

## - Burn out (Psychology)

# Bye bye burnout

## HOW A LITTLE PLANNING CAN HELP OPTIMISE YOUR DAILY ENERGY

The Chronicle · 3 Mar 2022 · 36 · Fleur Heazlewood is the author of Resilience Recipes: Making Space for Wellbeing that Works; founder of the Blueberry Institute; and an expert in healthy, high performance. Visit [blueberryinstitute.com](https://blueberryinstitute.com)

Most of us know that the foundations of our physical health and wellbeing include regular movement, nourishing nutrition and nurturing sleep. However, too often we let life get in the way of achieving this.



Australian resilience expert and author Fleur Heazlewood warns the reality is that if you keep drawing on your energy without refuelling or recharging, your system will keep slowing down until you eventually come to a stop. She uses the famous example of Huffington Post editor-in-chief Arianna Huffington who collapsed at her New York desk while checking work emails and making calls. She passed out and woke up in a pool of blood with a broken cheekbone.

“Her belief that led to this event was that burnout was the price for success,” Heazlewood says.

Huffington quit her working around-the-clock habit, prioritised daily self-care and launched her health start-up Thrive Global to help others burning the candle at both ends around the world.

“We’ve finally gotten to a time in which it’s not burnout that’s considered a sign of strength, but avoiding it. That’s a huge change,” Huffington says.

Heazlewood agrees: “We know we should be refuelling and recharging, but many of us are not doing it, or have fallen off the healthy wagon.”

Here are Heazlewood’s tips for improving our relationship with our energy and wellbeing:

### MANAGE YOUR ENERGY, NOT YOUR TIME

Many of us approach our energy like a time equation. We often start with the tasks that need to be done, burning energy in urgency, busyness and distractions that take you away from what’s important.

Optimising your energy means flipping this equation. Prioritising your energy to first do what is important, focus on the things that you want to do, and do them at a time when you want to do them.

### PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Most of us are familiar with fitness-oriented new year goals that start with a burst of energy and then fizzle out within weeks. These aspirations often miss the key ingredients to sustain action and momentum.

Try thinking about how to best boost your energy and wellbeing, the way you would if it was a business problem to solve.

What strategy, structure, supports and accountability do you need to put in place for success?

### BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT

Trying to do too much? You have a finite amount of energy and time each day, so you need to balance it across the things that matter.

When priorities work well, they help you stay focused. Priorities need to be supported by boundaries, which are the specific choices you make about what you will do, but also what you won't do. Be deliberate. What are your non-negotiables? What will you be flexible with?

#### HEALTHY HABIT STACKING

Healthy habits are good for you mentally, physically, and socially. They give you energy.

Habit stacking is pretty much exactly what it sounds like. It's about making it easy to create new, healthy habits by stacking them on habits you already have. It will look something like this: "After I do this, I will do that."

After I turn my alarm off in the morning, I will drink a glass of water. After I get out of bed, I will go for a walk around the park. A habit is most successful when it includes short-term incentives, built-in support, and provides a long-term pay-off.

#### REMOVE FRICTION

Think of your willpower as a muscle. It tires with use and depletes over time. Decision fatigue is an energy depletion that makes it difficult for us to resist distractions and temptations, but we can design our environment to energise rather than exhaust us.

Mark Zuckerberg wears a grey T-shirt and jeans every day so that he doesn't waste energy deciding what to wear. Reduce overload in your daily decisions by automating or outsourcing low-value tasks. Things like investing in a cleaner for your house, outsourcing the ironing of shirts, or engaging a professional to do your tax.