



Preventing Fatigue and Burnout



Let's get thinking...

1. Can you name a symptom of burnout?
2. Can you name a condition with fatigue as a side effect?
3. What behaviour helps to reduce work-related stress?
4. What is the accurate name of 'the power houses' in all our cells?
a. Mitochondria b. Nucleus c. Cytoplasm



Agenda

What's the definition of fatigue and burnout?

How to recognise the signs

Let's look at what's going on physiologically

What can go wrong?

Practical steps to manage burnout and fatigue



Defining the issue

- **Fatigue:** tiredness is often overwhelming and isn't relieved by sleep and rest.
- Often due to a health condition or symptom of burnout.
- **Burnout:** a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion.
- Redefined by the WHO as a medical syndrome "...resulting specifically from chronic workplace stress that has not been properly managed".
- Burnout can lead to fatigue, depression, anxiety and affect relationships in and out of work.



Exploring burnout....

The Silent Epidemic



**2022 43% of employees reported burnout
2023 62% of employees reported burnout**

Younger workers are more likely to experience burnout:

- 49% 18 - 29 year olds
- 38% of workers 30 years and older



Exploring burnout

Physical

Feeling tired and drained most of the time

Lowered immunity, frequent illnesses

Frequent headaches or muscle pain

Change in appetite or sleep habits

Behavioural

Withdrawing from responsibilities

Isolating yourself from others

Procrastinating

Using food, drugs or alcohol to cope

Taking out frustrations on others

Emotional

Sense of failure, self-doubt

Feeling helpless

Detachment

Loss of motivation

Negative outlook

Decreased sense of accomplishment

Recognising fatigue

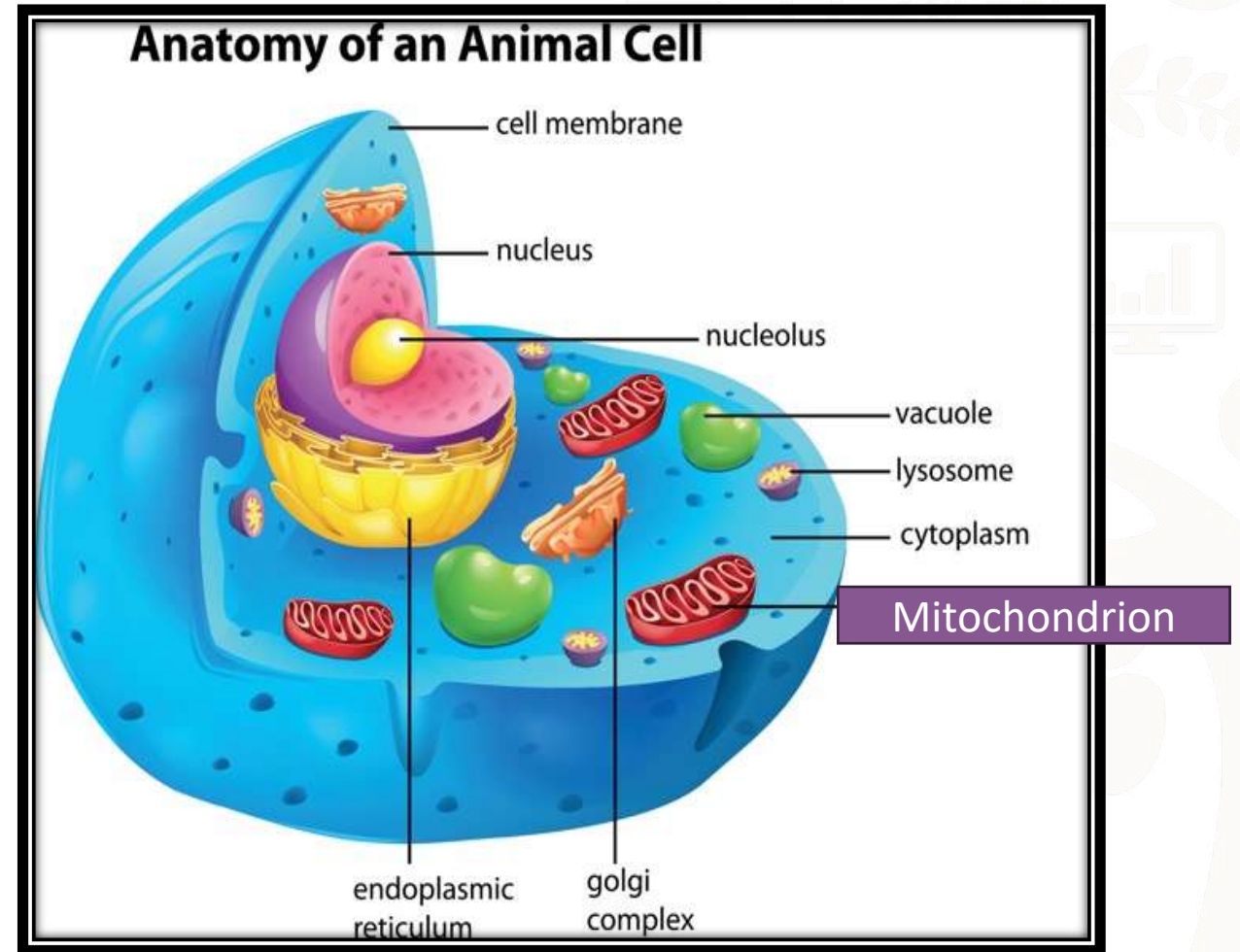
Possible health conditions:

- Anaemia
- Sleep apnoea
- Underactive thyroid
- Coeliac disease
- Chronic fatigue syndrome or ME
- Diabetes
- Glandular fever
- Depression
- Restless legs
- Anxiety



Our physiology

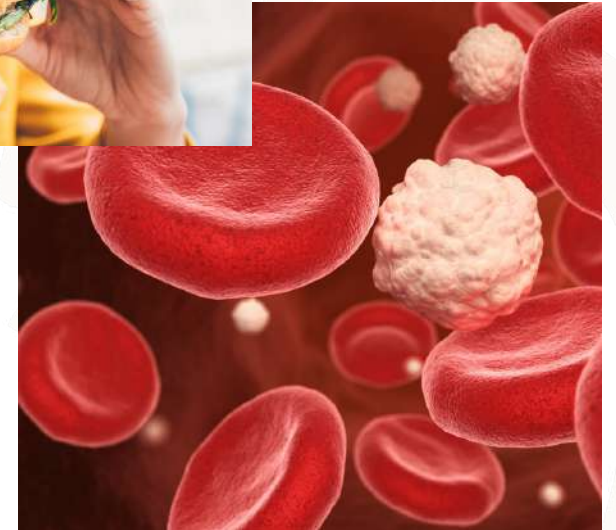
Mitochondria – the power houses of the cell!





How do we produce energy?

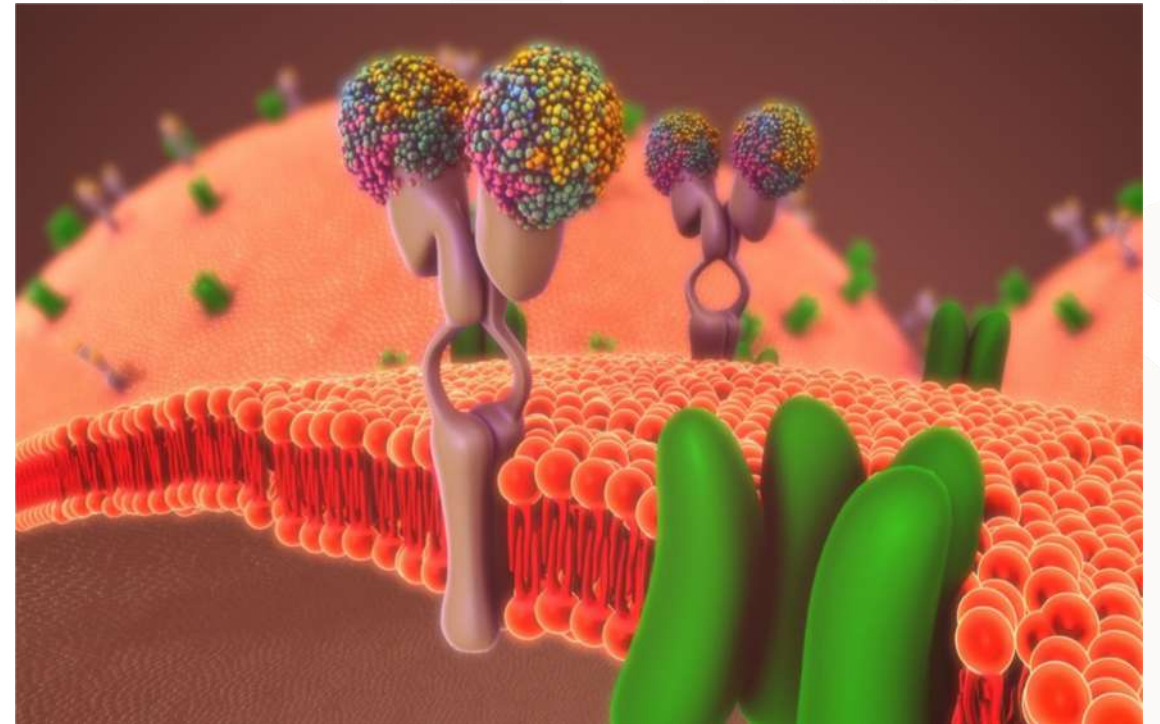
- **Mitochondria** convert chemical energy from the food we eat
- **Cellular respiration** - oxygen in the cell reacts with glucose from food to create an energy that the cell can use





How do we produce energy?

- An energy rich compound - **adenosine triphosphate (ATP)** is created via the energy contained in the chemical bonds
- **ATP** serves as a shuttle, delivering energy to places within the cell where energy-consuming activities are taking place.





What can go wrong?

- **Insulin Control / Diabetes**
 - Insulin resistance / Lack of insulin
- **Thyroid**
 - Regulates metabolism
- **Mitochondrial dysfunction**
 - Likely the root cause of many diseases but we are still learning.
- **Infections**
 - Post-viral fatigue





What can go wrong?

- **Body clock out of sync**
 - Shift work or insomnia
- **Long term stress**
 - Damaging effects of stress hormones on the body
- **Nutrient deficiencies**
 - 'Co-factors'





10 steps to address fatigue & burnout





1. Speak to your GP: rule out serious conditions and get tested



- Vitamin D
- Iron
- Folate
- B12
- Thyroid hormones (TSH)
- Blood glucose and HbA1c (glucose levels in the blood for 3 months)

2. Burnout: work specific approaches

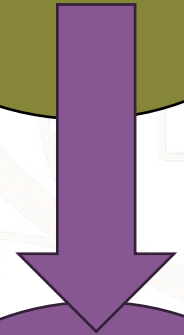
<p>Reach out to those closest to you <i>Open-up</i></p>	<p>Be sociable with co-workers</p>	<p>Limit contact with negative people</p>	<p>Connect with a meaningful cause or community</p>	<p>Find value in your work</p>
<p>Find balance in your life – look for meaning <i>E.g. family, friends, hobbies, voluntary work</i></p>	<p>Take time off</p>	<p>Set boundaries - realistic expectations</p>	<p>Take a daily break from technology</p>	<p>Nourish your creative side</p>

3. Mitigating stress



- Mindfulness / Meditation
- Yoga or other calming exercise
- Spend time in nature
- Aim for a good night's sleep
- Try breathing exercises

Note what
raises your
stress
levels?



Learn to
find what
supports
you



Benefits of using our **breath**

JUST
breathe

- Helps us to think straight, feel calmer & gain clarity
- Nose breathing helps to boost nitric oxide
- Supports blood pressure
- Slow deep breathing alleviates depression & anxiety
- May help insomnia



4. Exercise: is it appropriate?

- **Gauge level of intensity** carefully
- **30mins** moderate session to begin
- **Find what suits you:**
 - Walking
 - Yoga, Tai chi, Qi-gong
 - High Intensity Impact Training (HIIT)
 - Running
 - Dancing

High impact exercise may support mitochondria but not if already fatigued





5. ‘Pacing’

“Pacing is a self-management tool. It is a technique to help you take control of the **balance of activity and rest**.

Learn how to communicate to other people about the balance that usually works best for you.”

(Action for ME definition)

6. Nutritious diet – balanced plate

- **Complex Carbs**
- **Vegetables**
- **Protein**
- **Healthy Fats**





7. Look after your digestion

- Nutrient absorption
- Easy to digest foods: soups, smoothies, stews
- Soaking grains, nuts, overnight oats
- Pre- and probiotic foods



8. Micronutrient - food first approach

B Vitamins



EGCG



ALA



8. Micronutrient - food first approach

Carnitine



Zinc and Selenium



CoQ10





9. Supplements for some

- Alpha lipoic acid
- Coenzyme Q10
- Magnesium (essential for energy production)
- Vitamins C, E, B, D
- Selenium
- Iron





10. Things to be cautious of....



- Fasting
- Keto diets
- Exposure to environmental toxins
- Nicotine
- Alcohol (or in moderation)

Additional Resources

Preventing & Overcoming BURNOUT

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion, it was redefined in 2019 by the WHO as a medical diagnosis resulting from work related stress. If not properly addressed, burnout can lead to depression, anxiety and affect relationships in and out of work.

HOW TO RECOGNISE IT

Physical	Behavioural	Emotional
Feeling tired and drained most of the time	Withdrawing from responsibilities	Sense of failure, self doubt
Lowered immunity, frequent illnesses	Isolating yourself from others	Feeling helpless
Frequent headaches or muscle pain	Procrastinating	Detachment
Change in appetite or sleep habits	Using food, drugs or alcohol to cope	Loss of motivation
	Taking out frustrations on others	Negative outlook
		Decreased sense of accomplishment

HOW TO ADDRESS IT

Take time off	Be sociable with coworkers	Set boundaries	Nourish your creative side	Find value in your work
Find balance in your life - work, family, friends, hobbies, voluntary work	Reach out to those closest to you. Open up.	Limit contact with negative people and self-talk	Talk regularly, break from technology	Connect with a meaningful cause or community


DIET & LIFESTYLE

Long term stress calls for a diet that supports energy production throughout the day and is rich in nutrients needed to produce our stress hormones.

Minimise sugar and refined carbs to avoid crashes in mood and energy	Reduce caffeine if it triggers our stress response causing further energy dips	Exercise regularly (endorphins) to maintain a healthy weight and boost mood	Include protein with every meal and snack - helps keep energy levels high
Include fats from natural whole foods they are a great source of energy	Avoid processed foods, trans-fats and chemical additives to reduce the toxic load on the body and minimise empty calories	Eat more omega-3 fats shown to reduce burnout	Stay hydrated dehydration affects cognitive function and triggers fatigue
Avocado, coconut, nuts and seeds, butter, cheese	Support digestion and nutrient absorption: Eat mindfully and chew well	Rich in B vitamins, magnesium and zinc which are all depleted by stress	Vitamin C rich foods help to produce stress hormones
Replenish your gut bacteria they directly influence symptoms (the gut-brain axis)	Include easy to digest soups, bone broths, smoothies	Whole food diet: wholegrains, green leafy veg, nuts and seeds	Peppers, kale, broccoli, watercress
Set aside relaxation time	Minimise alcohol - it causes anxiety as it wears off	Get plenty of sleep	Avoid nicotine - this powerful stimulant can increase anxiety

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Nourish bowl



Serves 2

Nourish bowls are all the rage at the moment, and for good reason. They are bursting with nutrients and can provide a quick and balanced meal in minutes. Eating balanced meals, rather than picking at snack foods and refined carbohydrates throughout the day is important when looking to minimise the effects of burnout. The simplest way to build a nourish bowl is by having some basics pre-prepared, such as quinoa or brown rice, protein and pre-cooked vegetables then it's just a matter of arranging your bowl.

A nourish bowl can be what you make it, with a few important basics. Greens, which form the base of the bowl, are an excellent source of vitamins and minerals such as magnesium, which helps us feel relaxed and better handle stress. Protein is important for our mood-controlling brain chemicals, and can be either plant or animal-based. Complex carbohydrates, such as quinoa and brown rice, provide slow release energy helping keep blood sugar levels stable. And including health fats, such as oily fish, olive oil, nuts and seeds will help keep you feeling full for longer, and help support our mood. Seeds are a source of omega 3 fats, known for improving mood and helping brain chemicals to do their job. They also provide zinc, which is a natural anti-depressant.

Ingredients

- 2 x 100g salmon fillets
- 2 teaspoons dukka spice (or Za'atar spice)
- 1 cup uncooked quinoa
- 2 handfuls of greens/leaves for the base
- 100g broccoli, lightly steamed
- 2 large dollops of hummus (here with beetroot)
- 2 carrots, grated
- 75g cooked broad beans, skins removed
- 2 tablespoons Sauerkraut
- 100g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 50g toasted sunflower seeds
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon Tamari soy sauce
- Juice half lemon

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C.
Spread the dukka over the salmon fillets & place under a medium-hot grill & cook for around 8 minutes or until just cooked (cooking time will depend on thickness of salmon). When cooked, remove from heat & set aside.
Meanwhile, rinse the quinoa under running water & cook according to packet instructions. When cooked and fluffy, strain & set aside to cool.
To assemble the nourish bowl, line the base of your bowl with the greens. Then build your bowl, adding the other ingredients. Finishing with a sprinkle of sunflower seeds & drizzle with olive oil soy sauce & lemon juice.

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Chicken shepherd's pie with cauliflower crust



Serves 4-6

This is a lighter take on traditional shepherd's pie, using chicken and lentils as a filling topped with a cauliflower crust. Chicken and lentils make this dish rich in protein, which helps to keep blood sugar levels stable - a key factor in managing burnout. They are also rich in B vitamins, which help the body deal with stress. Lentils are a true mood-boosting food packed with tryptophan, an amino acid which helps us produce serotonin, our feel-good hormone. Cauliflower is a cruciferous vegetable, high in Vitamin C and antioxidants that help support our mental wellbeing.

Ingredients

- 1 large head cauliflower, steamed and broken into small florets
- 2 cups milk of choice (unflavoured)
- 150g fresh ricotta
- 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, finely sliced
- 2 carrots, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon dried mixed herbs
- 500g good-quality chicken, minced
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 400g can puy lentils, rinsed and drained
- 2 large handfuls spinach, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C.
Place the cauliflower & milk in a saucepan & bring to the boil. Lower the heat and simmer until cauliflower is soft, around 10 minutes. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the cooking liquid & set aside to cool. Place cauliflower & 1/2 cup of the cooking liquid in a food processor or use a hand mixer to blend until smooth. Add ricotta & process to a mash-like consistency & set aside. If too thick add more liquid.
Heat oil in a large saucepan over high heat. Add onion, celery & carrot & cook for around 5 minutes until starting to soften. Add garlic & mixed herbs & cook for a further minute or two. Add minced chicken & cook for 4-5 minutes, using a wooden spoon to break up any lumps. Continue stirring until chicken starts to brown. Add the stock & tomato paste & bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium & cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid has reduced. Add lentils, spinach & parsley.
Pour the chicken mixture into an oven proof dish, approximately 24 cms long. Top with the cauliflower mixture, spreading evenly & sprinkle over the grated parmesan. Place in the oven and cook for around 25-40 minutes or until golden brown on top. Serve with a leafy green salad.

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Further info...

Pacing – how to manage your pain and stay active (Oxford Uni Hospital)

Breathing Techniques:

Sleep support

- Abdominal breathing or diaphragmatic breathing
- Body scan technique

Calming / support anxiety

- Box breathing
- 4-7-8 breathing

The Institute of Functional Medicine

Non-profit organisation offering education and access to finding functional medicine practitioners across the globe.

<https://www.ifm.org/about/>

Home Testing Companies

- <https://medichecks.com>
- <https://thriva.co>

Complementary Therapies

- [Complementary & Natural Healthcare Council \(CNHC\)](#)
- [British Acupuncture Council](#)

Mental Health Support

- Worrying more than usual
- Finding it hard to enjoy your life
- Having thoughts and feelings that are difficult to cope with, which have an impact on your day-to-day life

www.mentalhealth.org.uk www.mind.org.uk

www.thecalmzone.net



Support for line managers and colleagues

Charity pages:

- [Mind - Mental Health at Work](#)
- [Mental Health Foundation – Supporting someone with a mental health condition](#)

Articles:

- [Understand & combat your teams burnout](#)
- [How to help your team with Burnout when you are burned out yourself' Harvard Business Review.](#)



Research

- *Journal of Assisted Reproduction and Genetics* Dec 2017 Abdulhassan M. et al CoQ10 increases mitochondrial mass and polarization, ATP and Oct4 potency levels, and bovine oocyte MII during IVM while decreasing AMPK activity and oocyte death
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5714820/>
- *The Labour Force Survey* March 2020 HSE Work-related stress, anxiety or depression statistics in Great Britain, 2020 <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.pdf>
- *The Guardian* Feb 2021 'Pandemic Burnout' on rise as latest Covid lockdowns take toll'
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/feb/05/pandemic-burnout-rise-uk-latest-covid-lockdowns-take-toll>
- *Invest Ophthalmology Visus Science* Oct 2014 Mencucci R et al CoQ10-containing eye drops prevent UVB-induced cornea cell damage and increase cornea wound healing by preserving mitochondrial function <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25301877/>
- *Clinical Nutrition* June 2019 Wesselink E et al. Feeding mitochondria: Potential role of nutritional components to improve critical illness convalescence
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261561418324269>



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