

School Burnout Workbook

Learn more about school burnout, how it affects you, and effective strategies for managing it at school and at home with six exercises.

- **Identifying School Burnout**
- **Time and Task Management**
- **Campus Solutions**
- **Personal Solutions**

School Burnout Workbook

School burnout can arise from a complex mix of personal stressors and the demands of school, college, graduate school, or other educational programs. **This workbook is designed to help you get to know your school burnout and learn about effective solutions that are a good fit for you.** With a combination of campus solutions like finding support and time management and personal solutions like challenging difficult mental patterns around work and time off, you can push towards alleviating your stress.

Here is a brief introduction to each worksheet included in this package:

Identifying School Burnout

This worksheet introduces common symptoms of school burnout, and helps you **learn which of the worksheets below are the best fit for you based on your answers.**

campus
solutions

Get the Support You Need

Universities have tons of resources you may not be aware of. This worksheet will help you name and find support for a variety of burnout-related concerns.

Time and Task Management at School

Review tips for managing your time and workload, and organize and schedule your tasks by priority with this worksheet - both for the semester and the week.

personal
solutions

Daily Rest Ritual

This worksheet will help you effectively rest with a clear daily ritual.

Feeling Guilty About Rest or Time Off

Challenge common messages about rest and time off with this worksheet, and create more true, realistic messages about the importance of rest.

Mental Patterns That Affect School Burnout

This worksheet helps you explore mental patterns that affect school burnout, like perfectionism and people-pleasing, and suggests ways to break those patterns.

**This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*



Identifying School Burnout

School burnout happens when there is a mismatch between a person's capacities and the demands of their education. People might experience school burnout because they are going through stress, health, or caregiving challenges, which could deplete their energy and make school harder. School burnout can occur if students are having trouble with time management, planning, or balancing a busy schedule. However, burnout can also happen if the demands on a student pile up, or if support for the student is limited.

If you're wondering if you are experiencing burnout, we encourage you to try our [free burnout quiz](#), which can help you understand how intense your symptoms are and direct you to resources based on your answers.

You can also see some common symptoms specific to school burnout below:

Feeling less competent at school, like you're not performing as well as before	Procrastinating, avoiding tasks, or avoiding schoolwork or class more
Feeling emotionally drained	Feeling physically exhausted
Feeling more anxious, irritable, or overwhelmed than usual	Having more difficulty concentrating and/or making more mistakes than usual
Feeling indifferent, like you just don't care as much as you used to about school	Feeling cynical or pessimistic about your education, classmates, teachers, or future

What does school burnout feel like for you?

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Identifying School Burnout

Are there any personal factors (like stress, health, caregiving) contributing to burnout for you?

Are there any solutions *at school* that might help? These might look like:

- Learning new strategies to plan ahead and manage your time
- Guidance on picking classes, study skills, writing, or research skills, etc.
- Guidance on choosing a career, writing a resume, finding an internship, etc.
- Practical help with technology, accommodations, finances, or safety
- Support for your mental or physical health
- Getting oriented to school, especially for international, first-generation, commuter, or underrepresented students
- Reducing loneliness at school
- Other: _____

To explore some of these ideas, check out the **campus** worksheets below.

solutions

Are there any solutions *at home* that might help? These might look like:

- Focusing on rest with a daily ritual
- Using time off to take a break and recover
- Challenging mental patterns that maintain burnout or keep you from taking breaks
- Connecting with support outside of school (e.g., loved ones, other communities)
- Good self-care, social, spiritual, and physical habits to keep yourself healthy
- Living a rich, meaningful life outside of school by doing what matters to you
- Other: _____

To explore some of these ideas, check out the **personal** worksheets below.

solutions

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Get the Support You Need

Universities have many resources you may not be aware of, which can be helpful for combatting burnout. **Most of these resources are also free for students and are dedicated to supporting their success.** This worksheet is designed to help you connect your burnout-related questions or concerns with on-campus resources that can help.

Question or Concern	Campus Resources to Consider
What classes should I take? How do I sign up for them? Am I in the right major? Will I complete my degree on time? Should I consider internships?	Your Advisor (often called an Academic, Faculty, Major, Departmental, or Program Advisor) can help you answer these questions. Asking for a meeting with them is a great first step, and they can help direct you to other resources around campus, too.
How do I do this assignment? How do I study effectively? How do I manage all these classes?	Many universities have separate Academic Support Centers to help you learn study skills one-on-one or in groups. These could also be called Academic Counseling, Academic Coaching, Supplemental Instruction, or an Academic Success Center. You can also reach out to your professor or TA.
How can I improve my writing? What about other specific skills?	Many universities have specific Writing Centers where you can get one-on-one writing help. You can also see if there are Learning or Tutoring Centers on your campus.
How do I do research and write a research paper?	University librarians often offer instruction and assistance with research and library tools.
How do I get help with technology? My laptop isn't working, what should I do?	Information Technology (IT) Departments can help you learn how to use technological programs and fix computer programs. Some departments might loan out devices, too.
What career is right for me? How do I get there? How do I write a resume, find a job, or do a job interview?	Many universities have a Career Center (or Career Services, Career Development Center, or Professional Development Center) to help with these concerns. They can help with career exploration, practice interviews, etc.

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Get the Support You Need

Question or Concern	Campus Resources to Consider
<p>How can I get the accommodations I need for my disability?</p>	<p>Offices of Disability Services and/or Accessibility help students coordinate accommodations like extra time, housing and dining concerns, physical access, etc.</p>
<p>Do I have a mental health disorder? Do I need therapy or medication? What should I do in a mental health crisis?</p>	<p>Centers for Counseling (or Psychological Services, Mental Health, Wellness, or CAPS) can help students assess whether they have a mental health disorder, and provide individual or group therapy, prescription medication, crisis counseling, and workshops (e.g., stress management).</p>
<p>Am I getting sick? How can I take care of my physical health?</p>	<p>A Student Health Center (or University Health Service) can help you assess and treat illness, get routine check-ups, and take care of your sexual health. Campus Recreation or Health and Wellness centers can provide spaces to exercise, group fitness classes, intramural sports, nutrition counseling, and wellness education.</p>
<p>How do I manage my finances? Can I get scholarships or grants? How should I handle student debt? Can I get a work-study job?</p>	<p>Offices of Financial Aid, Financial Success, or Scholarships can help you improve your financial literacy and budgeting, apply for and manage scholarships and grants, assist with FAFSA, get a work-study job, and learn more about managing student debt.</p>
<p>What should I do if I don't feel safe on campus?</p>	<p>Campus Safety offices can provide safety escorts (walking or shuttle services), self-defense classes, and incident reporting (for harassment, stalking, sexual misconduct, etc.).</p>
<p>I feel alone or like an outsider here. What should I do?</p>	<p>Many campuses provide specific supports for international, underrepresented or first-generation, or commuter students. Offices of Campus or Student Life, Student Activities, or similar help students connect with clubs and activities, campus events, leadership programs, community service opportunities, etc.</p>

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Get the Support You Need

Question or Concern	Campus Resources to Consider
I need really practical help - like childcare, food assistance, or professional clothes for interviews. What should I do?	You might be surprised by the number of practical supports that some universities provide for their students. Try talking to your RA, academic advisor, or searching the internet for specific resources on your campus.

Sometimes students can feel embarrassed or like a failure when they consider using campus resources. We want to remind you that most often, **the peers and professionals working at these offices want to help**. Your success at school means they are doing their job well - they work for you!

Are any campus resources relevant to my current challenges with burnout?

Name the burnout-related challenges you're currently facing, and if any resources above are relevant, find the name of the appropriate office on your campus and how to contact them.

Challenge: _____

Resource on my campus: _____

How to contact: _____

Challenge: _____

Resource on my campus: _____

How to contact: _____

Challenge: _____

Resource on my campus: _____

How to contact: _____

Challenge: _____

Resource on my campus: _____

How to contact: _____

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Time and Task Management at School

Managing your time, tasks, and habits at school can make a big difference in how school feels and reducing the risk of burnout. This worksheet covers tips for breaks, rest, and focusing on your goals, then guides you through task prioritization and time blocking to help you stay in balance.

Take Breaks

Whether it's the first week of the semester or it's finals week, make it a habit to **actually take breaks**. If at all possible, try to take them: away from where you study, in fresh air, in sunlight, and away from screens.

Breaks refresh our minds and help us check in with our bodies when we're probably used to ignoring them through the day.

How often do you take breaks during a typical day, including for a meal?

- 0 times 1 time 2 times 3 times 4+ times



Think Hard About Rest

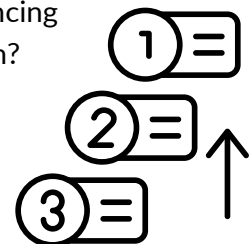
After a long day at school, it is **very** tempting to watch TV, scroll social media, or play video or mobile games. And in smaller doses, these activities can be great to give your brain a break or stimulate it in a different way, give your body a break, or connect you with others. But a screen **binge** is rarely as restful as it seems. Consider putting limits on screen time and opting for other restful options. Check off any you would like to focus on:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Napping | <input type="checkbox"/> Skincare | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taking a walk | <input type="checkbox"/> Doing art | <input type="checkbox"/> Spending time in nature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playing sports or exercising | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music or a podcast | <input type="checkbox"/> Stretching or yoga |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking with a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Meditation or mindfulness | <input type="checkbox"/> Rearranging or tidying your space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading for fun | | |

Stick to Your Priorities

School can feel really overwhelming, and many students deal with a **fear of failure**. Some students respond to a fear of failure by becoming perfectionists, making sure they earn every point and do everything right. Others find themselves shutting down, missing class, and getting behind, even when they don't want to. When experiencing fear of failure, remember your priorities. What motivates your education?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earning a degree or certification | <input type="checkbox"/> Love of learning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Experience for a future job | <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing earning potential |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connections and networking | <input type="checkbox"/> My family or community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |



All of these priorities require effort, but none of them require perfection. An imperfect job on something important to your priority will probably get you closer to your goal than a perfect job on something further from your priority (or no work at all).



Planning Ahead for the Semester

1

Prep the Calendar

Write the dates of each week of the semester or quarter in the week columns

2

Write Down Big Assignments

Check your syllabi for big assignments, projects, papers, and exams. Write them and their due dates in the appropriate week

3

Break it Down

Break down each assignment in to smaller pieces on a separate page. What do you need to do **before** the due date to get each one done? Consider:

- Exams: attending office hours, studying, taking practice tests
- Papers: brainstorming, writing drafts, editing, references and citations
- Group projects: group meetings, drafting, practicing presentations

4

Plan it Out

Space out each piece so you have enough time to complete it. If some weeks are very full, move pieces forward or backwards in time until each week's work is sustainable.

Week 1	Week 10
Week 2	Week 11
Week 3	Week 12
Week 4	Week 13
Week 5	Week 14
Week 6	Week 15
Week 7	Week 16
Week 8	Week 17
Week 9	

Example: For a midterm in Week 9, consider studying units 1-3 in Week 6, units 4-6 in Week 7, and asking questions at office hours and taking a practice test in Week 8



Scan or [click here](#) to learn more about school burnout:

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4

Prep the Calendar

Write in your school days and hours in the first row and first column

5

Add Classes, Meetings and Breaks

Add your classes and meetings to the calendar. Then be sure to schedule in breaks on each day so you prioritize them!

6

Schedule in Time Blocks

Consider scheduling dedicated blocks of time for studying or working with no interruptions and muted notifications. You can also block separate time for responding to messages, emails, etc.

7

Schedule Your Eisenhower Tasks

Refer to the previous page of organized tasks. Here are recommendations for how to prioritize and schedule them:

- (A): complete as soon as possible
- (B): schedule for completion soon
- (C): quickly delegate these tasks
- (D): do not complete

If you can't control which tasks you're assigned or can't delegate them, consider scheduling a few brief time blocks per week to knock these tasks out quickly. But don't sacrifice your deep work time dedicated to (A) and (B) tasks.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Hour 1					
Hour 2					
Hour 3					
Hour 4					
Hour 5					
Hour 6					
Hour 7					
Hour 8					
Hour 9					
Hour 10					



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Think about your typical weekday. You might be juggling many different types of school- or work-related activities or other important responsibilities. Below, check off those that are relevant to you:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classes and office hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Practicum/internship | <input type="checkbox"/> Chores and errands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Studying and homework | <input type="checkbox"/> Work-study or other job | <input type="checkbox"/> Caregiving or parenting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sports practice or games | <input type="checkbox"/> Clubs, societies, Greek life | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering |

During a typical weekday, do you have time to rest, unwind, or take care of yourself?

- Yes, I have this time regularly
- Only if all of my tasks for the day are complete
- Only when I feel I've done "enough" or earned rest time
- I only "rest" when I run out of energy and can't do anything
- I seem to be plugged in to work, school, or other responsibilities all day
- Other _____

If you did not check "yes" above, how does that aspect of your typical weekday affect your experiences of burnout?

It's important to disconnect from school, work, and responsibilities regularly, so your personal time is enjoyable and restorative. Creating a daily rest ritual is a great place to start.

To help you disconnect successfully, **pick an activity to signal to your brain that it's time to rest or take care of yourself.** Doing the same activity every day can help get your brain into resting mode. You might want to try the following:

Tidy Space, Clear Mind

- Tidy your study space
- Write down any to-dos for later
- Close your laptop or school-related browser windows
- Put school-related items away

Make a Change

- Wash your face
- Wash your hands
- Change your clothes
- Take a shower
- Go outside for fresh air

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Move Your Body

- Go for a walk
- Stretch
- Exercise
- Dance
- Spend time in nature

Decompress

- Play with your kids or pet
- Listen to music or a podcast
- Work on a hobby
- Read for enjoyment
- Meditate for a few minutes

How do you feel at the end of the day emotionally?

If you typically feel an unpleasant emotion at the end of the day, you might also want to consider a rest ritual that helps you feel better.

If you often feel... disorganized or scatterbrained → write a list, organize, or tidy up
drained, numb, or stagnant → make a change to freshen up
angry, frustrated, or exasperated → burn those feelings off with exercise
anxious or overwhelmed → decompress with your loved ones or interests

Could any of these ideas help you brush off the day? If not, what's a daily ritual that might work for you? *Try to avoid less healthy coping like alcohol, smoking, or scrolling.*

If a daily rest ritual worked well for you, how would you feel? What would be different?

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Feeling Guilty About Rest or Time Off

We hear a lot of messages about hard work and rest. “I’ll sleep when I’m dead.” “The grind never stops.” “Self-care is just an excuse to be selfish or lazy.” “Other people don’t need breaks or time off.” “Time is money.” A strong work ethic is a powerful thing. But these messages can make us feel guilty for taking breaks and resting when we really need it, increasing the risk of burnout.

This worksheet was designed to help you explore messages that may have gotten under your skin - and prevent you from resting appropriately.

Read the beginning of each sentence, then finish it with the *first* thing that comes to mind:

- Self-care is

- I’ll deserve rest when

- People who deserve rest are

- Hard work means

- Laziness means

- Good students are people who

- Bad students are people who

Reflect on your answers. What do they tell you about the messages you have heard?

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Feeling Guilty About Rest or Time Off

How might these messages about work and rest affect your school burnout?

Write some new messages. Now think through some healthier messages about rest and hard work. What do **you** believe? What messages are more true, realistic, or fair? What messages can you hold onto when you need a break? Maybe these sound something like, “Rest is not a reward, it’s a necessity.” “My health is important.” “Rest makes my work better.” “We all deserve a break.”

Read the beginning of each sentence, then finish it with a healthier message that you believe:

- Self-care is

- Rest is

- Hard work means

- Write your own message:

- Write your own message:

Make a plan for resting, taking breaks, or taking time off in the future:

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Mental Patterns That Affect School Burnout

School burnout is tough for everyone, but it can be particularly difficult if you experience some common mental patterns. These patterns may have been helpful in the past, or might still be helpful in other contexts. But if your education is stressful, these patterns can contribute to burnout over time because they sap your energy and confidence.

Review the lists below, and check off any examples that you often struggle with at school. If you can think of additional examples of each mental pattern that are relevant for you, feel free to add them to the end of the list.

People-Pleasing

- Worries about people being unhappy with you or your schoolwork
- Difficulty saying no because you don't want people to be upset or let down
- Saying yes to additional work, even if you're overwhelmed
- Often rescheduling your day to accommodate others' schedules
- Putting others' needs before your own
- Avoiding conflict or apologizing often (even when it isn't your fault)
- Always hoping for approval or reassurance
- Difficulty expressing your honest feelings or opinions
- _____
- _____

Perfectionism

- Feeling uncomfortable or displeased if your schoolwork isn't perfect
- Disliking time constraints that would affect your schoolwork's quality
- Difficulty having others see or critique your schoolwork before it's done
- Continuing to work on something after it's "good enough"
- Beating yourself up over mistakes
- Procrastinating because you worry your schoolwork won't be good enough
- Struggling to delegate tasks or ask for help
- Feeling relief or exhaustion instead of pride when something is done
- _____
- _____

Imposter Syndrome

- Feeling that people think you're more competent than you really are
- Thinking you only got into your school or program due to luck or a fluke
- Feeling like it's only a matter of time before others realize you're not qualified
- Thinking that others are much more capable and talented than you
- Not believing or downplaying praise of your abilities or schoolwork
- Doubting your skills or accomplishments, even though you've been successful
- Avoiding new challenges for fear of failure
- Overpreparing to avoid being "found out"
- _____
- _____

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Mental Patterns That Affect School Burnout

Self-Worth Defined by
School

- Feeling bad about yourself as a person if school is not going well
- Feeling useless or worthless if school is not going well
- Feeling you're not worthy of respect or love if school is not going well
- Having much higher self-esteem when school is going well
- Feeling guilty, restless, or lost when you're not doing schoolwork
- Feeling that your other qualities (e.g., being a good friend) don't matter
- Taking criticism of your schoolwork very personally
- Neglecting relationships and self-care for school tasks
-
-

After checking off the examples that are relevant to you, reflect with the following questions:

Do I tend to fall into one mental pattern, or multiple?

Has my most common mental pattern(s) ever helped me in the past?

How does my most common mental pattern(s) affect my schoolwork?

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What would school be like if I didn't experience my most common mental pattern(s)?

Consider the following ideas for ways to break each mental pattern:

People-Pleasing

Practice saying things like:

- "I'm not available then. How about tomorrow?"
- "Due to my workload, I can't take on any extra projects right now."
- "Right now, I need to prioritize [project]."

Challenge yourself to pause before:

- Saying yes - check your task list first
- Apologizing - are you actually at fault?

Perfectionism

Make a conscious effort to:

- Celebrate when a project is complete
- Welcome and breathe through feedback earlier in your process
- Focus on criticizing *the project*, not yourself (e.g., "The wording needs improvement," not, "I phrased this poorly")
- Embrace quick, messy first attempts

Imposter Syndrome

On your own:

- Make a list of your skills and accomplishments
- Purposely savor your successes

With others:

- Observe how others react to their mistakes and successes
- Say, "Thank you so much!" when you or your work is complimented rather than minimizing

Self-Worth Defined By School

Explore:

- Your values and interests outside of school
- What a great life would look like to you, and what elements besides school are important
- What your loved ones think your positive qualities are
- Reframing criticism from chastisement to opportunities to improve your project

Which pattern-breaker did you try? How did it go? What will you try next time?

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Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



325+
Companies Reviewed



3,625+
Hours of Firsthand Experience



1,545+
Data Points Analyzed



[Best Online Therapy for Depression](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

[Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



[Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

[Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.





Tools for Self-Assessment and Psychoeducation

Figuring out the next step in your mental health journey can be overwhelming. Developed by psychologists, the tools at [ChoosingTherapy.com](https://choosingtherapy.com) can help. Our mental health self-assessment quizzes can help you explore common symptoms of mental health concerns, as well as find the best therapy style for you. Our mental health worksheets can guide you through therapy concepts and how to use them in your life.

[Learn More with Mental Health Quizzes](#)

Our collection of psychologist-developed mental health quizzes can help you learn if you are experiencing mild, moderate, or concerning levels of anxiety, depression, stress, burnout, and more. Each quiz also provides targeted resources based on your answers. These self-assessments are designed to offer insight, not diagnoses, and can be a helpful first step in recognizing symptoms and deciding whether to seek further support. If you have concerns about your mental health or your quiz results, we recommend you reach out to a licensed mental health professional.



[Free Mental Health Worksheets](#)

Search our collection of therapy worksheets by mental health topic, therapy modality, or demographic group. Our free, psychologist-developed worksheets make therapy exercises understandable and relevant to daily life. Find worksheets for help with ADHD, anxiety, depression, relationship difficulties, and other common mental health challenges.