

SELF-CARE STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BURNOUT:

A portrait of Dr. Shantalea Johns, a Black woman with long, dark, curly hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a bright yellow blazer over a white top and large gold hoop earrings. The background is a dark, textured grey.

TIPS FOR ENTREPRENEURS

BY DR. SHANTALEA JOHNS



The pressure to constantly produce, scale, sell, and stay visible has fueled a burnout epidemic among entrepreneurs. What was once seen as ambition has now morphed into imbalance, eroding the mental health and momentum of even the most driven founders.

Burnout, characterized by chronic fatigue, emotional detachment, and a fading sense of purpose, is no longer just a personal issue. Experts warn it has become an entrepreneurial crisis. And if left unchecked, burnout doesn't just stall progress – it can quietly unravel everything you've built.

Here are five self-care strategies for entrepreneurs to help prevent overwhelm and support peace and balance:

Strategy 1: Implement burnout check-ins

Implementing burnout check-ins can help you recognize emotional exhaustion before it escalates. This can look like developing a daily routine to assess your mood, behaviors and physical symptoms.

- **Track Emotional Exhaustion:** Use a daily mood tracker to log emotional states. Persistent negativity, irritability or disengagement may signal emotional depletion.
- **Monitor Physical Energy:** Rate your energy levels each morning and note recurring low-energy periods throughout the week.
- **Evaluate Professional Enthusiasm:** Notice patterns of task avoidance, disengagement from responsibilities or lack of motivation.
- **Document Physical Symptoms:** Keep track of chronic fatigue, disrupted sleep, increased headaches, impulsivity or stress-related health changes.

These simple but consistent check-ins can serve as an early warning system that allows entrepreneurs to course-correct before burnout becomes debilitating.

Strategy 2: Redefine rest as a performance enhancement rather than a sign of inefficiency

High achievers often equate being overly busy with enhancing performance in the workplace. This is the same for entrepreneurs who often sacrifice rest, movement, and nutrition to meet deadlines. However, without time for rest, productivity becomes draining.

Consider implementing structured time blocking that includes intentional micro-breaks. These short pauses involve stepping away to stretch, taking a quick walk, checking in with a friend, journaling, or watching something that makes you laugh. Building in these moments throughout your day helps your brain recharge and supports your long-term well-being.

When you model this approach in your business, it also sends a clear message to your team: wellness isn't optional – it's essential to sustained performance.

Strategy 3: Build ways to distinguish between urgent and essential tasks

Tools like the Eisenhower Matrix, developed by former U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower and further popularized by Stephen Covey in his book, *"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,"* help professionals distinguish between urgent and essential tasks, focusing on long-term value rather than short-term pressure.

The key is to set realistic expectations. Establish *"deep work"* time blocks free from interruptions, delegate tasks that do not require direct involvement and allow space to say no to demands that compromise your well-being.

Strategy 4: Practice reflective self-care

Self-care is intentional. When self-care involves aligning your daily actions with your values and goals, it enables better time management and decision-making.

In her book *"Real Self-Care,"* Dr. Pooja Makshmin, M.D., states that real self-care is not a list of wellness activities such as riding your bike or going to the spa.

Real self-care involves boundary-setting, scaling back commitments, showing yourself compassion or seeking external support when needed.

So before you agree to another task or favor, ask yourself: *"Is this task aligned with my priorities?"* and *"What am I compromising by saying yes?"* These questions build self-awareness and protect against over-commitment and burnout.

Strategy 5: Leverage support systems

No one achieves or sustains success in isolation. Entrepreneurs should seek out reliable networks for guidance, accountability, and encouragement. This includes formal mentorship, business coaching, peer groups or wellness professionals.

Thriving in business and life is not about eliminating stress – it is about managing it with awareness and intention. Leaders who prioritize mental health and balance cultivate creativity and lead with clarity. As you define what success looks as an entrepreneur, try incorporating these strategies to help with work-life balance for sustainable success.

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