Burnout vs
Stress

Understanding the differences, recognising the signs, and taking steps to prevent burnout.

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What is **Stress?**

Stress is a natural response to challenging situations. It often relatively short-term and caused by a feeling that something is out of our control. For example our work, a high-pressure situation, or our finances.

Common signs of stress

➡ Headaches, muscle tension, fatigue

➡ Irritability and low mood

➡ Changes in appetite

➡ Feeling anxious or worried

➡ Trouble sleeping and difficulty concentrating

We all experience stress from time to time, once the situation changes, stress often lessens of disappears entirely. If the situation is prolonged or doesn't change, stress can sometimes cause burnout.

Being able to recognise the common signs of stress within ourselves means that we can proactive steps to manage and reduce symptoms, and avoid burnout.

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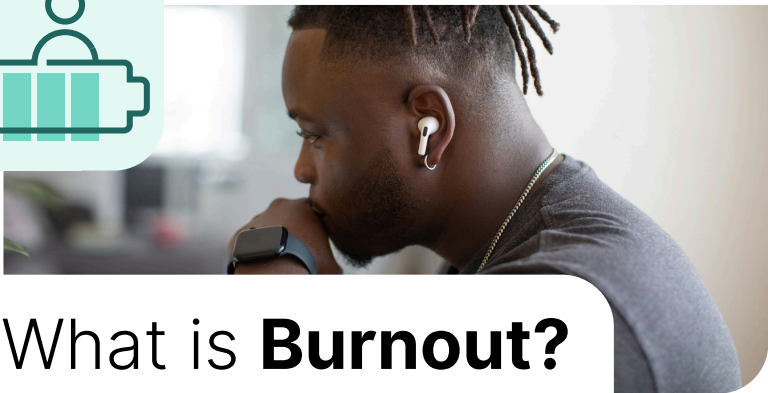
What is **Burnout?**

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion. It is often caused by prolonged and excessive stress, when we feel overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands.

Burnout tends to take place over a longer period of time and is a gradual process. If left unaddressed, the negative affects of burnout can spill into other areas of our lives such as our work, personal life, and even physical health; as a result, we may feel unable to cope with demands in our daily life.

Burnout can impact anyone, at any stage of their career, but it is avoidable.

Common signs **of burnout**

➡ Unexplained exhaustion, fatigue and headaches

➡ Detachment and feelings of helplessness

➡ Loss of motivation, withdrawal

➡ Becoming isolated

➡ Feeling overloaded and unable to cope

Take our free Burnout training

What are the
key differences?

Duration

Stress is often temporary and can go away on its own, while burnout is a gradual process that builds over time.

Impact

Stress can trigger our 'fight or flight' response, motivating us to take action. Whereas, burnout can lead to a sense of helplessness and disengagement.

Recovery

Stress can often be managed with relaxation techniques and lifestyle changes, but burnout requires more significant intervention and recovery time.

How to prevent
Burnout?

Burnout is avoidable. By understanding the differences between stress and burnout, and being able to recognise your own warning signs, you can take proactive steps to maintain a healthy work-life balance and prevent burnout.

Our top tips for prevention

- Prioritise and carve out dedicated time for self-care, whatever that might look like for you.
- Recognise your limits and set boundaries within your personal and professional life, such as clearly defined work hours.
- Lean on your support networks. You're not alone and it's okay to ask for help.

- Implement stress management techniques into your routines such as mindful practices.
- Take regular breaks away from work and allow yourself moments to switch off, such as leaving your desk at lunch time.
- Try to stay physically active to help reduce feelings of stress and improve your overall wellbeing.

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Get
in touch

If you'd like to know more about Rightsteps and how we can support your organisation, get in touch now – call **0161 238 5264** or email **info@rightsteps.co.uk** to speak to our friendly team now.

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