

BURNOUT-PROOF, NOT BULLETPROOF

Complete Workbook & Toolkit Companion

Dr. Claire E. Jacobs

7 Downloadable Toolkits | 60+ Pages | ADHD-Friendly Design

www.burnoutproofbook.com/worksheets

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is your hands-on companion to Burnout-Proof, Not Bulletproof. It contains all 7 toolkits fully laid out for printing, filling in, and referring back to.

The 7 Toolkits

- Toolkit 1: Boom-Bust Pattern Recognition
- Toolkit 2: Energy Budget Tracking Template
- Toolkit 3: Nervous System Regulation Toolkit
- Toolkit 4: Workload Architecture Toolkit
- Toolkit 5: Boundary Script Library & Enforcement Toolkit
- Toolkit 6: Crash Protocol Emergency Kit
- Toolkit 7: Variable Energy Planning System

Design Principles

Every page is designed with ADHD-friendly principles:

- Visual hierarchy — clear sections, headers, color-coding
- White space — no cluttered walls of text
- Checkboxes and fill-in-the-blank formats — easy to use
- Large, readable fonts — minimum 11pt throughout
- Single-page formats wherever possible

Color System

- Teal — Cognitive energy, Boom phases, active tools
- Coral — Crash/warning, Bust phases, urgent attention
- Purple — Shame phase, creative, neurodivergent-affirming
- Green — Functional zone, success, balance

Download individual toolkits or the complete workbook at:

www.burnoutproofbook.com/worksheets

TOOLKIT 1

Boom-Bust Pattern Recognition Worksheet

Identifying Your Cycle to Break It

Use this self-assessment to identify your personal boom-bust patterns. Complete both pages to get a full picture of your cycle.

PAGE 1 — Pattern Identification

⚡ SECTION 1: Recognizing the BOOM Phase

Check all that apply during your high-energy periods:

- I take on multiple projects simultaneously when I'm feeling energized
- I work long hours (10+ hours/day) during high-energy periods
- I say 'yes' to commitments without checking my existing workload
- I feel invincible and capable of handling anything
- I skip recovery time because I 'don't need it'
- I rely on urgency/deadlines to activate my productivity

Reflection: When do your boom phases typically start?

Example: After a vacation, at project kickoff, Monday mornings

↓ SECTION 2: Recognizing the CRASH Phase

Check all that apply when your energy crashes:

- I experience sudden exhaustion that doesn't respond to rest
- I can't focus or make simple decisions
- I withdraw from social connections
- I feel physically ill (headaches, digestive issues, body pain)

- I sleep excessively or can't sleep at all
- I can't start tasks even when they're urgent

Reflection: What are your earliest warning signs that a crash is coming?

SECTION 3: Recognizing the SHAME Phase

Check all that apply during your shame/recovery phase:

- I believe the crash proves I'm weak or incompetent
- I compare myself to others who seem to manage better
- I promise myself I'll 'do better next time'
- I hide my struggles from others
- I feel like a failure despite my accomplishments
- I push myself back into boom mode to prove I'm capable

Reflection: What story do you tell yourself about why you crashed?

PAGE 2 — Pattern Mapping & Cost Assessment

Section 4: Your Pattern Timeline

Map your last 3–6 months. Mark boom phases in teal, crash phases in coral, shame phases in purple.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Month 1</p> <p>BOOM: ___ to ___ CRASH: ___ to ___ SHAME: ___ to ___</p> <p>Notes: _____</p> | <p>Month 2</p> <p>BOOM: ___ to ___ CRASH: ___ to ___ SHAME: ___ to ___</p> <p>Notes: _____</p> | <p>Month 3</p> <p>BOOM: ___ to ___ CRASH: ___ to ___ SHAME: ___ to ___</p> <p>Notes: _____</p> |
| <p>Month 4</p> <p>BOOM: ___ to ___ CRASH: ___ to ___ SHAME: ___ to ___</p> <p>Notes: _____</p> | <p>Month 5</p> <p>BOOM: ___ to ___ CRASH: ___ to ___ SHAME: ___ to ___</p> <p>Notes: _____</p> | <p>Month 6</p> <p>BOOM: ___ to ___ CRASH: ___ to ___ SHAME: ___ to ___</p> <p>Notes: _____</p> |

Section 5: The Hidden Costs

What does this cycle cost you? Check all that apply and add specifics.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Physical Health</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sleep disruption: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chronic pain: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Weakened immunity: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> | <p>Mental Health</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Depression: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Brain fog: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Relationships</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cancelled plans: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irritability: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Social isolation: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> | <p>Work Quality</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Missed deadlines: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lower quality output: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Avoided tasks: _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p> |
|---|--|

| |
|---|
| <p>Personal Goals</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned hobbies: _____</p> |
|---|

- Delayed projects: _____
- Gave up on goals: _____
- Other: _____

Section 6: My Commitment

"I recognize that my boom-bust cycle is not a personal failing — it's a system design problem. I commit to using the tools in this book to build sustainable systems that work with my actual capacity."

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Download the complete toolkit at www.burnoutproofbook.com/worksheets

TOOLKIT 2

Energy Budget Tracking Template

2-Week Daily Tracker + Weekly Summary

Track your four energy currencies three times daily. Use this for two weeks to reveal your patterns.

The 4 Energy Currencies

Cognitive Energy — Focus, decision-making, complex thinking

Emotional Regulation — Managing feelings, stress tolerance





Sensory Tolerance — Sound, light, touch, environment sensitivity

Social Bandwidth — Interaction, communication, presence with others

Instructions: Rate each currency 3x per day: Morning (M), Midday (D), Evening (E). Use 1–10 scale.

Daily Tracker — Day ___ of 14

Date: _____

| Energy Currency | Morning Rating (1–10) | Notes | Midday Rating (1–10) | Notes | Evening Rating (1–10) | Notes |
|---|-----------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
|  Cognitive | | | | | | |
|  Emotional | | | | | | |
|  Sensory | | | | | | |
|  Social | | | | | | |

Hidden Drains Checklist

Check any that applied today and estimate time/energy spent:

- Masking neurodivergent traits: ___ hours | Energy cost: ___/10
- Context switching between tasks: ___ times | Energy cost: ___/10
- Decision fatigue (small decisions): ___ decisions | Energy cost: ___/10
- Unexpected interruptions: ___ times | Energy cost: ___/10
- Emotional labor (managing others' feelings): ___ hours | Energy cost: ___/10
- Sensory overload situations: ___ hours | Energy cost: ___/10
- Other: _____ | Energy cost: ___/10

Daily Reflection

1. What drained me most today?

2. What restored my energy today?

Repeat this Daily Tracker template for Days 2–14 | www.burnoutproofbook.com/worksheets

TOOLKIT 2

Energy Budget Weekly Summary

Week ___ of 2 | Dates: _____ to _____

Section 1: Pattern Graph

Plot your daily averages below. Use different colors for each currency.

| Day | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | | | | |

 Cognitive  Emotional  Sensory  Social

Section 2: Insights & Patterns

What patterns did you notice?

Example: Cognitive energy highest on Mondays, sensory tolerance lowest after 3-meeting days

What were your biggest energy drains this week?

What restored your energy most effectively?

Section 3: Planning Forward

Action items based on this week's data:

What I'll protect next week:

- _____
- _____
- _____

What I'll reduce or eliminate:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Recovery practices I'll prioritize:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Continue tracking for Week 2 to confirm patterns | www.burnoutproofbook.com/worksheets

TOOLKIT 3

Nervous System Regulation Toolkit

8 Components: Assessment, Menus & Reference Cards

Component 1: Recognizing Your Nervous System State

The first step to regulation is awareness. Check which state you're in right now.

| ↑ HYPERAROUSAL (Fight or Flight) | ✓ FUNCTIONAL ZONE (Window of Tolerance) | ↓ HYPOAROUSAL (Shutdown Mode) |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Racing heart | Can think clearly | Heavy fatigue |
| Rapid breathing | Can make decisions | Slow movements |
| Muscle tension | Can regulate emotions | Numbness |
| Sweating | Can handle stress | Low energy |
| Jitteriness | Feel present | Sluggish |
| | Respond flexibly | |
| MENTAL: | | MENTAL: |
| Racing thoughts | | Brain fog |
| Can't focus | | Can't think |
| Hypervigilance | | Dissociation |
| Irritability | | Hopelessness |
| Anxiety | | Apathy |
| → NEED: Down-regulation | → NEED: Maintain this state | → NEED: Up-regulation |

Right now, I am in:

- Hyperarousal
 Functional Zone
 Hypoarousal
 Unsure

↓ Component 2A: Down-Regulation Tools (for Hyperarousal / Anxiety)

Use when anxious, overwhelmed, activated, or in fight-or-flight.

1. Box Breathing Plus | Time: 2–3 min

1. Inhale through nose: 4 counts
2. Hold: 4 counts
3. Exhale through mouth: 6 counts (longer exhale = more calming)
4. Hold empty: 2 counts
5. Repeat 4–5 times. Tip: Count on fingers if internal counting is hard

2. Progressive Muscle Relaxation (Quick) | Time: 3–5 min

1. Tense shoulders to ears — hold 5 sec, release
2. Tense hands into fists — hold 5 sec, release
3. Tense jaw — hold 5 sec, release

3. Cold Water Reset | Time: 30 sec–2 min

1. Splash cold water on face (targets dive reflex)
2. Hold ice cube in hand
3. Drink ice-cold water slowly
4. Cold shower 30 seconds — Why: activates vagus nerve, slows heart rate

4. Grounding 5-4-3-2-1 | Time: 2–3 min

1. 5 things you can SEE
2. 4 things you can TOUCH
3. 3 things you can HEAR
4. 2 things you can SMELL
5. 1 thing you can TASTE

5. Bilateral Stimulation | Time: 1–2 min

1. Butterfly hug: Cross arms, tap shoulders alternately
2. Walk while noticing left foot, right foot rhythm
3. Tap knees alternately while seated
4. Why: Integrates brain hemispheres, reduces activation

↑ Component 2B: Up-Regulation Tools (for Hypoarousal / Shutdown)

Use when numb, foggy, shut down, or dissociated.

1. Movement Activation | Time: 2–5 min

1. Jump up and down 20 times
2. Do 10 jumping jacks
3. March in place vigorously 2 minutes
4. Dance to one energizing song — Why: activates nervous system, increases energy

2. Strong Sensory Input | Time: 1–3 min

1. Loud, energizing music
2. Crunchy, sour, or spicy food (strong taste)
3. Peppermint or citrus scent
4. Textured object to squeeze — Why: strong sensation pulls you back into body awareness

3. Vocalization | Time: 1–2 min

1. Hum loudly for 30 seconds (repeat)
2. Sing along to a song
3. Make exaggerated sounds (roar, sigh loudly)
4. Why: Vibration activates vagus nerve, increases presence

4. Cold Exposure (Brief & Intense) | Time: 30 sec–1 min

1. Splash cold water on face vigorously
2. Hold ice cubes 30 seconds
3. Cold shower blast 30 seconds — Why: shock to system increases alertness

5. Social Micro-Dose | Time: 2–5 min

1. Text a friend (even just 'hi')
2. Watch 2 minutes of a comedy video
3. Pet an animal if available
4. Why: Social connection signals safety, activates engagement

Component 3: Personal Regulation Menu Builder

From the tools above, choose 2–3 that you'll actually use for each state.

My DOWN-REGULATION Tools (for Hyperarousal)

Tool 1:

Name:

Where I'll do it:

What I need:

Time required: _____

Tool 2:

Name:

Where I'll do it:

What I need:

Time required: _____

Tool 3:

Name:

Where I'll do it:

What I need:

Time required: _____

My UP-REGULATION Tools (for Hypoarousal)

Tool 1:

Name:

Where I'll do it:

What I need:

Time required: _____

Tool 2:

Name:

Where I'll do it:

What I need:

Time required: _____

Tool 3:

Name:

Where I'll do it:

What I need:

Time required: _____

My Minimum Viable Practice

ONE tool I commit to using daily, even on bad days:

Tool:

When (specific time or trigger): _____

Duration: _____ For ___ days to build the habit

Accountability person: _____

TOOLKIT 4

Workload Architecture Toolkit

6 Components: Calculator, Inventory & Planners

Component 1: Real Throughput Calculator

Track actual vs. planned work hours for 2 weeks to discover your real capacity.

| Day / Date | Planned Hours | Actual Hours | Deep Work Hours | Recovery Needed Next Day? |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Mon ___/___ | | | | |
| Tue ___/___ | | | | |
| Wed ___/___ | | | | |
| Thu ___/___ | | | | |
| Fri ___/___ | | | | |
| Sat ___/___ | | | | |
| Sun ___/___ | | | | |
| — Week 2 — | | | | |
| Mon ___/___ | | | | |
| Tue ___/___ | | | | |
| Wed ___/___ | | | | |
| Thu ___/___ | | | | |
| Fri ___/___ | | | | |
| Sat ___/___ | | | | |
| Sun ___/___ | | | | |

Throughput Analysis

Total deep work hours across 14 days: _____ ÷ 14 days = _____ hours/day average
 Days I needed full recovery after intense work: _____
 Days I was at reduced capacity: _____

Hidden Work Multiplier — Tasks took longer than estimated:

- Never
- Sometimes → multiply estimates by 1.25x
- Often → multiply estimates by 1.5x
- Always → multiply estimates by 2x

My realistic project timeline multiplier: _____ x

My Real Throughput Formula

I can sustain _____ hours of deep cognitive work per day.

Projects take _____ x longer than I initially estimate.

I need _____ recovery time after intense work.

My realistic project timelines should add _____% buffer.

This is my REAL throughput, not my fantasy throughput.

Component 2: Current Commitments Inventory

List EVERY active commitment — if you're managing it, tracking it, or it's taking your energy, it goes here.

Date: _____

| Commitment | Intensity (L/M/H) | Hours/Week | End Date | Can Drop? | Can Delegate? |
|------------|-------------------|------------|----------|-----------|---------------|
| 1. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 2. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 3. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 4. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 5. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 6. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 7. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 8. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 9. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 10. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 11. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 12. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 13. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 14. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |
| 15. | | | | Y/N | Y/N |

Reality Check

My actual available work hours/week: _____ | My sustainable deep work hours/week: _____

My current commitments require: _____ hours/week

I am: Underloaded Sustainable Overloaded In crisis

Component 3: Commitment Decision Flowchart

Three checkpoints before saying yes to anything new.

START

Someone asks you to take on something new



CHECKPOINT 1

Do I know what I'm already carrying?

✓ Yes → Continue

✗ No → STOP. Review Current Commitments Inventory first.



CHECKPOINT 2

Do I have the specific type of capacity this requires?

Check: Cognitive / Emotional / Sensory / Social / Executive Function

If ANY required currency is depleted → This exceeds capacity.



CHECKPOINT 3

Is this in service of my actual priorities, or am I saying yes to manage expectations/avoid discomfort?

Serves my goals? I genuinely want to do this? Worth the energy cost?

If NO to any → DECLINE. This is people-pleasing.



CONDITIONAL YES

"Let me check my capacity and get back to you by [specific time]."

Then: Review inventory → Map on sequencing planner → Calculate buffers → Decide based on DATA, not guilt



Remember:

Your default response to unexpected requests is always: "Let me check my capacity and get back to you."

NEVER commit in the moment.

TOOLKIT 5

Boundary Script Library & Enforcement Toolkit

25+ Ready-to-Use Scripts, Tracking & Decision Trees

Component 1A: Work Boundary Scripts

Declining Additional Work

Simple No:

"I'm not available to take that on."

With Alternative:

"I'm not available to take that on. I can recommend [name] if that's helpful."

With Timeline:

"I don't have capacity right now. I could take this on starting [date] if that works."

Protecting Work Hours

After-Hours:

"I'm not available after 6 PM."

Weekend:

"I don't work weekends. I can address this on Monday."

Vacation:

"I'll be completely offline [dates]. For urgent matters, contact [backup person]."

Managing Meeting Overload

Declining Meeting:

"I won't be able to attend. Please send notes and I'll follow up on anything I need to address."

Requesting Agenda:

"Can you send an agenda? I want to make sure this is the best use of my time."

Limiting Duration:

"I have a hard stop at [time]. Let's prioritize the critical items first."

Pushing Back on Urgency

Questioning Deadline:

"What makes this timeline urgent? I want to ensure we have time to do it well."

Negotiating:

"I can deliver a quality version by [realistic date], or a rushed version by [their deadline]. Which serves the project better?"

Component 1B: Personal / Family Boundary Scripts

Simple Decline:

"I won't be able to make it, but thanks for thinking of me."

With Future Opening:

"I can't this time, but I'd love to connect [later date]."

Protecting Recovery:

"I need this weekend for recovery. Can we plan for [future date]?"

Limiting Visits:

"I can do [shorter duration] instead of [longer duration]. Does that work?"

Can't Host:

"I don't have the bandwidth to host. Could we meet at [restaurant/other location]?"

Capacity Full:

"I don't have the bandwidth right now."

Not Quick:

"That's not a quick task for me. I can't fit it in right now."

Component 1C: Handling Pushback Scripts

What to say when they don't accept your boundary. Repeat calmly as needed.

| | |
|--|--|
| THEY SAY: <i>"But you're the only one who can do this!"</i> | YOU SAY: "I understand it's important. I'm not available." |
| THEY SAY: <i>"It will only take a few minutes!"</i> | YOU SAY: "I don't have the bandwidth." |
| THEY SAY: <i>"I really need your help!"</i> | YOU SAY: "I understand. I'm at capacity and can't take this on." |
| THEY SAY: <i>"What if we moved the deadline?"</i> | YOU SAY: "The timeline isn't the issue. I don't have the bandwidth." |
| THEY SAY: <i>"But you helped last time!"</i> | YOU SAY: "My capacity was different then. It's not available now." |
| THEY SAY: <i>"You always say you're too busy!"</i> | YOU SAY: "I'm managing my capacity to prevent burnout. This is a permanent boundary." |
| THEY SAY: <i>"Don't you care about this?"</i> | YOU SAY: "Caring doesn't create capacity. I need to protect my energy to be effective anywhere." |
| THEY SAY: <i>"Can't you make an exception just this once?"</i> | YOU SAY: "No. This boundary protects my ability to function." |

Pushback Response Rules

1. Restate the boundary — don't provide new justifications
2. Stay calm and brief — longer explanations invite more negotiation
3. Don't apologize for having limits
4. Repeat as needed — use the exact same words
5. End the conversation — "I've given you my answer" then disengage

Component 2: Boundary Violation Tracking Log

Track patterns to strengthen future enforcement. No judgment — just data.

Entry 1 | Date: _____

What boundary did I violate? _____

Feeling when I said yes: Guilty Anxious Pressured Obligated Fear of disappointment

My capacity was at: 80-100% 60-80% 40-60% Below 40%

What this cost me: _____

What I'll do differently: _____

Entry 2 | Date: _____

What boundary did I violate? _____

Feeling when I said yes: Guilty Anxious Pressured Obligated Fear of disappointment

My capacity was at: 80-100% 60-80% 40-60% Below 40%

What this cost me: _____

What I'll do differently: _____

Entry 3 | Date: _____

What boundary did I violate? _____

Feeling when I said yes: Guilty Anxious Pressured Obligated Fear of disappointment

My capacity was at: 80-100% 60-80% 40-60% Below 40%

What this cost me: _____

What I'll do differently: _____

Entry 4 | Date: _____

What boundary did I violate? _____

Feeling when I said yes: Guilty Anxious Pressured Obligated Fear of disappointment

My capacity was at: 80-100% 60-80% 40-60% Below 40%

What this cost me: _____

What I'll do differently: _____

Entry 5 | Date: _____

What boundary did I violate? _____

Feeling when I said yes: Guilty Anxious Pressured Obligated Fear of disappointment

My capacity was at: 80-100% 60-80% 40-60% Below 40%

What this cost me: _____

What I'll do differently: _____

TOOLKIT 6

Crash Protocol Emergency Kit

7 Components: Use When Executive Function Is Offline

Component 1: Am I In a Crash? — 4-Stage Recognition

Check the stage that describes you RIGHT NOW. This determines which protocol to use.

STAGE 1: COMPENSATORY OVERDRIVE

Signs:

- Working harder for same results
- Tasks taking 2x longer than normal
- Relying on excessive caffeine
- Rigid routines, can't tolerate disruption
- Increased errors
- Using willpower for automatic tasks
- Irritable about minor things
- Can't focus as well
- Racing thoughts

→ **What you need: Prevention intensification — tighter boundaries, increased recovery, workload reduction**

STAGE 2: DIMINISHING RETURNS

Signs:

- Sleep problems worsening
- Tension headaches
- Digestive issues
- Low energy despite rest
- Physical pain
- Can't prioritize effectively
- Forgetting commitments
- Decision-making overwhelming
- Re-reading same info without comprehension

→ **What you need: Significant intervention — major workload reduction, professional support**

STAGE 3: FUNCTIONAL IMPAIRMENT

Signs:

- Persistent exhaustion despite rest
- Frequent illness
- Complete loss of appetite OR stress eating
- Body feels heavy/disconnected
- Emotional dysregulation
- Intrusive thoughts about escape (quitting everything)
- Basic tasks feel insurmountable

- Operating on autopilot

→ **What you need: CRASH PROTOCOL — Start immediately. Use 48-Hour Stabilization below.**

STAGE 4: FULL CRASH

Signs:

- Cannot get out of bed
- Cannot complete basic self-care
- Cannot tolerate any demands
- Nothing you usually rely on works
- Executive function completely offline

→ **What you need: EMERGENCY PROTOCOL — Alert someone you trust. Consider professional support (doctor, therapist, EAP).**

I am in: Stage 1 Stage 2 Stage 3 Stage 4

Component 2: 48-Hour Stabilization Scripts — Copy & Send When You Can't Think Straight

Script 1: Work Notification

To: [Your supervisor / key contact]

Subject: *Health Issue — Reduced Capacity This Week*

I'm dealing with a health issue and need to work at reduced capacity this week. I'll be available for genuinely urgent matters only.

Here's what I can commit to:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I cannot take on: new projects, optional meetings, non-urgent requests.

I'll update you by [specific day] on my status. Thank you for understanding.

Script 2: Canceling Commitments

To: [Anyone you have commitments with]

I need to reschedule due to a health issue. I'll reach out next week to find a new time. Thank you for understanding.

Script 3: Family/Household

To: [Partner / family / housemates]

I'm in a burnout crash. I need to minimize demands for the next few days.

What I need from you: handle [specific tasks], don't ask me to make decisions about [specific things], give me space/quiet for [timeframe].

This is temporary. I'll let you know when I'm recovering. Thank you.

Script 4: Accountability Check-In

To: [Trusted person]

I'm in a burnout crash. I've implemented my stabilization protocol: notified work, canceled commitments, reduced demands.

Can you text me on [date] to make sure I'm stabilizing? I need accountability in 48 hours.

Component 3: Strategic Demand Reduction Matrix

List EVERY current commitment. Sort each into one of four categories. Do this quickly — you don't have executive function for elaborate analysis.

| Commitment | DROP | DELEGATE | DELAY | RENEGOTIATE |
|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| DROP | Eliminate entirely. Not essential in crisis context. <i>Script: "I need to step back from [commitment] due to health reasons."</i> |
|-------------|---|

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| DELEGATE | Needs to happen but doesn't require your specific expertise. <i>Script: "I need to delegate [task] due to health constraints. Can you handle this?"</i> |
|-----------------|--|

| | |
|--------------|---|
| DELAY | Legitimate but not urgent. Can resume after recovery. <i>Script: "Due to health constraints, I need to push this to [date 4–6 weeks out]."</i> |
|--------------|---|

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| RENEGOTIATE | Core responsibility — can reduce scope or extend timeline. <i>Script: "I need to adjust this. Here's what I can realistically deliver: [reduced scope]."</i> |
|--------------------|---|

Component 4: 8-Week Phased Re-Entry Planner

Re-entry is gradual. Don't rush back to 100%. Build back slowly with structural protections.

WEEK 1
40–50%
capacity

Absolute Essentials Only

- Show up for essential work only
- Maximum 3–5 commitments total
- All recovery practices non-negotiable
- Everything else: delayed, delegated, or dropped

WEEK 2–3
60–70%
capacity

Graduated Expansion (if Week 1 was sustainable)

- All Week 1 essentials continue
- ONE additional responsibility added per week
- Monitor: Sleep / Focus / Boundaries / Physical symptoms
- If any metric shows 'poor': reduce back to Week 1

WEEK 4
60–70%
capacity

Assessment & Adjustment

- Am I stabilizing? (sleeping well, functioning consistently, boundaries holding)
- YES or MOSTLY → Continue to Week 5
- NO (still showing warning signs) → Extend this level 2 more weeks

WEEK 5–6
80–85%
capacity

Moving Toward Sustainable (NOT 100%)

- Previous commitments continue
- ONE–TWO additional responsibilities added
- Same monitoring continues
- 15% buffer is intentional — not a failure

WEEK 7–8
80–85%
capacity

Stabilization — This Is Your Sustainable Target

- Permanent boundaries now NON-NEGOTIABLE
- Recovery practices are now INFRASTRUCTURE
- 15% buffer protects against future overload
- Success metric: sustainable for months, not days

TOOLKIT 7
Variable Energy Planning System
 7 Components: Track, Plan & Adapt to Your Actual Energy

Component 1: 6-Week Energy Cycle Tracker

Track your energy across 6 weeks to reveal your personal patterns. Repeat this weekly grid for each of 6 weeks.

WEEK ___ of 6 | **Dates:** _____ to _____

| Day | Energy (1-10) | Cognitive | Sensory Tolerance | Social Bandwidth | Notes / Major Events |
|-----|---------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| M | | Sharp/Functional/Foggy | High/Mod/Low | Avail/Ltd/Depleted | |
| T | | Sharp/Functional/Foggy | High/Mod/Low | Avail/Ltd/Depleted | |
| W | | Sharp/Functional/Foggy | High/Mod/Low | Avail/Ltd/Depleted | |
| Th | | Sharp/Functional/Foggy | High/Mod/Low | Avail/Ltd/Depleted | |
| F | | Sharp/Functional/Foggy | High/Mod/Low | Avail/Ltd/Depleted | |
| Sa | | Sharp/Functional/Foggy | High/Mod/Low | Avail/Ltd/Depleted | |
| Su | | Sharp/Functional/Foggy | High/Mod/Low | Avail/Ltd/Depleted | |

Menstrual cycle phase this week: Menstrual Follicular Ovulation Luteal | Day of cycle: _____

Best energy days: _____ Lowest energy days: _____ Possible causes: _____

Repeat this weekly grid for Weeks 2-6 to reveal patterns over time.

Component 2: Capacity-Based Task Sorting Matrix

Sort your tasks by energy requirement, then match to actual capacity each day. No guilt about which list you're using.

HIGH-ENERGY TASKS

Energy: 8–10 | Cognitive: Sharp | EF: Available

Example: Complex writing, strategic planning, important calls, deep analysis

My tasks in this category:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

MEDIUM-ENERGY TASKS

Energy: 5–7 | Cognitive: Functional | EF: Limited but present

Example: Routine emails, standard meetings, organized tasks, moderate decisions

My tasks in this category:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

LOW-ENERGY TASKS

Energy: 2–4 | Cognitive: Foggy | EF: Depleted

Example: Filing, organizing, simple admin, watching recordings, passive tasks

My tasks in this category:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Daily Planning With This Matrix

My energy level today: ____/10 Cognitive state: Sharp / Functional / Foggy EF: Available / Limited / Depleted

Therefore, today I work from: High-energy list Medium-energy list Low-energy list (or MVD)

No guilt about which list I'm using. This is data-based planning.

Component 3: My Minimum Viable Day (MVD)

Define this during stable functioning. Use it on low-energy days without guilt.

NOT my ideal day. NOT my productive day. YES: the irreducible minimum that keeps my life from falling apart.

Work

Show up for: _____

Complete (1–2 tasks max): _____

Everything else can wait.

Physical Wellbeing

Eat 2 real meals (even if simple)

Basic hygiene

Take medications/vitamins

Other essential: _____

Relationships

One brief connection: Text _____ OR 5-min call OR _____

Home / Life Management

Everything else can pile up for now.

What's NOT on My MVD (these are OPTIONAL on low-energy days):

Exercise

Meal prep

Cleaning beyond basics

Responding to all emails

Social plans

Personal projects

If I can't do these things, the day is STILL successful if I met my minimum.

Component 4: Energy-Aware Weekly Planning Template

Week of: _____

STEP 1

Capacity Assessment

Where am I in my cycle? (check 6-Week Tracker):
 High-energy phase predicted Medium-energy Low-energy Recovering from high-demand period

Expected capacity this week: _____% (based on patterns)

Life circumstances affecting capacity: _____

STEP 2

Commitment Mapping

High-energy tasks on calendar: _____

Can I handle these given predicted capacity? Yes Need to reschedule Need to reduce scope

Social/high-drain activities this week: _____

Do these overlap with low-energy predictions? No conflicts Yes — need to adjust

STEP 3

Recovery Planning

I need recovery time after: _____ (date/event)

Recovery time protected: _____

Is recovery actually scheduled, or just hoped for? Scheduled Need to block time

STEP 4

Flexibility Planning

My Minimum Viable Day is ready if capacity drops.

If energy is HIGHER than expected, I'll tackle:

If energy is LOWER than expected, I'll shift to:
_____ (lower-energy list)

End-of-Week Review

Predicted capacity: _____% | Actual capacity: _____% | Very well Mostly Needed more flexibility

What affected my energy this week:

For next week:

www.burnoutproofbook.com/worksheets | *Burnout-Proof, Not Bulletproof* — Dr. Claire E. Jacobs