

## Getting Enough Good Sleep??



Some shift workers must sleep during daylight hours. On average, shift workers generally get 1.5 to 2 hours less sleep than the average person and the sleep that they do get is often fragmented and disrupted.

While the amount of sleep a person needs differs, you can assess the adequacy of your sleep by answering the following questions:

- 1 Do you feel alert during the time you are up working or participating in other activities?
- 1 Do you have trouble waking up?
- 1 Do you fall asleep easily at quiet times when you are not in bed?
- 1 Do you lie awake for a long period after you turn the lights off and lie down?
- 1 Do you need to sleep late on weekends to catch up?



If you find yourself spending most of your days off catching up on sleep, you're not getting enough.

## Suggestions to get an adequate amount of sleep:

- 1 Keep your sleeping room cool, dark and quiet.
- 1 Ensure an “anchor sleep” of at least six hours.
- 1 Communicate with your family to protect your sleep period.
- 1 Develop and maintain sleep rituals.
- 1 Unplug the phone or use an answering machine.
- 1 Don't answer the doorbell (disconnect the doorbell).
- 1 Maintain a regular meal/sleep schedule.
- 1 Avoid eating at least 3-4 hours before bed-time. This can be difficult for night-workers, but small morning snacks can help.
- 1 Pre-bed meal should consist of foods that can help promote sleep – complex carbohydrates (pastas, potatoes, breads) and foods rich in typtophan (fowl, legumes).
- 1 Give yourself time to unwind before bedtime, especially after a hectic



day. Do something relaxing such as a warm bath.

- 1 Drink less before sleeping to avoid trips to the bathroom.
- 1 When sleep eludes you, get out of bed and read, watch TV or do an activity until you feel sleepy.
- 1 Start exercising on a routine basis to enhance mood and induce sleep. Avoid exercise within 2-4 hours of bedtime.
- 1 Avoid stimulants such as nicotine, coffee, chocolate, soft drinks, tea during the three to five hours before bed.
- 1 Avoid alcohol, especially during the two to three hours before bed.
- 1 Use a reliable alarm. Fear of not waking up can cause insomnia and poor quality sleep.
- 1 If you are a night worker, avoid morning light as this will trigger melatonin suppression and cause sleep problems.



## Switching Back to Days

When switching back to days after the night shift, it's best to get most of your sleep the following night. Sleep just a couple of hours shortly following night shift to shake off sleepiness. Then stay awake all day and go to sleep at your usual bedtime at night.

## When to sleep after nightshift:

- 1 Try different times and see what works best for you.
- 1 Keep a written record of when you go to sleep, when you wake up and how rested you feel.
- 1 If one longer sleep period does not work for you, try two shorter sleep periods.
- 1 It is a good idea to go to bed as soon as possible after nightshift to maximize sleep.
- 1 Try taking advantage of the natural tendency to be sleepy in the mid-afternoon.

- 1 For some people, a nap of at least 30 minutes just prior to going to work is helpful.
- 1 Naps work best when they are extra sleep time, not a substitute for your daily sleep requirement.

Each person has a specific daily sleep requirement. Knowing yours will help you move toward a healthier sleep schedule. Become more aware of what you need for a more satisfying sleep by experimenting with sleep styles.

**For more information contact a member of the SFL Shift Work Committee.**

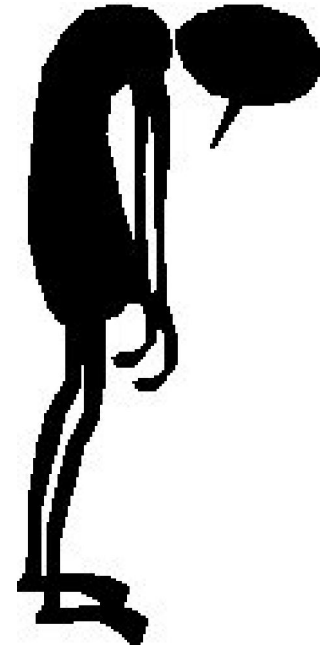
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# Shift Work giving you problems?



**There's help....  
On sleeping  
habits**