



MANAGING SHIFT WORK FOR BETTER HEALTH

Shift survival

Working shifts asks more of your body than a regular nine-to-five job. The varied hours can make it more difficult to lead a healthy lifestyle. But by making small changes to your daily routine, like when you cook and how you go to bed, you can reset your body clock and take your first steps towards a healthier lifestyle.

Here are our **top tips** for working shifts:

1 Cook once, eat all week



Fast foods never seem more convenient than when you're short on time and working varied shift patterns. Take time to make your own healthier quick meals. Cook your main meals once a week in large batches, freeze them in containers and have one each day.

2 Keep a routine, regardless of time



Going to sleep at different times of day is a difficult adjustment to make. To overcome this, keep to the same bedtime routine no matter when you go to sleep. Take a bath or listen to soothing music and keep mental stimulants such as TVs, games and computers out of the bedroom.

3 If you can't sleep, rest



You may not be able to get to sleep just when you want to every time. You shouldn't let this mean you miss out on rest though. Go for a lie down in a darkened room anyway and avoid bright light exposure, because rest is good for you and your heart, even if you can't get to sleep. And the odds are you will probably nod off eventually.

4 Keep hydrated



Keeping well-hydrated will help you cope with the physical strain of working varied hours. Regular top-ups are best. Drink lots of small amounts spread throughout the day.

5 Avoid caffeine and alcohol before sleep



Avoid caffeine before bed and don't drink alcohol – it might help you feel drowsy but both are stimulants and can cause disturbed sleep. Both are best avoided at bedtime.

For more information on managing a healthy sleep routine and a balanced diet:

AXA PPP healthcare www.axapphealthcare.co.uk/health-information/sleep

AXA PPP healthcare www.axapphealthcare.co.uk/health-information/diet-and-nutrition