

# INSIGHTS



LETTERS

## NEXTGEN VOICES

# Pithy burnout prevention

We asked young scientists this question: **In exactly six words, what is the secret to preventing burnout?** In their succinct responses, scientists from around the world suggested ways to prioritize breaks, focus on the positive, and find inspiration in work, hobbies, and community. Our respondents urged researchers facing burnout to take care of themselves, whether that means setting boundaries or giving themselves permission to splurge. Follow NextGen on Twitter with hashtag #NextGenSci. See all NextGen Voices results at <https://science.sciencemag.org/collection/nextgen-voices>. —**Jennifer Sills**

### Invest in hobbies

Improve a skill unrelated to research.

**Ming-Ju Amy Lyu, China**

Walk while listening to soothing songs.

**Jian Zhang, China**

Incorporate parkour tricks into coffee runs.

**Raf Aerts, Belgium**

Channel exhaustion to creativity; art works!

**Shruti Sharma, USA**

Sing loudly! It's socially acceptable screaming.

**Tiffany Phu, USA**

Rescue a dog, catalyst for joy.

**Matt Joseph Kuhn, USA**

Regenerate neurons by exercising. Start yesterday.

**Athanasia Nikolaou, Germany**

Do something that brings joy daily.

**Carson Alice Wills, USA**

Beer tastings count as field research.

**Beth McKinnon Adamowicz, USA**

Watch kitten videos during conference calls.

**Aric S. Campling, USA**

### Cultivate community

Chilling with friends makes me fireproof.

**Vanessa Karina Alves da Silva, UK**

Work with people who respect you.

**Marion White, USA**

Tell your supervisor about your feelings.

**Clara del Junco, USA**

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Intentionally cultivate honest, supportive work friendships.  
**Rosalie Shinwei Doerksen, USA**

Margaritas with temporary friends at conferences!  
**Heather Burkin, USA**

Recognize other people's confidence in you.  
**Jonathan Marquez, USA**

Coffee with lab friends is indispensable.  
**Joel Henrique Ellwanger, Brazil**

Team sports and friends outside academia.  
**Andrés S. Rigual Hernández, Spain**

Cook elaborate meals for your friends.  
**Leah Cairns, USA**

Take your time and get support.  
**Ingrid Zuniga, Mexico**

Read bedtime stories to the kids.  
**Ben de Haas, Germany**

## Set intentional goals

Find permanent positions with permanent funding!  
**Sacha Escamez, Sweden**

Find work that fits your personality.  
**Robert P. Tett, USA**

Share long-term ambitions with collaborators.  
**Yuta Igarashi, Japan**

Define your target. Focus on it.  
**Allison Matia, USA**

Set relevant, achievable, and short-term goals.  
**Marcela Viviana Nicola, Argentina**

Divide big projects into smaller tasks.  
**Lin Wang, France**

## Celebrate success

A glass of beer after brainstorming.  
**Luiz H. Varzinczak, Brazil**

Dance, listen to music when stressed.  
**Karishma Shaik, India**

Impromptu, solo dance parties to Toto.  
**Déna Jansen, South Africa**

Recurring break to garden and hike.  
**Aminata Coulibaly, USA**

Learn to enjoy the small successes.  
**Satyanarayana Subrahmanyam, India**

Remember the wins and stay grateful.  
**Caitlin M. Aamodt, USA**

Acknowledge and celebrate team's progress weekly!  
**Salma Kaochar, USA**

Delight in the success of colleagues.  
**Catherine Carbone, USA**

Find meaningful reward in the journey.  
**Carol Lee Wilkinson, USA**

## Maintain perspective

Try your best. Let it be.  
**Junxiang Cheng, China**

Remember! You are not your job.  
**Rachel Hale, New Zealand**

Keep the big picture in mind.  
**Sarah Ch'ng, Australia**

Recall why and how you started.  
**Jing Woei Li, Hong Kong**

Have something more important in life.  
**Amanda Linnea Karolina Jonsson, USA**

Love yourself more than your work.  
**Mallory Rose Peterson, USA**

Recognize burnout's systemic, not personal failure.  
**Rachel Yoho, USA**

See the inner child in everyone.  
**Joseph Michael Cusimano, USA**

Focus on the joy of discovery.  
**Richard Gaughan, USA**

Bonfire: Reviewer 2's comments as kindling.  
**Colin Murphy, USA**

## Prioritize self-care

Mindful breathing, 15 minutes every day.  
**Oriana Jovanović, Hong Kong**

Sleep! Even Einstein got 10 hours.  
**Josiah Dykstra, USA**

Appropriately titer your caffeine:ethanol ratio.  
**Kelvin Yen, USA**

Invest in yourself and experiments equally.  
**Victoria Tokarz, Canada**

Know limits; take care of yourself.

**Ruwansa Galagedara, Sri Lanka**

Resting creates space for great ideas.

**Ingrid Olivares, UK**

Internet-free day keeps burnout away!

**Martin Schwarzer, Czech Republic**

Regular breaks, including a postlunch nap.

**Rambabu Korrapati, India**

Talk with a mental health professional.  
**Carl Davidson Gandola, USA**

## Set boundaries

Delegate all tedious work to minions.

**Thomas Alejandro Berrueta, USA**

Work actual contract hours, not weekends.

**Klaudija Daugeilaite, France**

Honor and respect work-life balance.

**Shahienaz Hampton, United Arab Emirates**

Remember, "breakthrough" starts with a "break."

**Anne-Sophie Hafner, Germany**

Thou shall not do it all!

**Mac Kevin Ella Braza, Philippines**

Realize long hours don't equal productivity.

**Edward Lau, USA**

Do not take on unnecessary responsibilities.

**Evrin Fer, Turkey**

The secret: Learn to say "No."  
**María Romina Schiaffino, Argentina**

Refuse to do what doesn't matter.

**Shervin Fatehi, USA**

## Splurge

Indulge in guilty pleasures without remorse.  
**Yong Tang, USA**

Give yourself permission to be selfish.  
**Howard M. Huynh, Canada**

Ignore serving size suggestions on snacks.  
**Do Soon Kim, USA**

Eat cake...Didn't work? Eat more!  
**Michael Patrick Schwoerer, USA**

Sugar is brain food. Keep snacking.  
**Emily Royse, USA**

Coffee before lab. Goodbye, steady hands!  
**Mark Martin Jensen, USA**

Ditch that coffee and just snooze.  
**Charles Teta, South Africa**

Clean house. Just joking. Netflix binge.  
**Ken Dutton-Regester, Australia**

Conference in Hawaii. Don't attend talks.  
**Soham Saha, USA**

Deep breathing (if inhaling food counts)  
**Dhruv Patel, USA**

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# Science

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