



Recognizing **ACADEMIC BURNOUT** and how to help

Some people use academic burnout and academic stress interchangeably, however, these are two different conditions. Let's start with defining these terms.

Academic Burnout

A negative emotional, physical and mental reaction to prolonged study that results in exhaustion, frustration, lack of motivation and reduced ability in school.

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Academic Stress

A student's psychological state resulting from continuous social and self-imposed pressure in a school environment that depletes the student's psychological reserves.

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Causes of academic stress and burnout:

- Piles of school work
- Lack of sleep
- Poor eating habits
- Concurrent family demands
- Limited or no physical exercise
- Poor time management
- Unrealistic goals

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Symptoms of academic burnout:

- Long term fatigue
- Inability of the brain to absorb more information
- An unwillingness to study further
- A decline in academic performance
- Feelings of anxiety & depression

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Symptoms of academic stress:

- Over Engagement
- Reactive or overactive emotions
- Sense of urgency and hyperactivity
- Lost or diminished energy
- Feelings of anxiety
- Physical pain

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HELPFUL COPING STRATEGIES

Prolonged academic stress without proper and helpful coping strategies can progress into academic burnout. Many students turn to drugs or alcohol as a way to manage or escape the pressures of academic stress. For instance, stimulants are often misused to enhance focus and prolong study sessions, while alcohol and marijuana are commonly used for relaxation.⁵ Here are some helpful coping strategies to help stop academic burnout before it starts:⁶



Stay Present

The past is gone, and the future is not yet here. The moment over which you have full control is the present moment. When you notice that your attention has drifted to the future or to the past, gently refocus yourself to the present moment.

Learn New Skills Through Practice

The way you learn a new skill is by practicing. The more you practice healthy thinking patterns and behavioral choices, the better you will feel. The more you practice good study skills and time management, the more prepared you will be for the test or for writing the paper.

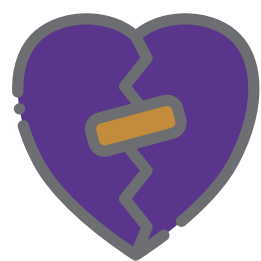


Use Positive Self-Talk

How you talk to yourself influences how you feel about yourself. If you “beat yourself up” and “belittle yourself,” you might start believing the voice of that internal critic. You can practice replacing negative thoughts with thoughts that are helpful and inspiring. You can learn to be kind to yourself.

Take Responsibility for Mistakes

When you make a mistake, take responsibility for it. If you are late when turning in a paper or lab, acknowledge your mistake and take action. You can apologize to a professor or lab partner and be more prepared next time.



Forgive Yourself

We are taught to apologize to others when we have been unkind to them or when we have made a mistake that affects them, but we sometimes don't forgive ourselves for mistakes. If you do poorly on a test, forgive yourself. Compassion is something that we can give not only to others but to ourselves as well.

Focus on What You Can Control

Others make their own decisions about their lives and even if they make decisions you disagree with, it's their right to make those decisions. You can study in the library alone. You can go to study hours even if friends are not going. You can control your own choices even if others disagree with you.



Practice Good Self-Care

Staying up all night studying or sleeping all day makes concentrating on studies difficult. Getting at least seven hours of sleep at night, eating three meals each day, exercising, going for a walk, laughing with others, or taking a hot shower to relax at night are great self-care strategies. It's important to take care of ourselves.

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