

Bath Mind’s Tips on Preventing Postgraduate Burnout

What Is Burnout? (Ref: [Mindtools](#))

- "A state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in emotionally demanding situations." – Ayala Pines and Elliot Aronson
- "A state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward." – Herbert J. Freudenberger

‘Anyone can become exhausted. What is so poignant about burnout is that it mainly strikes people who are highly committed to their work: you can only "burn out" if you have been "alight" in the first place.’

Symptoms of burnout may include:

- Having a negative and critical attitude to your studies.
- Dreading approaching or getting going with your work.
- Having low energy, and little interest in your studies.
- Having trouble sleeping.
- Being absent from lectures or social activities a lot.
- Having feelings of emptiness.
- Experiencing physical complaints such as headaches, illness, or backache.
- Being irritated easily by others.
- Having thoughts that your work doesn't have meaning or make a difference.
- Pulling away emotionally from your colleagues or loved ones.
- Feeling that your work and contribution goes unrecognized.
- Blaming others for your mistakes.
- Thinking of quitting your studies.

The Difference Between Stress and Burnout (ref: [Dawkins Brown, 2015](#))

Stress	Burnout
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · It is characterized by over engagement · The person’s emotions are over reactive · It gives one a feeling of urgency and hyperactivity · It leads to loss of energy · It can lead to anxiety disorders · Its primary damage is physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · It is characterized by disengagement · The person’s emotions are blunted · It gives one a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness · It makes one lose motivation, ideals & hope · It can lead to detachment and depression · Its primary damage is emotional

5 Myths That Lead to Postgraduate Burnout Cycle (ref: [Dora Farkis PhD, 2017](#))

Myth 1: More Hours at Work Leads to More Progress

Myth 2: My work needs to be perfect

Myth 3: I am great at multitasking

Myth 4: I need to abuse my body to get work done

Myth 5: My thesis has to be groundbreaking

5 Tips to Prevent a Postgraduate Burnout Cycle (ref: [Dora Farkis PhD, 2017](#))

Tip 1: Structure your day so that it includes frequent breaks away from your work

Tip 2: Give yourself permission to make mistakes

Tip 3 Set up your daily structure so that you minimize the necessity to multitask

Tip 4: Nurture your mind and body unconditionally

Tip 5: Reach out for support to help you keep your thesis on track

Questions to Guard Against Future Burnout (ref: [Erin Rider, 2017](#))

- How do I know when I am burned out?/ What are the effects of burnout on me?
- What are some boundaries that would help me to not become burned out?
- How do I balance personal, family, calling, occupational and other responsibilities?
- Can I differentiate between 'Good, Better, Best' priorities?
- How do I take care of myself?
- What do I do for enjoyment?
- How have I dealt with stress or burnout in the past?
- What could I do to cope better in the future?

The Five Ways to Mental Wellbeing (Ref: [New Economics Foundation, 2008](#))

