- ✓ Plagued with doubt that it's all going to be all right again
- ✓ Having to wash your shirt 4 times a day because of excessive perspiration
- ✓ Feeling an enormous fear of getting back on track after 2 years of recovery
- ✓ The rest of your life being confronted with the thoughts of this horrible time

Are symptoms recognisable in your partner?

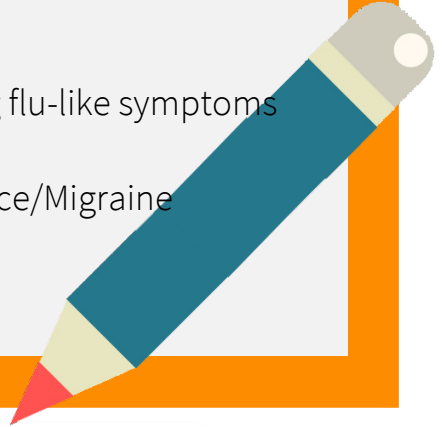
Of course, it is also possible that you recognise the symptoms above in your partner. The environment often signals the beginning of the symptoms earlier than the person who is suffering from burnout. You can feel pretty powerless when you notice that your partner is burning out. You stand on the sidelines while your partner goes through a tough process. Sometimes you can help but often you can't help at all. In addition to the feeling of powerlessness, it also means that you:

- ✓ Keep the household running
- ✓ Must work to keep the household income stable
- ✓ You must stay strong yourself
- ✓ You can be uncertain about how long the burnout will last?
- ✓ Being angry at your partner (and feel confused and lost with these feelings)

Complete the
checklist and find
out if it's **time** to
take **action**



Checklist part 1

- ☐ Adrenal Fatigue
 - ☐ Blurred Vision
 - ☐ No control over your own body
 - ☐ Constant fatigue
 - ☐ Total exhaustion
 - ☐ The loss of limb function
 - ☐ Puffiness under the eyes
 - ☐ Making mistakes
 - ☐ Shame
 - ☐ Not able to enjoy oneself
 - ☐ Feeling depressed
 - ☐ Suicidal thoughts
 - ☐ Lots of sweating
 - ☐ Don't feel like doing anything anymore
 - ☐ Poor performance
 - ☐ Good days and bad days
 - ☐ Irritated skin
 - ☐ Poorly functioning immune system
 - ☐ Problematic sleep patterns
 - ☐ Oversleeping
 - ☐ Finding it difficult to get out of bed
 - ☐ Deteriorated condition
 - ☐ Feeling hasty
 - ☐ Adrenaline junkie
 - ☐ Colds
 - ☐ Having flu-like symptoms
 - ☐ Headache/Migraine
- 



Checklist part 2

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tinnitus | <input type="checkbox"/> Easily irritated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worry | <input type="checkbox"/> A short temper/Anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indifference | <input type="checkbox"/> Agression |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cynicism | <input type="checkbox"/> An overcrowded mind |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of failure | <input type="checkbox"/> Indecision |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> Lots of delaying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fear of being alone | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty with social contact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afraid of being ill | <input type="checkbox"/> Mistrust |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afraid of being active | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling powerless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Panic Attacks | <input type="checkbox"/> Change of behaviour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Having difficulty driving | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling hasty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uncertainty | <input type="checkbox"/> More smoking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crying | <input type="checkbox"/> More alcohol |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling emotionally numb | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Problems concentrating | |





Checklist part 3

- ☐ Sore muscles
- ☐ Neck and shoulder pain
- ☐ Tense jaws
- ☐ Difficulty speaking
- ☐ Lower back pain
- ☐ Abdominal pain
- ☐ High, accelerated heart rate
- ☐ High blood pressure
- ☐ Hormonal fluctuations
- ☐ Fast breathing
- ☐ No appetite for sex
- ☐ Feeling guilty
- ☐ Gaining weight
- ☐ Constant hunger
- ☐ Eating unhealthily
- ☐ Bowel complaints
- ☐ Hair loss
- ☐ Acné/Pimples
- ☐ Dizziness



What should you do when you recognise the symptoms?

The burning question now is: what should you do when you recognise the symptoms of excessive stress or burnout? The most difficult thing is to accept the current situation.

But accepting the current situation (whether it's overburdened, overworked or burned out) ensures that you will find a resting place to build a solid foundation.

First physically, then mentally

It is also very important to recover physically first and only then to take steps towards psychological recovery. This is the most effective and meaningful way to get better from burnout.

Personally, I believe that you should use burnout / overstrain to organise the rest of your life in a way that is sustainable for you, but also in a way that you can experience happiness and pleasure.

I hope I have helped you make some good progress with this impressive list of burnout symptoms. If you have any questions, feel free to call or e-mail me at info@milltain.com.

Ruud Meulenberg

Saying goodbye to your burnout forever?



On the website milltain.com you will find more than 600+ valuable blogs with information

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