

Kinesiology

Athletic Overtraining and Burnout Checklist

Overtraining and burnout are both physical and psychological in nature, and you should know the main signs and symptoms of both conditions that are listed in your book. To help someone cope with feelings of burnout, you must recognize and appreciate the variety of reasons for experiencing burnout. In this activity, you will evaluate an experience of burnout and select the factors that characterized that specific situation. Then, you will reflect on the signs and symptoms of overtraining and burnout that you experienced.

A variety of signs and symptoms characterize overtraining and burnout, and many types of factors cause burnout. Every athlete's experience of burnout is unique. If you have an athletic background, think of the point in the season that you were most tired, most stressed, and least motivated. If you do not have an athletic background, imagine some other personal situation (another activity, school, work) in which you experienced burnout. In the table, mark an X in the column next to the specific factors that characterized your situation. When you are finished, answer the questions that follow the table.

Factors Related to Athletic Burnout	
Situational demands	
♦ High conflicting demands	
♦ Lack of control or powerlessness; dependency	
♦ High expectations on the part of self and others	
♦ Low social support	
♦ Excessive demands on time	
♦ Limited social relationships	
♦ Parental involvement: restrictive, inconsistent feedback, negative feedback	
♦ Coach involvement: inconsistent feedback, negative feedback	
♦ Injuries	
♦ Training loads: repetitive, high volume, number of competitions	
Cognitive appraisal of the situation	
♦ Perceived overload	
♦ Few meaningful accomplishments	
♦ Lack of meaning and devaluation of activity	
♦ Lack of enjoyment	
♦ Chronic stress	
♦ Learned helplessness	
♦ Decreased life satisfaction	
♦ Identity crisis	
♦ Stifled; trapped	
Physiological and psychological responses	
♦ Decreased motivation	
♦ Fatigue	
Physiological and psychological responses (continued)	
♦ Decreased concentration	
♦ Weight gain or loss	
♦ Illness or injury susceptibility	
♦ Moodiness and impatience	
♦ Poor sleep	

♦ Anger; irritability	
♦ Muscle soreness	
♦ Boredom	
Behavioral responses	
♦ Physical withdrawal	
♦ Emotional withdrawal	
♦ Psychological withdrawal	
♦ Decreased performance	
♦ Giving up during play, tanking	
♦ Rigid, inappropriate behavior	
♦ Interpersonal difficulties	
♦ Lowered school performance	
Personality and motivation factors	
♦ High trait anxiety	
♦ Low self-esteem and low perceived competence	
♦ Competitive orientations: fear of failure, fear of poor evaluation	
♦ Unidimensional self-concept	
♦ High need to please others	
♦ Low assertiveness	
♦ Self-critical	
♦ Perfectionism	
♦ Low perceived control	
♦ Low frustration	

Data from D. Gould et al., 1996, "Burnout in competitive junior tennis players: II. Quantitative analysis," *The Sport Psychologist* 10(4): 341-366.

Reflective Burnout Questions

1. When did you burn out?
2. In what sport or activity were you participating?
3. How intensely were you training when you burned out?
4. How did you feel physically at this time?
5. How did you feel psychologically at this time?
6. Relative to questions 4 and 5, for how long did you feel this way?
7. Did your symptoms occur suddenly or build up over time?