

CLEARING THE HORIZON



Luxury resorts
are offering
rehablike retreats
to cure our most
modern malady:
Burnout

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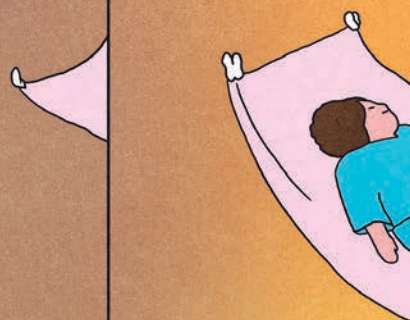
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Passing out at 36,000 feet was the wake-up call for Jenny Graham. The businesswoman, who worked for multimillion-dollar concierge firm Quintessentially Ltd. in London, had struggled with insomnia and stomach upsets for some time, but she dismissed it as typical stress. “I was just pushing, pushing on the ambition trail,” she says now. But when she woke up in a stranger’s arms somewhere over Middle America, she recognized there was a bigger problem.

Doctors, including a neurologist, eventually confirmed it. Bloodwork, EEGs and an adrenocortex stress test all supported one diagnosis: Her body was burned out. Cortisol, the stress hormone, was rampant—leaving her permanently turned up to 11. It was a life-changing moment, setting her on an entirely new career path. In May the 38-year-old Graham, along with co-founder Jenny Morris, will open the first Deep Rest “home,” a planned chain of resorts aimed expressly at treating people suffering those precise symptoms of burnout.

It’s a potentially lucrative niche. Burnout rates since the pandemic have reached all-time highs: More than three-quarters of white-collar workers told Deloitte in March 2022 that they were suffering from it, with half saying they regularly felt physically and mentally exhausted at day’s end. Expect that number to rise: Aflac Inc.’s 2022-23 *WorkForces Report* revealed 59% of Americans have feelings of moderate burnout, 7% higher than in 2021. The World Health Organization has recognized it as a medical condition since 2019, backed by studies that show burnout produces physical signs in the body, including an enlarged amygdala, the brain’s stress and distress switch.

Michael Leiter, co-author of *The Burnout Challenge*, has studied the phenomenon for more than four decades. With colleague Christina Maslach, he developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory, which scores subjects according to three metrics: exhaustion, negativity about work and falling performance. “Burnout is this existential crisis: Who am I? What is my relationship to the world and particularly to work?” Leiter says. The shift in the way we work has accentuated the issue: Working from home could be better described as WFH 24/7. “The relationship crisis between people and their work is what’s really pushing burnout,” he says.

No wonder then that several well-established, high-end hospitality brands are offering treatments expressly aimed at executives suffering from those same symptoms—call it white-collar wipeout. Sha Wellness, a 15-year-old luxury integrated medical clinic in Alicante, Spain, opened a dedicated Leader’s Performance program in March that combines conventional

medicine (nutrition counseling, electrocardiograms, cognitive tests, hormone supplementation) with complementary therapies (breathwork, bioenergy assessments, ozone therapy). So far 30 C-suiters have signed up for the seven-day program, which starts at €6,800 (\$7,430), with the goal of improving job performance along with mental and physical health.

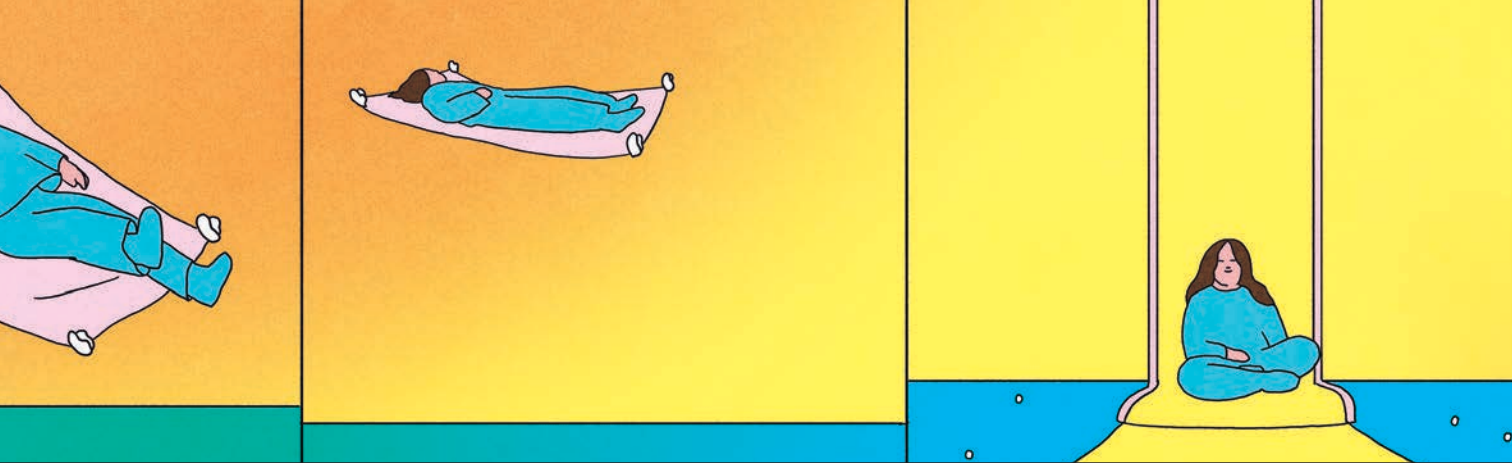
For those with more time (and money) on their hands, Sensei Lana’i, on billionaire Larry Ellison’s semiprivate Hawaiian island, has been offering a 30-day Sabbatical Package, a megasize version of its brand-new Rest & Recovery five-night program. A thermographic scan kicks things off, mapping the body to identify asymmetries, muscle stress and pain points to inform custom training and massage. There’s also one-on-one mindfulness meditation coaching and *Shinrin-yoku*-style hikes (aka Japanese forest bathing) in the surrounding jungle. Price: \$25,000 per person.

The original “burnout” clinics—that is, high-end rehabs, when the term was a useful fig leaf employed by misbehaving celebrities’ press agents—are now treating the real thing. Istana has seen a rise in admissions to its centers on the islands of Bali, Barbados and Ibiza. There, psychotherapy and medical teams utilize wellness elements (bespoke diets, massage, yoga) to maximize efficacy; psychedelic-assisted programs begin in May, joining modalities such as art therapy and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, in which anxiety can be recoded in the brain.

Istana founder Ian Ross-Smith says the uptick first became evident about nine months into the pandemic, and admission for burnout—often in tandem with depression, PTSD, addiction and other issues—has risen 600% since March 2020. “I worked for a similar facility in Australia from 2012 to 2018, and we had zero stated admissions for burnout,” he says. The combo of hardcore work habits, pandemic trauma and seize-the-day substance use has left high performers reeling, especially against the background stress of always-on devices and social media preening.

The same upward trend of check-ins is evident at other exclusive rehabs, such as Switzerland’s Kusunacht Practice, where a week’s stay can cost as much as 119,000 Swiss francs (\$133,000), and the Balance chain of clinics (Zurich, Mallorca, London), which use magnetic or electroshock-like techniques to try to realign your exhausted mind.

Of course, the sine qua non of burnout is not having the time to check into a clinic or visit a retreat. The soon-to-open five-star Raffles London at the OWO has engaged celebrity trainer Harry Jameson to tailor its fitness facilities around short-term



fixes. He's a pro when it comes to those who are "overworked and under-recovered, and they've run the sponge dry." (One past client: erstwhile British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.)

From £250 (\$310) per hour, he'll pull data from clients' Whoop, Apple Watch, Fitbit and other devices to put their past performance—or lack thereof—to work customizing a burnout-banishing routine. A jet-lagged, red-eye arrival, for example, might undergo mindfulness exercises rather than a boot-camp-style workout. "We don't want an already exhausted, adrenalized person getting more exhausted and adrenalized because they feel they have to work out," Jameson says. The key to rebooting is battling our overperforming alpha instincts, or at least the misplaced guilt about taking time off.

Stress is structural, after all, so solving it with a hotel stay—whether over days, weeks or months—can be like putting a Band-Aid on a bullet hole. In an American Psychological Association survey of 1,500 workers conducted in 2018, two-thirds reported that the mental benefits of their vacation had

vanished within days. "Nothing changes when you get back, and that's fine, because we all need vacations," says psychiatrist Pooja Lakshmin, the Austin-based author of the new book *Real Self-Care*. But burnout is a systemic issue requiring life changes as much as long walks in the woods. "You can't meditate your way out of a 40-hour workweek without child care," she says.

Developing tools to thrive rather than merely taking time off is one way many of these programs are modeled after drug rehabs. "Everything's decided for you, and you have this structured, regimented time when you don't have to make any decision," Lakshmin says. It allows the space to heal and—after you've taken the first step of participating in a program—make lasting changes for the future.

For Deep Rest's Graham, that meant jettisoning her jet-set life entirely. She quit her corporate job two weeks after decamping to Tulum in Mexico. "I followed my intuition. I had no Plan B," she recalls. "I've never slept so much." She spent a year in Tulum decompressing. "My 'work' there was resting and just being—that's very hard to reprogram from a go-go-go way of living, as a lot of suppressed stuff comes up. I invested in myself and enjoyed the luxury of truly switching off." It was there that she met Morris, on the beach.

Once she'd recovered, Graham moved to Spain and bought the property she'll soon open as Deep Rest's first location: Casa Amoros. The 300-year-old, five-bedroom *finca* on the Costa Blanca can be rented in its entirety for a single €10,000 VIP "immersion" with a live-in coach leading various burnout-banishing practices; groups can pay €6,500 per week for rooms, with programming at an extra cost. Offerings run from the more esoteric, such as sound healing, to the more practical.

Graham has dubbed the counseling she offers Elevation Coaching; it's intended to be a combination of life coaching and mindfulness, with a dose of positive thinking. "It's about helping them turn inwards and elevate their state—physical, emotional—their story, or beliefs and habits, and their strategies, so they can deal with challenges and obstacles better."

Deep Rest also offers structured pop-ups, including a six-day program in Mt. Shasta, California, in June, and is looking into holding events on yachts in Croatia this fall.

"I'm loath to use the word 'retreat'—we're a restoration brand," Graham says. Deep Rest will offer an anti-activity vacation. "People think that rest is lying on a sun lounger, but you can't rest if you're playing on your phone. To really rest, you have to remove the stimulus." **B**

THE ULTIMATE BURNOUT SPAS

SHA WELLNESS, SPAIN

The just-launched Leader's Performance program combines scientific and holistic medicine for overworked execs to further optimize their lives. Seven days at the Alicante spa (and its forthcoming Mexico location) includes everything from classes at its Healthy Living Academy to physical therapy sessions, breathwork and infrared healing, and a cardio checkup. From €6,800

SENSEI LANA'I, A FOUR SEASONS RESORT, HAWAII

Everyone who checks in for this 30-day respite from the grind receives a personal one-on-one coach to be their *sensei* through the process, devising a signature program customized ahead of time to specific needs, from mindfulness to a nutritional reboot. Activities might include forest bathing, zip lining, sailing or diving. \$25,000

BRENNERS PARK-HOTEL & SPA, SWITZERLAND

In the historic health town of Baden-Baden, Dr. Harry König leads a 14-night holistic Revive package from the luxurious Villa Stéphanie spa annex. Some 65 separate treatments range from active fascia release to deep relaxation via osteopathy to hypoxic (high-altitude) training sessions to increase energy. €16,810 excluding accommodation

GWINGANNA LIFESTYLE RETREAT, AUSTRALIA

Aside from being co-owned by Hugh Jackman, this resort in Queensland's Tallebudgera Valley is known for its uncompromising weeklong detoxes. A veg-heavy, restricted menu (don't even think of picking extra fruit on the grounds) combines with intensive massages and meditative labyrinth-walking to tackle stress. A\$8,150 (\$5,460) for a villa