

Burnout

Be Well, Massage Magazine

Valerie Cooksley, RN, OCN, FAAIM

Introduction

Does nervous exhaustion and a state of physical fatigue have you feeling fizzled? Familiar among the healing professions, burnout is caused by a combination of factors, the most common being chronic stress, lack of fulfillment or positive feedback, and complicated by perfectionism. At this time of extreme weariness, realize that you are prone to catching colds and infections, as the immune system, as well as the neuro-hormonal system, has been overwhelmed to the point of exhaustion.

Holistic Solutions

Aromatherapy

Essential oils naturally create balance and aid in regulating the central nervous system. There are many pleasing scents to choose from such as basil, clary sage, eucalyptus, geranium, ginger, grapefruit, hyssop, jasmine, juniper, lavender, lemongrass, marjoram, neroli, nutmeg, patchouli, petitgrain, pine, rosemary, and ylang ylang.

Inhalation is one of the most effective and direct methods to help you transcend exhaustion. Take the time to breathe in deep, life-affirming breaths several times during the day. Deep breathing oxygenates and nourishes every cell in your body, and totally rejuvenates the exhausted mind/body. By integrating the benefits of deep breathing with

aromatherapy, you will be increasing oxygenation, enhancing relaxation, and balancing the sympathetic nervous system with necessary vital energy.

Re-Charge Synergy Blend

6 parts Lavender essential oil

3 parts Basil essential oil

2 parts Pine essential oil

1 part Nutmeg essential oil

Mix the essential oils in an amber glass bottle. Use a few drops in an aroma lamp or inhale from a tissue or use in an electric aromatherapy diffuser to disperse the essential oils into a room or office two or three times per day.

Diet

Avoid unhealthy, processed foods made with additives and preservatives. All these fast foods contain toxic chemicals, damaged fats and high levels of sodium and sugar that are devitalized, acid forming and rob your body of its energy. Junk foods cause your sympathetic nervous system to overwork and therefore stress your body (i.e. adrenal glands) even more. Eat small and frequent healthy snacks during the day to prevent fatigue and choose fresh, organic, and real whole foods. Potassium and iodine-rich foods such as sea vegetables (toasted nori, wakame, dulse) are recommended for nervous disorders because they are high in minerals. Alkaline-forming nuts and seeds, especially sprouted seeds, almonds, pumpkin, flax and sunflower seeds, are all excellent snack foods, as well as herbal teas and whole fresh fruits.

Herbs

Herbs known to balance, nourish and support the adrenal glands are called adaptogenic herbs. These include ashwaganda, holy basil, kava kava, licorice root, royal macca, Siberian ginseng and St. Johnswort. Herbs that have a calming effect upon the nervous system are also useful during extreme stress and states of depletion and include hops, passiflora and valerian. These herbal medicines can be taken in capsule or herbal tea form.

Hydrotherapy

There are many wonderful relaxing and healthful benefits to the aromatic bath. However, a spa bath would integrate soothing music, soft lighting and pleasing scents to encourage renewal. This aromatic soak will relieve nervous tension via the essential oils and specific water temperature that encourages a sedative and relaxing state. Making time for yourself on a regular basis is key.

Relax and Recharge

5 drops Patchouli essential oil

3 drops Clary sage essential oil

2 drops Eucalyptus essential oil

4 Tbls Celtic or Dead Sea salts

Celtic and Dead Sea salts contain high concentrations of healthful minerals and trace elements that can be absorbed dermally through the water, which makes them perfect for depleted states. Also, they are completely natural, are alkalizing in nature and carry the energy of the ocean. Add the essential oils to the salt and mix well. Pour the aromatic

salts into a drawn warm bath (94-98 degrees ideal for stress and burnout) and stir with your hand. Soak for 15 to 20 minutes.

Lifestyle

Strategies to refuel and re-energize your life are crucial in preventing fatigue and to build the body's defenses and nourish the nervous system. Taking a midday catnap for 15 minutes can bring added energy. And since humor is always good medicine, add more laughter, your favorite activities and fun into your daily life. Light exercise will help with stress and encourage better sleep. Walking, yoga and dance are great forms of movement, especially when it's done outdoors in nature. Prioritize your day so you complete your major tasks in the morning rather than in the afternoon when you may be less energetic. Be realistic in your expectations of yourself and others. Be careful not to over extend yourself and schedule your time accordingly and say "no" more if this is an issue for you.

Conclusion

Putting yourself first, and personalizing restorative treatments at home with pleasurable, life-enhancing therapies will make a world of difference in your renewal of mind and body to prevent and ease burnout. Be well.