

Burnout Recovery

Cheat Sheet

A four-phase plan for getting your energy, your care, and your confidence back - in the right order.



READ THIS FIRST

Burnout is not fixed by a long weekend. It is an energy debt that built up over months, and it repays on a similar timescale. That is not bad news - it means recovery has a reliable shape, and this page is the map.

THE THREE SIGNATURES OF BURNOUT

If all three sound familiar, this sheet is yours.

Exhaustion

Tired in a way sleep does not fix. A full night, even a week off, and you wake up just as empty.

Cynicism

Work you genuinely used to care about now reads as pointless, and caring itself feels naive.

"Why bother"

Confidence in your own competence collapses. Every task feels heavier than your actual skill level.

1 FIND THE PHASE YOU'RE IN

2 DO ONLY THAT PHASE

3 MOVE UP WHEN IT HOLDS

1

Stop the Bleeding START HERE • THIS MONTH

Subtract before you add. No routine, app, or retreat helps while the drain stays open.

- Name your two biggest drains. Pause one, hand one off, or deliberately half-ass both for a month.
- Say no to one recurring thing. "I am at capacity" is a complete sentence.
- Rest is the treatment, not the reward you earn once everything else is handled.



2

Repay the Body THE NEXT FEW WEEKS

Your body kept score of every short night and skipped meal. Pay it back gently.

- Same-hours sleep for weeks, not one heroic lie-in. Consistency repays the debt; catch-up naps only cover the interest.
- Food that is food, not performance fuel. Regular, warm, unremarkable meals at regular hours.
- Walks, not workouts. The body reads gentleness as safety and hard training as one more emergency.



3

Refill on Purpose WHEN SOME ENERGY RETURNS

Burnout shrinks life down to work and recovering from work. Widen it back out.

- Reconnect with one person who knew you before the burnout. Let them remind you who that was.
- Pick up one activity from before it all shrank, and keep it gloriously unproductive on purpose.
- Chase small competence wins: cook one real meal, fix one small thing. "I can" gets rebuilt in miniature.



4

Renegotiate BEFORE YOU RETURN TO FULL SPEED

Whatever caused this will cause it again, unchanged. Recovery without renegotiation is a countdown.

- Have one honest conversation about load: what you can carry, what has to move, what happens if it does not.
- Or ask the harder question honestly: does this role still fit the person you are now?
- Keep one Phase 1 subtraction permanently. That is your proof that something actually changed.



ONE LAST THING

Needing months is normal. Needing help is normal. Nobody recovers on willpower alone - a doctor or therapist is part of a good recovery plan, not a sign that yours failed.