

Wellness Wednesday



August 5, 2020

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You Can Still Burn Out While Working From Home. These Are The Signs.

Working from home doesn't mean we avoid stress. The 'burnout' might feel a little different, though.

We might be working from home, but that doesn't mean we can't burn out from stress. The feeling might be a little different from what we're used to, though.

Pop-up offices have appeared in bedrooms across the globe, so the boundaries between work and personal lives are increasingly blurred. It's all too easy to check emails at 9 p.m. because your laptop is within reach, or skip a lunch break because your head is deep in a project. And while you might not realize it, it's also all too easy to burn out.



"Working from home provides little opportunity for variety in your working day," says Lucy Fuller, a UKCP-accredited psychotherapist. "There's little chance for face-to-face, non-work social interaction and it comes with an intensity that would usually be broken up by traveling and dawdling on your way to work, in your lunch period and also going to meetings outside your place of work.

"Our days are therefore becoming grey and our brains are burning and clouding from sitting in front of a screen for so long. We're effectively trapped in this way of work without a definite end point to look forward to."

Psychotherapist Philip Karahassan, a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, doesn't think people know they can burn out while working from home – "people usually see it as a more relaxing work day, where they can do work at their own pace" – which might mean they're hurtling headfirst into it.

What actually is burnout?

Last year, burnout was classified by the World Health Organization as an "occupational phenomenon," legitimizing the experiences of many who've fallen prey to the problem, also known as vital exhaustion.

“Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed,” said WHO. It’s characterized by three factors: feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance or negativity surrounding your job, and reduced productivity.

Left unchecked, it can cause physical problems too. One study linked the issue to atrial fibrillation – an irregular heartbeat – which is a major cause of stroke.

So what are the signs of burnout at home?

When working from home, feelings of burnout might be slightly different to what we experience while commuting and traveling for work, suggests Fuller. “We can experience a burnout that has less physical symptoms but manifests as more of a mental fuzziness,” she says.

Those experiencing burnout at home might feel tired, confused and become forgetful. Other signs include frustration, anger and sadness.

Burnout is different for everyone, so it’s important to check in with how you’re feeling and be aware if your feelings or behavior change. If you do notice a change, don’t ignore it.

Can I prevent it?

Making changes in your work-life routine to prevent burnout is important because, as Fuller points out, when our mood starts to dip, it can be even harder to climb out of our low state of mind.

Taking holiday is a good place to start – especially if you feel like the last few months have been a stressful blur. “Many people have taken their holiday leave, even though they have nowhere to go,” says Fuller. “This might sound mad and a waste of holiday leave, but it makes good sense in terms of taking a break and doing something different for a few days away from the pressures of work.”

If you can’t take annual leave, try to separate your work life from your home life as much as you can. Karahassan recommends setting boundaries as soon as possible. “Have a separate place for work, rest, discussion,” he says. “It can be as easy as having a corner of the room which is just for your work.”

“Something that helped me is having a table for me to sit and do my work rather than the laptop on my legs,” he says. “It’s about making those small changes that go a long way as you are able create a work-life balance.”

Set boundaries with the people around you, too. Make clear what times you’ll be working and when you can spend time with them – and stick to that routine.

You might also want to think about how to create commute-type divides into your working day. “In normal circumstances we have a natural divide, which is your commute, but we now have to create our own transition,” says Fuller. “This might be doing exercise, putting music on that you love or taking a bath.

“Whatever it is, use the activity to shake off your day and draw a line under your work to move into your leisure time.”

What can I do if I feel burnt out already?

First of all, stop and tell yourself you're doing a great job and take a break outside of your home environment, suggests Karahassan. "Go for a walk, sit on a bench alone. If you can't go out, go in the shower, wash your face, just do something for you. That five or 10-minute break can give you the space to reset and take control of your thoughts and feelings," he says.

"Turn off your work screen and indulge yourself in something that brings you joy," adds Fuller. "You won't regret it."

Avoid unhealthy vices like smoking and drinking and instead try to do things for your mental wellbeing – do some exercise, connect with loved ones, prioritize self-care, sign up to volunteer, and try to work smarter (not harder).

Practicing mindfulness can help you live in the moment rather than thinking about the endless Zoom meetings you've got coming up. And practicing gratitude can promote feelings of positivity – write down three things that went well today, or for which you're grateful.

Breathing exercises are useful when things feel too much, so take five minutes out of your day, sit comfortably somewhere, and focus on your breath. There are a number of deep breathing apps you can download on your phone to help guide you.

And if none of this helps and your stress is causing you distress, speak to your GP who can offer psychological support AND/OR contact your Employee Assistance Program for resources and guidance.





FOIL PACKET SPICE RUBBED FISH WITH WATERMELON SALSA



314 Calories | *PREP TIME: 15 mins* | *COOK TIME: 15 mins* | *TOTAL TIME: 30 mins*
YIELD: 4 Servings | *COURSE: Dinner, Lunch* | *CUISINE: American*

INGREDIENTS

Watermelon Salsa:

2 cups diced seedless watermelon, 1/4 inch
 1/4 small red onion, finely diced
 2 tbsp roughly chopped fresh cilantro
 Juice of 1 lime
 1/2 jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely diced
 1 tablespoon olive oil

Fish:

4 boneless, skinless fish filets, 6 oz each (striped bass, salmon, cod or halibut)
 1 tsp smoked paprika
 1 tsp kosher salt
 1/2 tsp onion powder
 1/2 tsp garlic powder
 1/2 tsp ground cayenne pepper
 1/4 tsp ground oregano
 1/8 tsp black pepper
 1/2 lime, juiced
 4 teaspoons olive oil
 4 pieces Reynolds Wrap® Heavy Duty Aluminum Foil, 12 x 18 inches
 lime wedges, for serving

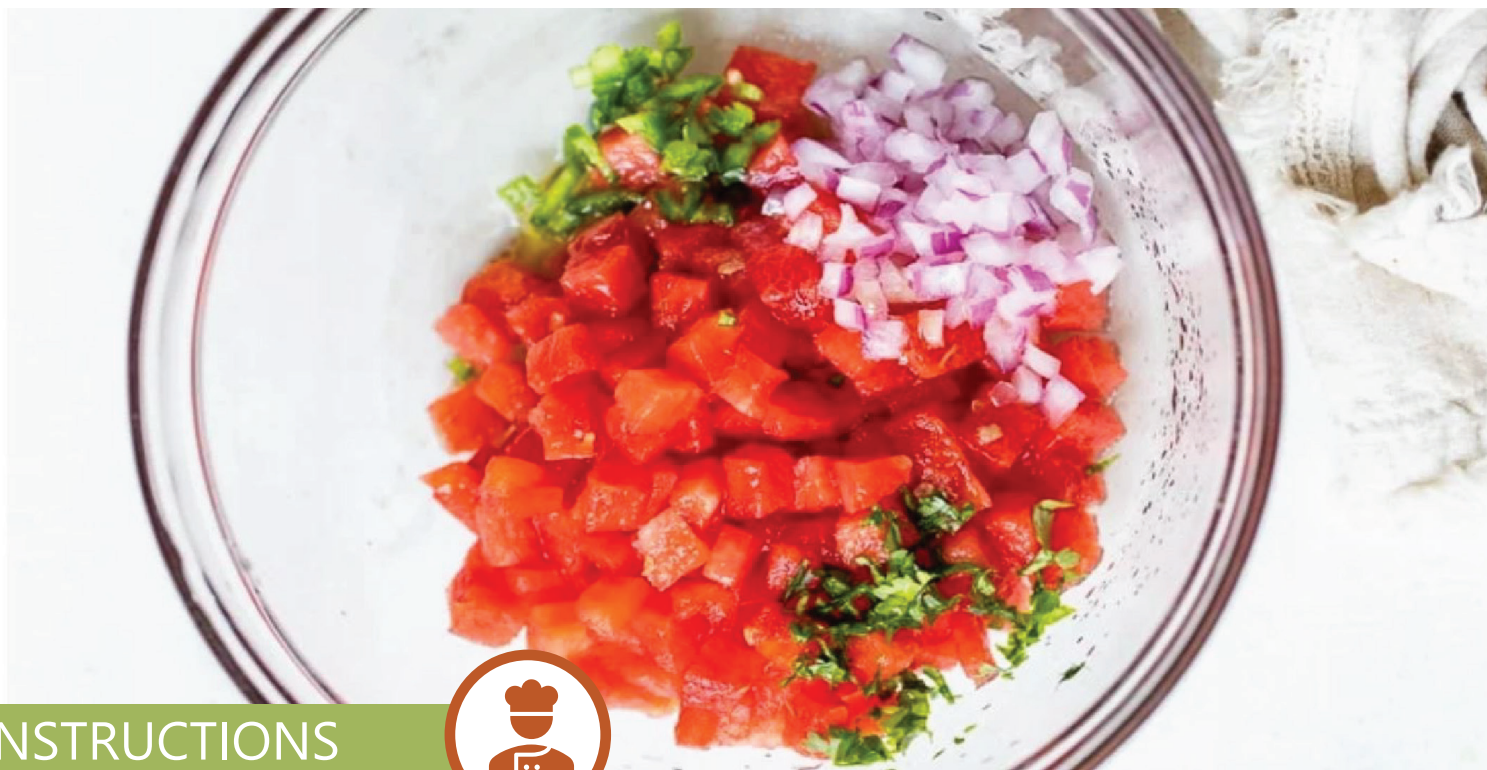
Spice Rubbed Fish is zesty and so flavorful, the refreshing watermelon salsa is the perfect compliment. Cooked in foil on the grill or the oven!

TIPS:

The foil packets create steam which essentially poaches the fish to come out perfectly tender and flaky. And of course, the best part clean up is easy. You can prep them ahead and refrigerate until ready to cook.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 1 foil packet with 1/3 cup salsa, Calories: 314 kcal, Carbohydrates: 8 g, Protein: 39.5 g, Fat: 13 g, Saturated Fat: 2 g, Cholesterol: 175 mg, Sodium: 431.5 mg, Fiber: 1 g, Sugar: 5.5 g
 Source: Skinnytaste.com



INSTRUCTIONS

How to make:

Combine salsa ingredients and refrigerate at least 20 minutes until ready to cook the fish.

Mix the dried spices and seasoning together in a small bowl, squeeze the lime on the fish then rub the seasoning onto fish.

Lay out 4 large sheets of Reynolds Wrap® Heavy Duty Foil 18 x 12. Put the fish in the center of each and drizzle with olive oil.

Bring the short ends of the foil together and fold twice to seal; fold in the sides to seal, leaving room for steam.

Cook the packets.

Preheat a grill to medium high or light a campfire and put a cooking grate in place. Grill the foil packets until the fish is just cooked through, 10 to 12 minutes.

Let the packets sit 5 minutes, then carefully open and top with salsa and serve with lime wedges.

FEATURED EXERCISE

Grab your towel– let's get to work!



Lunge with a Towel

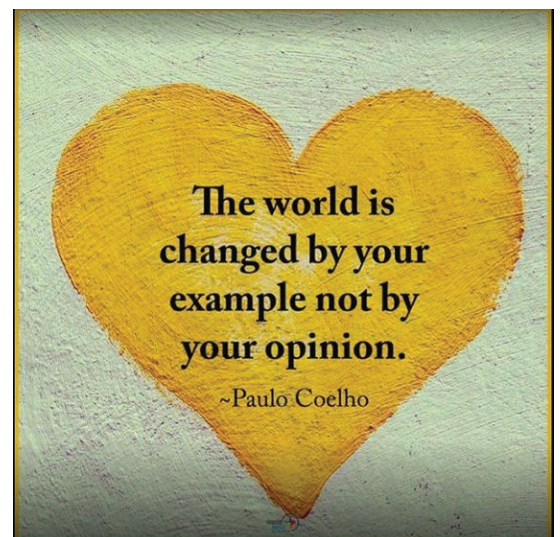
Hold one end of a towel in each hand, pull it tight between your hands, and raise your arms directly overhead. Lower into a lunge with right foot in front.

Pulse your body up and down about an inch. Return to standing. Repeat on the left side



Source: <https://greatist.com/move/lunge-variations-you-need-to-know#towel>

Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



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