

# Tips to replenishing your energy levels this holiday

By  [Anja van Beek](#)

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Many South Africans are currently concerned about the energy crisis and the impact of load shedding on the economy. An even bigger concern is the global trend of exhaustion and low energy levels of the workforce.



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When I speak to leaders and managers, there are a few words that continue to be mentioned in conversations and they are: “fatigue / exhaustion / burnout”.

This isn’t surprising.

Many of us started 2022 in a survival mode, still recovering from the challenges and changes the pandemic brought. We were expected to deliver our best this year... but in fact... many were still recuperating and adjusting to what the new working world will look like.

## Fast forward to now

Burnout is a global concern. It refers to feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion. It is an increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one’s job and reduced professional efficiency.

A [new study by Asana](#) looked at over 10,000 knowledge workers across seven countries, and found approximately 70% of people experienced burnout in the last year.



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Burnout is hard on people, and it also hurts businesses. According to the Asana study, when people experience burnout, they are more likely to have lower morale (36% of people), be less engaged (30%), make more mistakes (27%) and miscommunicate (25%). They are also more likely to leave the company (25%).

Another study done by Deloitte, the Workplace Intelligence research, found that 47% of employees have quit in the past when a job negatively affected their well-being, and 57% are considering quitting to find a role that better supports their well-being.

## **Getting ready for the December break**

When we look back at the year filled with challenges and disappointments, you might look forward to this holiday break as an essential opportunity to renew your energy. As a leadership coach, I call high performers 'Corporate Athletes'. They understand the importance of balancing stress (energy expenditure) with recovery (energy renewal). They too need the necessary time and energy to rest and more importantly, rest well.

The way you take care of your body has a huge impact on your ability to perform under pressure. To be effective at work, we must first ensure we have the energy required to make an impact.

Here are some practical ideas to revive your spark and energy levels during the holidays:

### **1. Get outside**

If you are going away, make the most of the walking trails at your destination. Staying at home? Get your hands dirty and work in your garden.

The holidays are a good time to naturally enhance the neurotransmitters in your brain. Spending time in nature, and getting a good dose of vitamin D, can naturally increase these neurotransmitters.

### **2. Make sleep a priority**

It is super tempting to burn the candle at both ends during the holiday season. Holiday schedules can be jam-packed and late nights with family and friends is part of the fun. However, if you are serious about your energy recovery, it is critical to ensure you get sufficient sleep to ensure your body can function optimally when you are back at work.

Post-holiday-fatigue is a real thing, so let's make sure you "don't need a holiday after your holiday". So, take those afternoon naps!

### **3. Laughter remains the best medicine**

Nothing works faster to bring your mind and body back into balance than a good laugh. Be intentional about creating opportunities to laugh.

Arrange a game night with friends, watch a funny movie or play with your pet. Remember that smiling is the beginning

of laughter, and like laughter, it's contagious. So, it might even just be to give a quick smile to a stranger in the grocery queue in front of you.



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### 4. What is your time worth?

Time is the currency of your holiday (and life), so spend it wisely. Intentionally be aware of what you spend your time on.

An easy tool to determine if something is worth the time, start with getting a number (rand value) of what an hour of your time is worth. A tip is to make your value comfortably high. Now, you can calculate what scrolling on social media or binge-watching a Netflix series is costing you.

You might see that taking care of your health, preparing nutritious meals, giving attention to your spouse or doing things for others, is a better return on your time investment.

### 5. Slower and softer

Yes, for some of us the holiday season is chaotic and can be stressful. It is tempting to go all out and a sense of lack of control can feel overwhelming. We don't need to rush everywhere.

We often overlook the importance of getting the basics in place. You can spend hours searching for, making or wrapping presents. Create a few simple holiday rituals for your family. Be *present* for your loved one over finding perfect things.

On another point, are you worried that you may struggle to cope with energy-draining holiday makers, in-laws or nagging neighbours? It is not the behaviour of others that leads to your annoyance - it is the story you tell yourself about their behaviour that leads to your feeling.

Do you want to reclaim your peace? Consider what is the story you are telling yourself about their behaviour and think about when you also displayed a similar type of behaviour. This will support you to move from judgment to act in a more civil way.



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## When you are back at work...

### 1. Find and create meaning

Research has shown the power of spending time outside of work to increase satisfaction at work. Ironically, people tend to perceive more joy at work when they are happier in their activities outside of work.

What does “work” mean to you? Is it that you can create a quality life so that you and your family can live and experience what life has to offer, or, is it “live to work”?

It's crucial to emphasise that no job is perfect. There will always be aspects of a job that you enjoy more than others, and that's okay. It's normal to go through ups and downs in your level of job satisfaction.

Boundaries in your workplace might be simpler to maintain once you did some introspection on how you view work.

### 2. Find a thinking partner or a mentor

When you feel stuck or when your stress level is increasing, make sure you have a confidant you trust. Sometimes you need a thinking partner that can listen to your side in a non-judgmental manner – to provide you the space to be listened to.

You can even consider combining exercise with a “vent buddy” and arrange for a walking club to keep your cortisol levels at bay. Make sure to diarise these activities to support the habit-forming activity otherwise, months will go past without having the session.

Mentorship can also be a powerful tool to enhance your career growth. Be sure to schedule monthly sessions with your coach or mentor to ensure there is consistency and follow through on your personal growth action plan.



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### 3. Book your next leave

Plan shorter and more meaningful breaks during the year to recoup and regroup your energy levels. Studies show that people who take their leave days are more productive, engaged and more likely to be loyal.

What is your next planned event that you are excited about? Perhaps you always wanted to do a camping trip with the family in autumn, or perhaps you want to do the Otter Trail. It might also just be to be at home with the kids during the March school holidays.

Don't wait until next December to book your leave. Stress and exhaustion cannot be managed if you don't prioritise your own rest. But, most importantly, we must be able to take time off without facing consequences or having leave with debt. According to one study, it takes an average of 14 days to prepare for and recover from a week of vacation!

### 4. Feeling like it is all getting too much? Speak to your manager

We need to be able to talk about mental health at work. We are going into 2023 – and post-pandemic – exhaustion and putting up your hand isn't a sign of weakness. In the Microsoft Worktrends Report, it was learned that the reasons 41% of employees wanted to quit their job were unmanageable workloads and a lack of empathy from their employers.

Start off by talking to your boss if you feel comfortable doing so. If not, speak with your HR department to see what kind of assistance is available.

## In conclusion

One of my favourite quotes is by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross:

“ People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within. ”

The holiday is an ideal opportunity for you to rest well so that you are energised to tackle 2023 head-on. The key is to find what really lights you up. Be deliberate about understanding what creates your flow, for example, any activity that causes you to lose track of time. Being in the zone is a biological phenomenon that releases dopamine. I encourage you to permit yourself to take a well-deserved break without being in flow, without interruptions from work.

## ABOUT ANJA VAN BEEK

Anja van Beek is an independent leadership consultant, talent strategist and coach.  
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