

Working Nights? Five Ways to Improve Your Sleep

Many call it the toughest shift to work, but unfortunately for some it's one they have to soldier through. Simply managing to get through a night shift is no mean feat, but how do you recoup when your sleep cycle has been thrown out of its natural schedule?

This article seeks to help those struggling to get the sleep they deserve after a hard night's work. Chronic insomnia can be crippling, so even if you're not on the night shift it might be worth it to read up on these tips to improve your sleep.

1. Shut out the light.

First and foremost, light plays an important part in telling our body when to sleep – one of the reasons why shift work is so tough. When you return home try not to look at any screens before going to bed (even artificial light can trigger your body's responses) and reduce light in your bedroom as much as possible; try visiting ebay.co.uk for some heavy-duty blackout curtains to really get a good night's sleep.

2. Your sleeping environment

On the subject of the bedroom, take a good look and see if your room and bed is suited for sleeping. Body temperature is another way of our brain knowing when to sleep, so ensure that you're perfectly comfortable when trying to sleep. Mute any noise, – no matter how small – if they're keeping you awake so you're not constantly pestered. Most importantly, let others in your house know about your work and help them to respect your sleep when you need it.

3. The bed time ritual

Humans are indeed creatures of habit, so be sure that you have a solid bedtime routine you follow every single night. Suggestions include getting a drink of hot milk, doing maybe half an hour of reading before getting washed up and hitting the hay. Do this enough and you should begin to find yourself getting tired at the appropriate times, no matter how weird they are. You might be tired after work, but you'll only feel the benefits of this technique if you stick to your routine diligently.

4. Napping

It might seem counterintuitive but [napping does in fact help you sleep better](#). Getting a quick nap before a long night shift will help you stay more alert during work. Some productivity experts even suggest taking a power naps of around 20 minutes during breaks. Topping up on sleep in small bursts is helpful but be careful not to fall too deeply into sleep, as that will have the reverse effect and leave you feeling groggy.

5. Eating well

A good, healthy diet will benefit your sleep greatly. You might find yourself coming home from work feeling peckish, but there are some foods you should avoid so you don't stay awake all night; things like sugary snacks and fatty foods. If you are looking for a good midnight snack, simple

September 2014

cereals and porridge will fill you up without giving your body excess energy. Remember to control your intake too, as even large portions of healthy things won't contribute to a good night's sleep.