



FIGHTING WORK FATIGUE

The dangers of work fatigue (and how to avoid it)

We've all been there. It's 2 p.m. and lunch is long over. But instead of feeling recharged and focused, you're ready to curl up in a corner, turn off the lights and take a nap. No one will notice, right?

While it's completely normal to hit the dreaded afternoon slump, what happens when this feeling is around all day, every day?

Workplace fatigue isn't just being physically tired—it's being mentally exhausted.

Not only are your energy levels low, but so is your motivation. When we're fatigued like this, it can make it difficult to concentrate and stay organized. And when it lasts for days or weeks, despite adequate sleep, it can leave you feeling anxious, depressed, and on the road to burnout.

Anyone can feel tired at work. It's when those feelings of tiredness persist that you need to take action.

Let's take a closer look at what causes work fatigue and what you can do to stop being so sleepy at work.

What is work fatigue and how is it different than just being tired?

If you're tired, you might feel that way for a day or two, but it

will usually resolve itself after a couple of nights of quality sleep. Fatigue, on the other hand, is a bit more complicated.

So what is work fatigue?

Work fatigue is defined as, "unrelenting exhaustion that isn't relieved by rest, a nearly constant state of weariness that develops over time, reducing your energy, motivation, and concentration."

Much like burnout, work fatigue is a constant state of tiredness that won't go away. Eventually, it seeps into other aspects of your life and makes it harder to focus, feel motivated, and even disconnect from work. ***(Continued, Page 2)***



*(Continued)****What causes basic tiredness to become work fatigued?***

For one, the changing nature of work is redefining our daily schedules and making it more difficult to re-energize even on our days off.

In fact, the average American worker puts in 137 more hours per year than someone in the same industry in Japan (and nearly 500 more hours per year than employees in France!) While most people do *at least* one hour of work on 50% of all weekends.

Remote work also plays a part in this change. While remote workers claim to be more productive they're also more likely to work overtime and less likely to take a day off. Remote workers also tend to work without a schedule, making it even more challenging to maintain a healthy work-life balance that prevents fatigue and burnout.

This isn't to say that work fatigue is a consequence of modern working culture. We all feel tired at work. However, if the problem is long term, it's time to look at ways to reclaim your energy.

***1. Find and work during your peak productive hours***

Once you determine your body's natural Circadian rhythm, you can learn to work during the hours when you're most alert. Simply put, this means scheduling deep, focused work when your energy levels are naturally higher.

When your energy levels are low, such as during the afternoon slump, switch your focus to less-important tasks like answering emails and returning phone calls.

2. Manage your motivation

We mentioned earlier how a lack of motivation can impact your energy levels and cause fatigue. But motivation is a fickle thing. If you wait for it to appear, you'll find yourself waiting forever.

Instead, you need to engineer your workspace and your brain to self-motivate. Start by changing up your workspace to reduce clutter and make it more action-oriented. Clutter provides distraction and tends to make us unmotivated.

Finally, create rituals and routines to signal to your brain that it's time to start something new.

Your brain loves repetition, so if you spend five minutes cleaning your desk before it's time to start work, or five minutes responding to emails after each break, you are training your brain to expect this activity before you begin something more mentally strenuous.

3. Take more breaks during the day

If you're tired at work, why not take a break? A power nap, just 15 to 20 minutes of sleep, can boost alertness and improve performance (while longer naps—called slow-wave sleep—are excellent for decision-making skills).

Taking breaks during the day isn't just good for your productivity or combating fatigue—it's instinctual.

4. Set limits on your working time

Work-life balance is crucial for fighting work fatigue. Yet few people set proper limits to their working day. Instead, we let our phones and email seep into our personal time and never fully disconnect from work.

5. Develop an exercise routine

Finally, some studies have shown that activities like exercise, meditation and yoga can help decrease the stress and anxiety that lead to work fatigue.

Stop feeling so sleepy at work

You don't have to relegate yourself to feeling tired at work all the time. Instead, determine the cause of your work fatigue and try one of these solutions.

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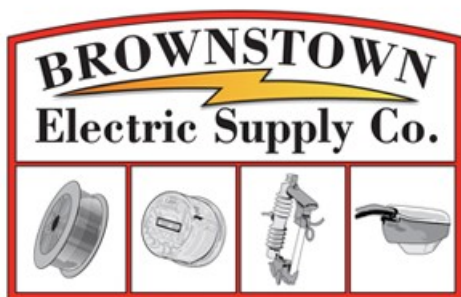
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