



JUNE 2020

Yerbo's go-tos to avoid Mental Fatigue



WHY ARE WE EXHAUSTED ALL THE TIME?

Do you ever find yourself re-reading the same paragraph over and over? Not being able to focus? And it's not like you could just sit back, relax and enjoy a movie. No, you're sitting on your desk and watching the hours go by, without being able to focus and jumping from task to task. When the day is over, you feel like you ran a marathon and you barely left your desk. Furthermore, a sense of guilt arises from not achieving what you were striving for which drains your energy as well. Enters: *Mental Fatigue*.

IN A NUTSHELL

In layman's terms, Mental fatigue is that feeling of your brain entering a thick fog and not being able to function correctly and the simplest tasks seem daunting. That email could have just as easily been compared to climbing the Everest. *But it wasn't that hard last week!* That's the trick: Mental Fatigue can be *acute* or *chronic*. The first one can happen after a particularly bad day, is quite fleeting, and can be solved with a good sleeping session. Yet, if left unattended, acute fatigue can quickly snowball and turn into chronic fatigue, and then, well that's just a perfect scenario for burnout to show up.

WHAT CAN LEAD TO MENTAL FATIGUE?

Well, pick your poison because there's no one thing to point to, it can be an array of factors: hormonal, nutritional, sleep deprivation—on the physical side, or cognitive when you've been pushing your brain to its limits: either asking focus for long periods of time, or from spreading its attention too thin and asking too many things at once. A main point of focus or juggling tasks can be just as daunting.

OUR GO-TO REMEDIES FOR MENTAL FATIGUE

EAT PROPERLY

A no-brainer—no pun intended! Treat your brain as if you were training for a weight lifting competition. You'd pay extra attention to what you're eating then. Basic guidelines for keeping balanced energy levels:

- **Plan your meals.** This cuts down time and stress to figure out what to eat and you'll avoid the easy way out of just choosing junk food.
- **Eat breakfast.** No, black coffee and one piece of toast won't cut it. Fuel your brain!
- **No (or few) refined sugars.** We don't have to explain what a sugar crash is, we've all been there. Avoid them!
- **Plenty of water:** JUST.DRINK.WATER. Do whatever it takes to remind yourself to do it. Having a big bottle right next to you is enough reminder.
- **Snack.** Don't go on long periods without eating. Snacks will keep you fueled. You are not running a marathon but high-stress jobs will drain your energy all the same.

GET REGULAR EXERCISE

We get it, you're tired—and probably a bit sad from it, so the last thing you want to do is get on a treadmill. Well, that effort will go a long way because you'll release endorphins that will

make it all worth it, and your energy levels will slowly but surely start to pick up. A few pointers:

- **Pick a time**, train your brain to know that it needs to get ready for exercise.
- **Don't over do it**. Start small, a 15-minute walk will do just fine.
- **Groups are better**. A sense of community and accountability will keep your spirits up, and then you have buddies to hang out with. Win win.
- **Pick an enjoyable activity**. If you don't enjoy running, don't strive to become a marathonist just yet, focus on getting over your mental fatigue first. Check out your local meetup groups, some might surprise you with physical activity: bird watching, anyone?

FOCUS ON SLEEPING

No-brainer, again, but for some reason we have to include it: because even if it's obvious, you're most likely not getting enough sleep, are you? Treat sleep like you would a deadline. Here are some of our go-tos to keep a productive sleep schedule.

- **No screens before bed**. That pesky blue light will keep you scrolling with no end.
- **Develop a night routine**, even if it's something as simple as having a cup of tea while listening to chill music before brushing your teeth and heading to bed. If you do it often enough you'll be letting your brain know it's time to sleep.
- **Dark and quiet**. If possible, invest in great curtains to block the light out.
- **Wake up at the same time**, it's easier to get your biological clock to make you wake up at the same time than to make it fall asleep. The routine will help get you tired at the end of the day.
- **Cut down the caffeine after 4 pm**. Nobody likes late afternoon coffee jitters and it certainly does not help your sleep.

END OF DAY, END OF WORK

Just like we said before that a nighttime routine will help your mind realize it's time for bed, **an end-of-day routine will tell your brain it's time to disconnect from work**, since shutting down your computer just won't cut it. Maybe getting on your workout clothes, even if you end up just walking around in the fresh air. That's completely up to you.

You know this, but you're probably not doing it: set your phone notifications off at the end of your work day, at least with work-related apps. Do it, no ifs and buts on this one.

GAUGE YOUR ENERGY LEVELS

We are not all built in the same way, people experience spikes and lulls of energy throughout the day. These are called Ultradian Rhythms.

When possible, arrange your day to fit that flow. If your job position allows it, don't keep an arbitrary 9 to 5 and make your own schedule. If that's not possible, try to identify around what time you're feeling energetic and around what time you feel you need to take it easy.

High-energy spikes are better for:

- Tasks that need your full focus.
- Tasks that need your focus but are usually procrastinated.
- Decision-making.

Low-energy lulls are useful for:

- Tasks of repetitive nature that don't require much head space.
- Personal errands.
- Catch up on emails.
- Reading and creative tasks.

REDUCE MULTI-TASKING

Yes, controversial advice! Multitasking gets all the rave, but it doesn't really work at your advantage when you're going through a mental-fatigue period. When you're asking for too much of your brain at once, it's bound to get overloaded, like that browser window you keep piling new tabs on and on.

A big part of multitasking is having things on your mind, like replying to an email you've read 10 times but never got around to doing, or a recommendation letter for a colleague's child. To avoid that, a good rule of thumb is **only getting to it when you have the time** to complete the task. **No hovering, no pondering, just getting it done** when you get the chance.

If/when possible, **use time-blocks to separate your day** and focus on one thing at a time: emails, meetings, technical things. This strategy works hand in hand with figuring out your energy rhythms like we mentioned above. Low energy lulls will help with pesky tasks like replying to a gazillion emails.

RALLYING IS A NO-GO: TAKE BREAKS

Though they won't guarantee a complete energy-recharge, they will allow for a rest to avoid an overload. Give your brain a chance to breathe and relax. A few pointers for more productive breaks: a short 10 minute walk outdoors, with someone and no technology is definitely better than just sitting on your desk scrolling through social media. Make the best out of it and recharge!

KEEP A HEALTHY SOCIAL CIRCLE

We are social creatures by nature, even introverts need someone to talk to! It can be family, friends, coworkers, but here's the catch: we need to surround ourselves with people that allow us to recharge and provide us with positive mental energy. You know when you get together with someone and when you leave you feel like you could take over the world? Those are keepers!

Try to avoid people that leave you exhausted mentally and end up draining you (energy vampires!). Whether we want to admit it or not, most of us have some sort of toxic relationship or another, we keep someone around because of how long we've known them, obligation, or any other reason we use to convince ourselves. Get rid of these relationships, or keep them to a minimum, at least during periods of high mental fatigue, you really can't afford the extra weariness.

DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP, IT'S A WEIRD TIME

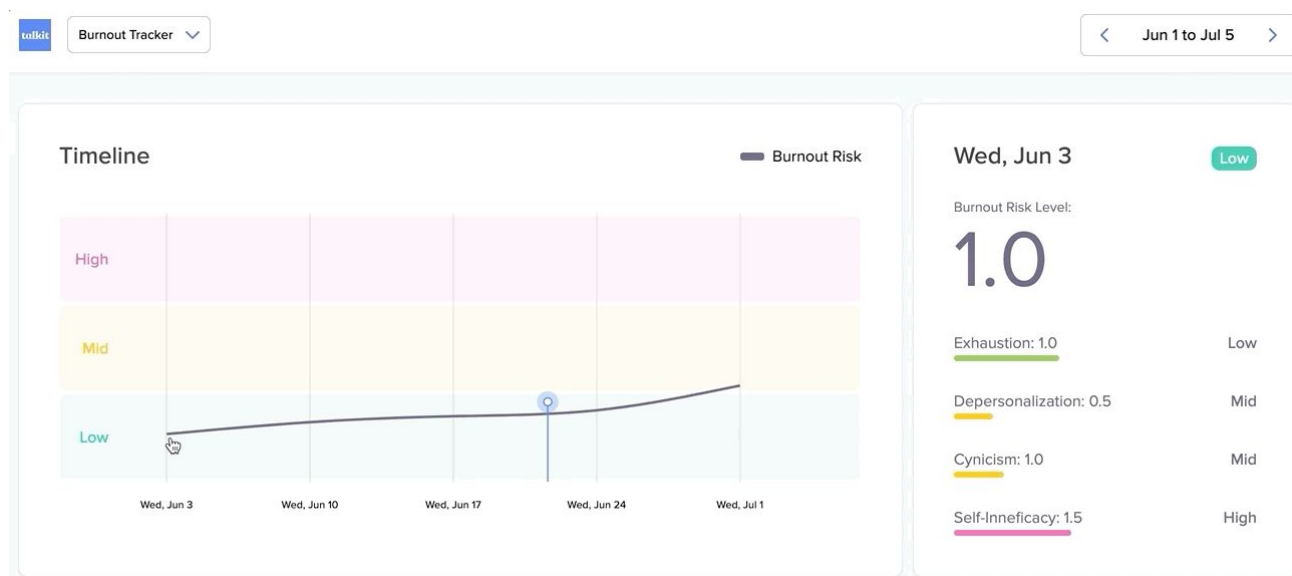
These thoughts are meant to be evergreen and always good advice that will work for you, but perhaps you're not reading them at the time when we're writing them, and let me tell you, *person from the future*, in case you don't remember, this is a weird time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit us in too many ways to count, so part of the mental fatigue that you're experiencing might be due to it. You're not alone. [A study done by SHRM](#) on the impact that the pandemic had on mental health showed that:

- Nearly 1 in 4 employees report often feeling bad about themselves, or that they are a failure and have let their family or themselves down.
- 22% of employees report having trouble concentrating. Out of those, 65% are living with a member of the vulnerable population, and 54% are women.
- Over 1 in 3 reported experiencing a lack of energy and feeling tired. Out of those, 44% are Gen Z and 56% are women.

DO WHAT YOU CAN, WHEN YOU CAN

Only you can take the necessary measures to take care of yourself. Using tools like [Talkit](#) on a daily basis can help you keep your burnout risk at bay. Having actual information that shows your risk, week to week, will make it harder to look away from it. Make a change, start today.



MANAGING A TEAM?

You're probably fatigued yourself, but you still need to be a leader that takes care of their team. We're here to make that easier. [Request a Talkit demo for your team.](#)

ABOUT US

Yerbo is becoming the leader player startup in Democratizing Mental Health at work. We build tech solutions for top-notch teams that promote emotional well-being and prevent burnout, through an ecosystem with behavioral-science products at its core.

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE TO DIVE DEEPER INTO?

We're always open to talk things out and see what we can do to make your work environment burnout-free, and to overall be a place where you'd like to stick around. You can email us here, and follow us on our social media outlets, we love to share news about our products but also useful content for everyone.

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