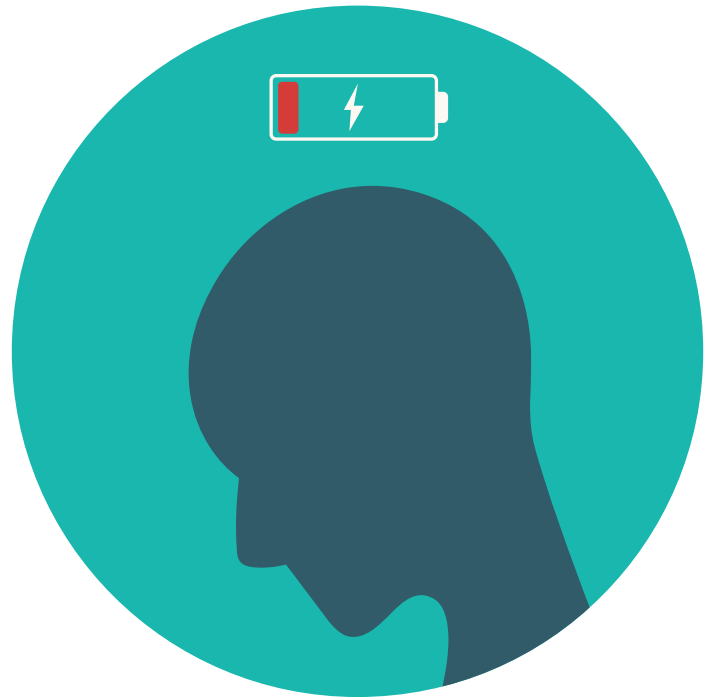


Burnout



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Is work culture more stressful now than it was 50 years ago?
2. How does the human body react to stress?
3. What are some things you do to relieve stress?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Scan the article on the next page and find the correct word in **bold**.

1. a word that describes natural substances in the body that regulate cells and organs _____
2. a synonym for "extreme tiredness" _____
3. a synonym for "limits" _____
4. a word that describes the identification of an illness _____
5. an antonym of "trivialize" _____
6. a synonym of "signal" _____
7. a word related to the inability to sleep _____
8. an antonym of "shortened" _____
9. a word that means "put in too much effort" _____
10. a word that means "a feeling of bitterness toward others" _____

Reading

BURNOUT

Is workplace stress affecting your health?

1. Does your job cause you to feel anxious? Does worrying about work keep you awake at night? If you answered yes, you may be suffering from burnout. Burnout is a state of mental, physical, and emotional **exhaustion** caused by **prolonged** periods of stress in the workplace. It usually happens when a person feels unable to meet constant demands.
2. When burnout occurs, the brain goes into an extended “fight or flight” response. A fight or flight response is the reaction of a person’s nervous system to danger. The body’s stress **hormones** and heart rate rapidly increase and the brain loses access to frontal lobe functions including logic and decision-making. As a result, the person feels like they can’t think clearly.
3. Burnout can lead to feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and **resentfulness**. People experiencing burnout may become less productive and even begin to doubt their personal identity. While burnout is not a medical **diagnosis**, it often causes health problems like depression, substance abuse, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, **insomnia**, and a weakened immune system.
4. Signs of burnout can be difficult to recognize, but changes in appetite, sleep patterns, and energy levels are often **indicators**. Once the signs of burnout are identified, the best way to treat it is to take a significant break from work. It’s important to not only reduce stress, but also **prioritize** joy and fun.
5. There are also short-term strategies a person can use when they feel themselves dealing with excessive stress. The first strategy involves movement. Movement decreases the body’s level of cortisol, a stress hormone. Fifteen to twenty minutes of exercise can clear excess cortisol from blood. The second strategy involves lowering the heart rate by rapidly changing the body’s temperature with a cold shower.
6. Of course, it’s better to prevent burnout than to deal with it once it has already happened. A good way for people to avoid burnout is for them to set **boundaries** at work. This means that they must sometimes say no when asked to do something so that they do not **overextend** themselves. It’s also important to set priorities in general. What matters to you? Work might be important, but it cannot always be the number one priority. You also need to make room for other aspects of life, like family and hobbies, and to regularly reach out to loved ones for support.

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.”

—Anne Lamott, American author

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. What is burnout?
2. What happens during a fight or flight response?
3. What health issues can be caused by burnout?
4. What short-term strategies are mentioned in the reading to deal with stress?
5. Why is it important to set priorities?

Vocabulary Review

Complete each sentence with the correct word in bold on page 2. You may need to change the word forms.

1. Some people find a little bit of stress to be motivating, but _____ stress is never good for the body.
2. She wanted to do the whole project by herself, but her boss was worried she would _____ herself.
3. I am exhausted. I have had _____ for the past three nights.
4. I used to experience burnout once a year, but now I _____ fun activities, like my weekly bowling club and spending time with my sister. It has helped a lot.
5. Sasha felt _____ when Harry got a promotion and she didn't.

Grammar Review

A. Modals of Advice

Modals (also known as *modal verbs*) are words that come before a main verb and give it extra meaning such as *ability, advice, necessity, possibility*, etc. Modals of advice are used for giving advice, suggestions, and recommendations.

1. Modal Pattern

MODAL + BASE VERB

Modals are always followed by a base verb.
A base verb is a verb with **no ending** (-s, -ed, -ing, etc.) added to it.

3. Usage

Should

Should is the most common modal of advice.

Ought to

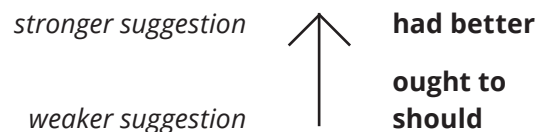
Ought to is more formal than *should*, and it is becoming more and more old-fashioned in American English. On the rare occasions that it is used in speaking, it is often pronounced “oughta” (/ɑdæ/). *Ought to* is a slightly stronger suggestion than *should*, but the difference is not important. *Ought to* is not used in questions and is rarely used in negative sentences.

Had better

Had better is common when making a stronger suggestion. It is often shortened to *’d better*. *Had better* is not used in questions. In casual speaking, *had* is sometimes dropped.

2. Suggestion Scale

There are three common modals of advice in English: *should, ought to, and had better*. *Had better* is a stronger suggestion than *should* and *ought to*.



4. Sentence Patterns

Positive: You should take a break.
You ought to take a break.
You had better take a break.
You’d better take a break.
You better take a break.*

Negative: You should not work extra hours.
You shouldn’t work extra hours.
You ought not (to) work extra hours.**
You oughtn’t work extra hours.**
You had better not work extra hours.
You’d better not work extra hours.
You better not work extra hours.*

Question: Should I work extra hours?

**Had* can be dropped in casual speaking.

**Negative forms of *ought to* are very rarely used. If used, *to* is usually dropped.

Grammar Review cont.

B. Practice

Rewrite the sentences using *should* or *shouldn't*.

Ex. Helena never takes a vacation.

Helena should take a vacation.

1. Jim's boss doesn't encourage him to take breaks.

2. The manager doesn't realize how many extra hours I work.

3. Omar doesn't get enough sleep when he has a big work project.

4. You always eat junk food when you're stressed.

5. Anisha doesn't do yoga anymore.

6. When I have a lot of deadlines, I forget to eat.

C. Writing

Now write your own examples using *had better* and *ought to*.

1. _____

2. _____

Discussion

1. In addition to physical symptoms, what effect does burnout have on a person's mood?
2. When is the last time you said no to something?
How did you feel afterward?
3. Can stress ever be a positive thing? Explain.
4. What is one small thing you can do today for self-care?

Research

Research the following questions on the internet.
Then share your findings with the class.

1. Which countries have the best work-life balance? What laws or policies have these countries put in place to promote a healthy work-life balance?
2. Which professions have the highest rates of burnout?
Which jobs have the lowest burnout rates?

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

BURNOUT

Is workplace stress affecting your health?

1. Does your job cause you to feel anxious? Does worrying about work keep you awake at night? If you answered yes, you may be _____ from burnout. Burnout is a state of mental, physical, and emotional _____ caused by prolonged periods of stress in the workplace. It usually happens when a person feels unable to meet constant demands.
2. When burnout occurs, the brain goes into an _____ “fight or flight” response. A fight or flight response is the reaction of a person’s nervous system to danger. The body’s stress _____ and heart rate rapidly increase and the brain loses access to frontal lobe functions including logic and decision-making. As a result, the person feels like they can’t think clearly.
3. Burnout can lead to feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and _____. People experiencing burnout may become less productive and even begin to doubt their personal identity. While burnout is not a medical _____, it often causes health problems like depression, substance abuse, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, insomnia, and a weakened immune system.
4. Signs of burnout can be difficult to recognize, but changes in appetite, sleep patterns, and energy levels are often _____. Once the signs of burnout are identified, the best way to treat it is to take a _____ break from work. It’s important to not only reduce stress, but also prioritize joy and fun.
5. There are also short-term _____ a person can use when they feel themselves dealing with excessive stress. The first strategy involves movement. Movement decreases the body’s level of cortisol, a stress hormone. Fifteen to twenty minutes of exercise can clear excess cortisol from blood. The second strategy involves _____ the heart rate by rapidly changing the body’s temperature with a cold shower.
6. Of course, it’s better to prevent burnout than to deal with it once it has already happened. A good way for people to avoid burnout is for them to set _____ at work. This means that they must sometimes say no when asked to do something so that they do not _____ themselves. It’s also important to set priorities in general. What matters to you? Work might be important, but it cannot always be the number one priority. You also need to make room for other aspects of life, like family and hobbies, and to regularly reach out to loved ones for support.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read a short article about burnout. They learn about the signs and symptoms of burnout and ways to avoid it. The lesson includes a review of modals of advice, discussion questions, and a research activity.

LEVEL: Int – High Int

TIME: 1–2 hours

TAGS: work culture, business, work-life balance, stress, mental health, modals of advice, should, had better, ought to

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

1. Answers will vary.
2. Stress can cause blood pressure, heart rate, and breathing to increase. It can also cause muscles to tighten.
3. Answers will vary.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. hormones | 6. indicator |
| 2. exhaustion | 7. insomnia |
| 3. boundaries | 8. prolonged |
| 4. diagnosis | 9. overextend |
| 5. prioritize | 10. resentment |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 7. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

1. Burnout is a state of mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion caused by prolonged periods of stress in the workplace.
2. During a fight or flight response, the body’s stress hormones and heart rate rapidly increase and the brain loses access to frontal lobe functions including logic and decision-making.
3. Burnout can cause depression, substance abuse, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, insomnia, and a weakened immune system.
4. The first strategy involves 15–20 minutes of exercise to clear excess cortisol from the blood. The second strategy involves lowering the heart rate by rapidly changing the body’s temperature with a cold shower.
5. It is important to set priorities in order to make room for other aspects of life, like family and hobbies, instead of focusing only on work.

Vocabulary Review

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. prolonged | 4. prioritize |
| 2. overextend | 5. resentful |
| 3. insomnia | |

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Grammar Review

A. MODALS OF ADVICE

Review the grammar with your students before they begin.
For more practice on modals of advice, students can view this resource: <https://esllibrary.com/courses/88/lessons/1629/print>

B. PRACTICE

1. Jim's boss should encourage him to take breaks.
2. The manager should realize how many extra hours I work.
3. Omar should get enough sleep when he has a big work project.
4. You shouldn't eat junk food when you're stressed.
5. Anisha should do yoga again.
6. I should remember to eat (even) when I have a lot of deadlines.
/ I shouldn't forget to eat when I have a lot of deadlines.

C. WRITING

Answers will vary.

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Research

Encourage your students to dig deeper! After they have done their research, have them write down their sources and share what they've learned with the class.

Listening

1. suffering, exhaustion
2. extended, hormones
3. resentment, diagnosis
4. indicators, significant
5. strategies, lowering
6. boundaries, overextend