



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at Branch Benefits Consultants



AVOID BURNOUT WHILE WORKING FROM HOME DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

For many workers, their new “normal” routine consists of getting out of bed and logging on to work. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has shifted the workplace from the office to kitchen tables and living rooms for thousands of employees.

This shift to telecommuting has made it possible for employees to work while staying safe and preventing the spread of COVID-19, but it has also created a few challenges, including increased levels of stress and burnout.

What is burnout?

According to the World Health Organization, doctors can diagnose you with burnout if you exhibit the following symptoms:

- Exhaustion or energy depletion
- Decreased engagement at work, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to your job
- Reduced productivity or efficacy

The negative effects of burnout can extend beyond the workplace and into your home and social life. It can also increase your risk of getting sick and developing chronic conditions.

What are the signs of burnout?

Since burnout is the result of prolonged and chronic workplace stress, it’s important to know how to

recognize the signs of workplace stress. Common job stressors include:

- Heavy workload
- Long work hours
- Lack of work-life balance
- Concerns over job security

While dealing with stress is a normal part of everyday life, and these uncertain times may be elevating your overall stress levels, it’s important to watch out for prolonged stress. Here are some early warning signs of burnout:

- Anxiety or depression
- Low morale
- Short temper
- Headache
- Stomach or back problems
- Fatigue

If you experience any of these symptoms, it may be time to talk to your supervisor or manager to address your chronic stress.



How to Prevent Burnout While Working From Home

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to reduce your stress, and your risk of burnout, while you work from home. Here are some simple tips to try:

- **Create a schedule**—When you're at home, it can be difficult to step away from work when your day is done, which often results in you working longer hours than normal. Set a schedule and only work the hours you normally would if you were in the office.
- **Plan and prioritize**—When you're feeling stressed out, don't panic. Make a list of the tasks you need to complete, and set realistic deadlines.
- **Set up a separate workspace**—One way to make it easier to maintain a work-life balance while you're working from home is to set up a space where you'll work. This will help you decompress from work when your day is done.
- **Focus on what you can control**—You know what your job tasks are. Break the larger tasks into smaller, more doable steps.
- **Take breaks throughout the day**—Getting a change of scenery and a brief break during the workday can help you clear your mind and reduce your stress.
- **Slow down**—When you have a lot of tasks looming over you, it can be tempting to hurry through them just to get them off your plate. Rushing through tasks, though, can cause you to feel more stressed and increase the odds of mistakes being made. Take a deep breath when you start to get overwhelmed, and slow down.
- **Maintain a good attitude**—Try to think positively about tasks at work—avoid negative thinkers and always acknowledge your accomplishments, even if it's just by mentally congratulating yourself.
- **Ask for help**—Sometimes the best way to overcome your workplace stress is to ask peers or your superiors for help.

- **Communication is key**—While you're working from home, it's important that you regularly communicate with your team and co-workers. Doing so will help ensure that expectations can be properly set and managed during the time you're working from home.

What should I do if I think I'm experiencing burnout?

If you feel like you're burned out, you should talk to your supervisor or manager, as they may be able to help you reduce your workplace stress or direct you to valuable workplace resources, like an employee assistance program.

Talking to other co-workers, friends or family may also be helpful, as they may have insight into how you can reduce your stress and improve your burnout syndrome. Implementing healthy stress coping mechanisms, such as exercising, hanging out with friends or taking time off from work, can also help alleviate your stress.

For more information on burnout, click [here](#).