



There is a growing epidemic around the world. Burnout. We work too hard. We have accepted a stressed-out life as the norm. We don't even realize how sick we are making ourselves. **ARIANNA HUFFINGTON** wants to change that.

A stress-induced wakeup call ten years ago led Huffington to find the link between well-being and performance. She discovered it's not about how hard we work, but how well we take care of ourselves. The evidence was clear.

"Seventy-five percent of healthcare costs in the U.S. are just about treating preventable, often-stress related conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease," notes Huffington. So, she sold *The Huffington Post* and created Thrive Global, a wellness source that focuses on both everyday consumers looking for better health, as well as corporate programs to improve wellness from the top down.

*Pulse* asked Huffington where her inspiration for Thrive came from and how its principals can be translated to the spa industry.

**Pulse:** Where did the concept of creating a multi-tiered wellness tool stem from?

**Arianna Huffington:** After I collapsed from exhaustion in 2007, I became more and more passionate about the connection between well-being and performance. And that led me to write my two books, *Thrive* and *The Sleep Revolution*. And as I went around the world speaking about them, and our epidemic of stress, burnout and sleep deprivation, I saw how deeply people want to change their lives. So, I wanted to go farther than just raising awareness—I felt the need to turn this passion into something real and tangible that would begin to help people change their daily lives. It was a call to action I just couldn't ignore, and so I founded Thrive Global. And since the problem exists on multiple levels, we wanted the company to have both business and consumer tiers.

**P:** You have written a lot about your wellness experiences and principles in your books *Thrive* and *The Sleep Revolution*. How do you plan to use Thrive Global to expand those principles among the global wellness market?

**H:** Thrive Global is meant to accelerate the culture shift away from our current culture of burnout and sleep deprivation. Right now, a lot of the global wellness market is focused on downstream harm reduction, working only on the symptoms. So, what Thrive Global is doing is focusing upstream, on the root causes – burnout and stress. That's where the intervention needs to be.

**P:** What areas of wellness does Thrive's consumer platform focus on?

**H:** We go upstream and focus on all the elements that go into

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well-being. That includes sleep, nutrition, movement, wisdom, wonder, purpose, giving, creativity and productivity.

***P: How can these wellness categories help someone with their personal wellness journey?***

**H:** When you prioritize all these core elements, your well-being will improve across the board—both at work and outside of work. In our wellness journey, we don't leave our humanity behind when we leave for work. It's not about balance. Thrive Global is based on the truth that work and life, well-being and productivity, are not on opposite sides—so they don't need to be balanced. They're on the same side, and rise in tandem. Increase one and you increase the other, which is what the science clearly shows.

***P: Technology can be both a huge asset and a burden on our wellness. How do you recommend finding balance in our ever-connected world?***

**H:** Technology is definitely a factor in our culture of burnout. We're at an inflection point in history where technology accelerated the pace of life beyond our capacity to cope. We're being controlled by something we should be controlling. And it consumes our attention and cripples our ability to focus, think, be present, and truly connect with the world around us and ourselves. The answer isn't to get rid of technology and go backwards, but we do have to be deliberate about finding time to disconnect. There are also increasing new technologies that can help us do that. One tip you can start with is not reaching for your phone first thing in the morning, but instead using ten minutes to breathe and set your intention for the day. Another is to set aside specific times in the day to disconnect – like leaving our phone at work when you go out for lunch.

***P: How can spa industry leaders work to combat high stress in the workplace?***

**H:** One study found that employees who feel burned out are 31 percent more likely to consider seeking another job than those who don't feel burned out. And often what's needed is a major culture change. Even the best wellness plans won't be maximized if there's not buy-in from senior management to change the incentive structure. So, it's not just about awareness, but top to bottom culture and behavior change. ■

## FAST FIVE

Burnout at work, whether you're in an office or the spa, can create a slew of problems for both your personal wellness and your company's overall culture. Arianna Huffington has the cure. Here are her five tips for avoiding burnout.

**1.** Get seven to nine hours of sleep. Sleep is the bedrock of well-being and without that firm foundation, we're much more susceptible to burnout.

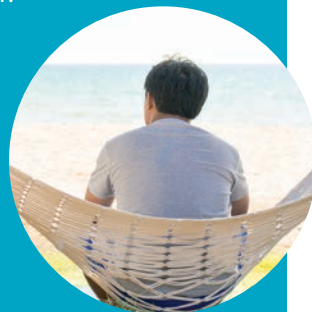


**2.** Make time to disconnect periodically throughout the day.



**3.** Move – try to take breaks and build regular movement into your day.

**4.** Take real time off. When you go on vacation, really go on vacation.



**5.** Naps – they're the world's best performance-enhancing secret.



**INTERESTED** in learning more about the science behind Thrive's principles? Head to [pulse.experienceispa.com](http://pulse.experienceispa.com) to learn more.