



# Burnout

Lesson code: ZRIH-G2P8-N9PD

UPPER INTERMEDIATE +

## 1 Warm-Up

What do you know about burnout? Do you think that it could happen to you or someone you know?

## 2 Key words

Read the sentences and match each underlined word or phrase to its correct definition.

1. The doctor was available out of hours because there were too many patients to see during the day.
2. The proposed guidelines say that employees must have a lunch break that is at least one hour.
3. Sarah feels like she is always on. Her mobile phone never stops ringing.
4. Carrie has to be ready to respond to her boss at any moment. There is no downtime for her.
5. You shouldn't wolf down your food before work because this can cause stomach problems.

- a. a period when you can relax
- b. available at all times
- c. before or after the time when a place is open, or people are working
- d. eat something very quickly and greedily
- e. information offered about how something should be done

Now write sentences using each phrase. Work with a partner and read out each sentence, but don't say the phrase. Your partner will guess which phrase you used.

## 3 Reading

You are going to read an article about the plan to ban out of hours emails in France. Find answers to the questions below.

1. What is France going to give its workers?
2. What is the maximum amount of time that somebody can currently work for during a week?
3. Which businesses might have to obey the new law?
4. Who might be an exception to the new law?
5. What things might make implementing the new law difficult?



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# Should Employees be Banned from Sending Emails out of Hours?

France is set to give all workers the "right to disconnect" from emails as the scale of "burnout" among employees draws concern

- 1 France's parliament are considering a law that would clamp down on employees sending emails out of working hours.
- 2 Under the proposed guidelines, businesses with more than 50 employees would be required to create a document, setting out the hours when employees are not supposed to be sending emails.
- 3 **Is there a problem?**  
It's certainly true that in our working world with technology as it is, many of us are always on. Mobiles by your side, is a quick glance at the inbox too tempting?
- 4 Yes, and before you know it you're rushing out an email as you get on a bus only for a reply to hit you as you take your seat. In the evenings and at weekends how easy is it to flick between Facebook notifications and work emails?
- 5 And even at night time who's guilty of sleeping with their smartphone surreptitiously tucked under the pillow? There's no downtime and that can't be good.
- 6 What laws do we have to prevent digital burnout? We've hardly any. Under the Working Time Regulations workers mustn't work more than 48 hours each week, averaged over 17 weeks. Workers can opt out provided that they provide a minimum of 7 days notice. They may have to give more notice up to a maximum of 3 months if there's an agreement with the employer.
- 7 There are also some exceptions to the 48 hour week including for those workers whose working time is not measured and are in control of their work.
- 8 And would checking emails and replying out of hours be included within the working time?
- 9 They probably wouldn't. Working time is defined as working at your employer's disposal and carrying out your duties; periods when the employee is receiving relevant training; and other periods stated in an agreement.
- 10 Time working at home, as part of a flexible working arrangement, instead of being in the office, would be covered.
- 11 However, choosing to respond to emails as you step out of the shower or wolf down your breakfast wouldn't be included because you wouldn't be at your employer's disposal at that time.
- 12 But is intervention necessary? Some employees may prefer answering emails in their own time to make the return to the 'work' less painful. What about globalisation - and companies dealing with clients in different time zones? And then there's social media?
- 13 Interestingly the bill in France has no penalties, and companies are expected to comply voluntarily.
- 14 Employees will have to buy into this too.

*Adapted from The Independent, 16th of May 2016*



## 4 Phrasal verbs

Match the infinitive form of the phrasal verbs to the correct definitions.

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. clamp down (P.1) | a. decide not to be part of an activity or plan         |
| 2. rush out (P.4)   | b. do a job and complete it                             |
| 3. opt out (P.6)    | c. produce something very quickly and make it available |
| 4. carry out (P.9)  | d. stop or limit an activity that causes harm           |
| 5. deal with (P.12) | e. support a plan or idea                               |
| 6. buy into (P.14)  | f. talk with or meet somebody to do business with them  |

Now make up your own sentences using the phrasal verbs.

## 5 Find the word

Complete the gaps with a word or phrase from the text.

1. If you start work on something in an energetic way you \_\_\_\_\_ it. (phrase subtitle)
2. If something \_\_\_\_\_, it causes people to worry about an issue. (phrase subtitle)
3. If you look at something for a short time, you take a \_\_\_\_\_ (phrase P.3)
4. If something came to you unexpectedly, it \_\_\_\_\_ you. (verb P.4)
5. If you quickly switch from one activity to another, you \_\_\_\_\_ them. (phrase P.4)
6. If you become involved in a difficult situation to influence it, you start an \_\_\_\_\_. (noun P.12)
7. If you obey rules when you are not forced to, you \_\_\_\_\_. (collocation P.13)

Now create your own sentences using the words and phrases.

## 6 Talking Point

Discuss the questions below.

1. What are the positive and negative points about France's plan?
2. Would it work in your country?
3. Is there anything else that employers can do to help with stress in the workplace?

