

BEATING BURNOUT - THE FACTS

Burnout is affecting people of all generations at an alarming rate. A recent study by the employment website Indeed found that rates of burnout among all age groups have soared in recent years, especially during the pandemic. [Of the millennials surveyed, 59 percent reported experiencing burnout](#), with Gen-Zers facing similar numbers. Even older generations like baby boomers and Gen-Xers have seen increases in burnout. [Of course, the recent increase has had a lot to do with the pandemic, but even pre-pandemic, studies found that 53 percent of millennials were experiencing burnout.](#)

Burnout is defined by the International Classification of Diseases-11 (ICD-11) as:

A syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion.
- Increased mental distance from one's job or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job.
- Reduced professional efficiency.

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We have a number of tools at our disposal to combat burnout, but they all involve truly resting our minds, not just zoning out in front of a television or computer screen. Burnout damages the mind, which can only be repaired with activities that both relax and rejuvenate it. Suggested activities include:



- Going on long walks.
- Exercising: Ride a bike, jog, play a sport or do some yoga. Physical activities will make you feel better.
- Taking periodic breaks from work.
- Taking in some sun.
- Meditating, practicing mindfulness and doing some deep-breathing exercises.
- Avoiding cell phones and screens before bed to ensure quality sleep.

BEATING BURNOUT - MEDITATION

Meditation is a powerful means of combating burnout and has been proven to be an incredible tool in developing positive traits like:

- Reduced stress
- Better control of anxiety
- Enhanced self-awareness and mindfulness
- And so much more

Studies show creating a meditation practice can both cultivate these traits and embed them in your life more effectively. If you would like to add a little more meditation to your daily life, consider the video below: a guided meditation from the Institute for Jewish Spirituality's own Rabbi Jonathan Slater. We hope it serves as a resource for your future mindfulness and relaxation. You can find more meditations and resources at the Institute's [website](#).

MEDITATING ON REST



**A Jewish Guided
Meditation with
Rabbi Jonathan Slater**

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BEATING BURNOUT - TORAH STUDY

A number of Jewish sources speak to the need for rest. Below are a number of sources for you to meditate on and study.

Rest in the Wake of Trauma - Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:12

"For on the third day, the blessed Holy One will come down in the sight of the people." Israel slept all through the night, because the sleep of Shavuot is pleasant and the night is short. Rabbi Yudan said: Not even a flea stung them. When the Holy One, came and found them asleep, God started to get them up with trumpets, as it is written: "For on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings." (Exodus 19:16) And Moses roused Israel and took them to meet the King of kings, the Holy One, as it is written: "And Moses brought forth the people [out of the camp] to meet God." (Exodus 19:17) And the Holy One, went before them, until they reached Mount Sinai, as it is written: "Now mount Sinai was altogether on smoke." (Exodus 19:18)

Essentially, this interweaving of commentary and Biblical passages describes a scenario in which the Jewish people overslept on the morning they would be receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai. As a result, the practice developed to stay up all night learning Torah on the holiday of Shavuot to ensure we do not repeat the mistakes of our ancestors as described in the Midrash.

Within the context of burnout, however, we can understand this text very differently. Slavery in Egypt lasted hundreds of years, according to the Torah. It was back-breaking, traumatic, intensive work that ended only a couple of months before the Mount Sinai experience. It is no wonder the Jews were exhausted when they finally had a moment to pause and reflect at the foot of Sinai. The extensive period of slavery, followed by the intensity and stress of the Exodus, took its toll on the Jewish people, and what they needed more than anything was a break.

Have you ever given yourself a chance to pause etc,? If not, why not do so now! If yes, what have you learned?



BEATING BURNOUT - TORAH STUDY

Rest is Human: Exodus 20:8-9

“Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work”

Commenting on this passage from the Ten Commandments, the collection of Jewish texts and commentaries called the [Mekhilta d’Rabbi Yishma’el](#) states:

“Six days shall you labor”: Is it possible for a person to get “all” of their work done in only six days?! Rather, we are invited to “rest” as if our work is complete. [Mekhilta d’Rabbi Yishma’el, Bachodesh 7](#)

Many people who struggle with burnout do so because of anxiety about completing their work. But the above commentary reminds us that implicit within the Torah is the message that we are human. We can't always complete the work assigned to us, but we do always need rest if we hope to complete it the following week.



BEATING BURNOUT - TORAH STUDY

Rest is Godly: Genesis 1:2-3

On the seventh day, God finished the work that God had been doing, and God ceased on the seventh day from all the work that God had done. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation God had done.

After completing his task of creating the world, the Torah tells us God took an entire day to be with Himself and rest when His work was complete. A core principle of Jewish tradition is to emulate God's ways, and this text teaches that recovery, rest and self-care are not only good; they are godly.



BEATING BURNOUT - ACTIVITY

Activity: Achieving True Rest

Identify some activities that truly put your mind at ease and actually help you recover rather than numb the pain of burnout. Once you identify at least three, write them in the thought bubbles below. On the next page, create a plan for how you are going to include them in your day.





BEATING BURNOUT - ACTIVITY

Break Activity



Time



Quick Reminder

Breathe

