

Red Flags of EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

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How can you tell when your energy level is slipping to dangerous levels? What signals emotional and physical exhaustion? Here are a few significant pointers. Answer the questions below as you consider the last two or three weeks of your life. **Give yourself a score of each:**

2 if your answer is "often"

1 if it is "sometimes"

0 if "rarely"

Then total your score and see below for an interpretation.

_____ Are you spending an unusual amount of time by yourself, withdrawing from friends, family, and work acquaintances?

_____ Are you becoming more negative, pessimistic, critical, or cynical about yourself and others?

_____ Are you forgetting appointments, deadlines, or activities and not feeling concerned about it?

_____ Are you more irritable, hostile, aggressive, angry or frustrated than usual?

_____ Are you sleeping either much more than usual or significantly less?

_____ Do you suffer from gastrointestinal problems (indigestion, stomach discomfort, diarrhea, or colitis)?

_____ Are you waking up feeling tired or fatigued?

_____ Are you spending a lot of time thinking or worrying about your work, people, the future, or the past?

_____ Do you have an overwhelming feeling of being overloaded, that too many demands are being imposed on you?

_____ Do you find yourself focusing on relatively petty things or persevering with nonproductive or ineffective actions?

_____ Do you feel that nothing you do is effective in coping with your life or that you are helpless to control the outcome of anything?

_____ Are you experiencing headaches, muscle tension, or stiffness in your shoulders and neck, or increased pain anywhere else in your body?

_____ Does your heart thump or race, or do you get irregular heartbeats when you lie down to rest?

_____ Do you get dizzy or light-headed (especially when you are under pressure)?

_____ Have you become aware of increased anxiety, worry, fidgetiness and restlessness?

_____ TOTAL

Scoring results:

The fifteen items of this test cover the most significant, subtle signs of overwork, such as repeatedly waking up tired in the morning. Other symptoms include withdrawal, negative thinking, forgetfulness, and irritability, as well as an assortment of hysterical problems, such as stomach discomfort, headaches, and light-headedness. Although this simple self-test will not yield conclusive results, you can tentatively interpret your score as follows:

0-5: You are living a relatively stress-free life and appear to be coping well with your pressures.

6-10: You are showing *mild* signs of distress from overwork. Ease up a little.

11-16: You are showing *moderate* signs of distress from overwork. Ease up a lot.

17-24: You are showing *severe* signs of distress from overwork and need to change your style drastically. See help from a professional if necessary.

25-30: You are living *dangerously*. You are experiencing distress in every major system and should consult a physician right away. Then get some good stress management counseling.