



Southern Ontario
Counselling Centre

***Get me off this roller coaster!
The demands of Doing-it-All***

By Susan Rosenblum, M.S.W., R.S.W.

Anna Gold
M.S.W., R.S.W.

For most people, juggling the demands of career and personal life is an ongoing challenge. The stress of “doing it all” can lead some to feel overwhelmed, overloaded, and stressed to the *max*. Over time, this can lead to burnout.

Lee Horton-Carter
M.A.

Being stressed can lead to problems in relationships, loss of interest in sex, sleep deprivation or over sleeping, and a loss of interest in things previously enjoyed. Sometimes people cope with the discomfort of stress by using alcohol, drugs, gaming, or addictive behaviours. Striking a work-life balance takes a bit of effort, and is a continuous process.

Dr. Mavis Kerr
M.D.

What is burnout?

It is an exhaustion that comes from excessive stress and demands caused by jobs, family responsibilities, friends, self, or societal expectations. It zaps our energy, and can interfere with our ability to cope. It evolves over time and accumulates from on-going stress.

Neil Lackey
M.Th.

Signs of stress and burnout:

Stress is marked by feelings of being trapped, powerlessness, hopelessness, exhaustion, detachment, isolation, irritability, frustration, failure, cynicism, and apathy. It can make people feel uninterested in the things previously enjoyed.

Susan Rosenblum
M.S.W., R.S.W.

Strategies to deal with burnout:

☒ **Time management** . Your time is like your income: it is finite, so try to budget your time the way you do your money. Notice how much time you spend doing your various activities.

☒ **Prioritize** : Sometimes we want to do more than is actually possible. Set priorities for what is most important. Let go of some of the tasks.

☒ **Take control** . People tend to feel better when they have some control, choice and flexibility in their lives at work and at home.

☒ **Learn to say no**. This means deciding what you need, or want, in your life. It's OK to say no respectfully. You will make more room in your life for the activities that you have prioritized.

☒ **Leave work at work**. With technology to connect to anyone at any time from virtually anywhere, there's no boundary between work and home — unless you create it. Make a conscious decision to separate work time from personal time. For instance, turn off your cell phone, put away your laptop computer, and don't answer the phone during personal or family time.

Teresa Wiebe
B.Ed., M.T.S.

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p. 2

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- ☒ **Rethink your cleaning standards.** An unmade bed or sink of dirty dishes won't impact the quality of your life. Do what needs to be done and let the rest go. If you can afford it, pay someone else to clean your house.
- ☒ **No more guilt.** Remember, having a family and a job is OK — for both men and women.
- ☒ **Take care of yourself.** Set aside time each day for an activity that you enjoy, such as walking the dog, playing with a child, working out or listening to music.
- ☒ **Time for recreation.** At least once a week, take the phone off the hook, turn off the computer and the TV. Find activities you can do with your partner, family or friends that will rejuvenate you.
- ☒ **Sleep enough.** There's nothing as stressful and potentially dangerous as being sleep-deprived.
- ☒ **Exercise.** Getting daily physical exercise is known to be a stress-buster. Get moving in any way that works for you – walking, biking, playing a sport, throwing a ball or Frisbee. It doesn't matter what it is.
- ☒ **Nutrition .** Take time to build healthy meals into your schedule. Healthy doesn't mean it takes longer, in fact it can be faster and cheaper than “fast food” -- And it makes you feel good.
- ☒ **Emotional Supports.** Cultivate a network of friends and relatives who can support you.
- ☒ **Seek professional help.** Everyone needs help from time to time. If you feel overwhelmed, talk with a professional, such as a counsellor or your family doctor.

Balance does not mean doing it all. Look at your priorities and set boundaries. Be firm in what you can and cannot do. Only you can be the judge of what you need in your life.

Susan Rosenblum M.S.W., R.S.W. is a psychotherapist working at Southern Ontario Counselling Centre near Waterloo, Ontario with individuals, couples and families. She is experienced working with trauma using mind, body, spirit techniques. She can be reached at 519-746-2323 Ext. 304. More information is available at www.socounselling.com