

Keep the Home Fires Burning

Don't let balancing work and family get the best of you. Focus instead on building a peaceful, positive home life. **Here's how:**

Follow your values. Create goals that support your core beliefs about home and family. Keep your values at heart whenever you talk to a family member. Conflicts arise when you lose sight of what has true meaning.



BE PRESENT:

Today's busy world can pull you in many directions. Use family time as your retreat. When you spend time with loved ones, don't worry about the past or the future. Simply be with the people you care about. Laugh, enjoy and relax.

Get to the real problems. If an argument goes on for more than a few minutes, chances are the issue in dispute is not what's really upsetting you. Take a break to think about it, then discuss it again when everyone is calm.

Keep your promises. If you feel guilty about missing out on family time due to your work schedule, you may be tempted to make commitments you can't keep. Fully enjoy the time you do have, rather than worry about what you might miss.

Shiftwork: You're in This Together

When those you care about follow a 9-to-5 schedule and you're a shiftworker, here's what to keep in mind as you all go about your days and nights:

You all need your sleep. Although comings and goings while someone is sleeping are inevitable, try to prevent sleep interruptions. **Tips:** Keep a white noise machine, a fan or earplugs on hand to dampen noise and a sleep mask to block light.

A little reassurance helps. If a loved one has anxiety about being alone at night, consider installing an alarm system and check in with a scheduled phone call from work.

Don't let problems linger. Discuss them right away. Brainstorm solutions together and avoid placing blame. Keep the lines of communication open.

Quality time is invaluable. Make a date to meet and talk at least once a week, even if just for a few minutes.

It's important to keep in touch. Find ways for more togetherness. Remind those around you of your time off, and plan for celebrations and special events as much as possible. When you can't attend, have the events captured on video.

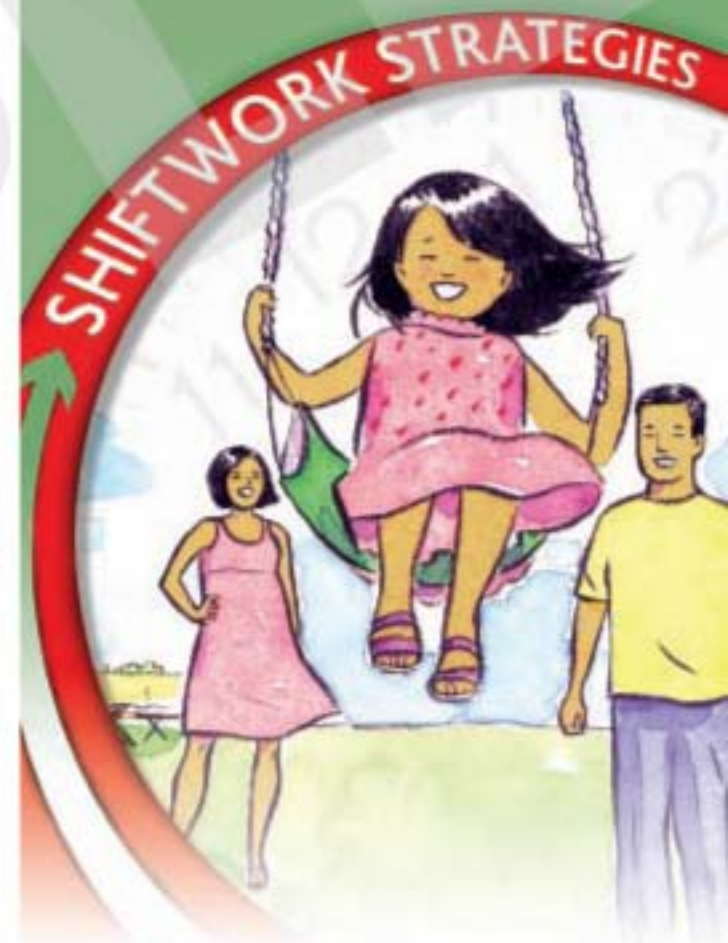
What works for your family is the right thing to do. Keep in mind that there's no "normal" or "right" time to work, sleep and spend time together as a family. Respect everyone's needs and schedules, and find solutions that keep your entire household happy.

Remember: Fun does not have to follow a schedule. Get creative with the time you have, and adopt a more positive attitude at work and at home. Life will balance out.



Balancing Shiftwork & Family

Keeping Relationships Strong



Finding Balance in a 24-Hour World

Everyone is busy these days, and as a shiftworker, managing both your job and your personal life can be challenging. Yet a satisfying home and social life are key to feeling and working your best, so it's best to create a healthy balance. The information in this brochure presents some practical strategies and tips for balancing work and family as a shiftworker. Consider sharing it with your family and friends.



Merging Schedules and Keeping in Touch

Clear communication is one way to keep relationships strong. It helps bridge the gap that shiftwork can leave between you and your loved ones. **Try these ideas:**

Put together a family calendar. Make dates for gatherings. Notice any important events you might miss, and plan a celebration for when you are available — for example, have someone videotape the school play and then watch it together on your day off.

Post a bulletin board. Put it in a central location where everyone can share notes, pictures, drawings, messages and other items.

Check in. A partner or children who are nervous about being home alone can be reassured by contact with you. Set a time based on workplace policy, such as meal breaks, to call home.



THINK POSITIVELY ABOUT YOUR SCHEDULE

Perhaps you can't be there for every family dinner, but you could stage a midnight pizza party on the living room floor. You might miss bath time and bedtime with your kids, but you could pick them up from school and visit the playground together.



Is Your Life in Balance?

Are you successfully balancing work and personal time? Check yes or no.

- YES NO I have little time for myself and those I care about.
- YES NO My schedule is so full, I rarely have any downtime.
- YES NO It's been a long time since I did something just for myself.
- YES NO I often don't use my personal and vacation time.
- YES NO I usually feel exhausted and stressed.
- YES NO I'm the person everyone depends on, but I rarely ask for help.
- YES NO I often miss family events because of work obligations.
- YES NO I often work overtime.
- YES NO I wish I had time to exercise, enjoy a hobby, or simply read a book or see a movie, but my schedule does not allow it.
- YES NO I bring work home with me.

The more "yes" answers you marked, the less balance you have between your work and your personal life. Think of this as a wake-up call. **Start small:** Just 15 to 30 minutes per week to read, have fun with your family or get extra sleep can make a difference. Identify one work or personal obligation that isn't absolutely necessary and let it go. You can achieve balance one step at a time.

SPEND TIME WITH FELLOW SHIFTWORKERS

Socialize on a schedule that works for everyone. Online message boards are also places shiftworkers congregate for support and conversation.



Success Tips for Life and Work

MANAGE your time. Group errands together instead of making several trips. Do one cleaning task or one load of laundry per day rather than saving it all until your day off. At work, add time estimates to each task on your to-do list and stick to them.

ACCEPT imperfection. Ask yourself: Is a clean house more important than time with my family? Is missing out on sleep worth putting your work productivity and safety at risk? Recognize that you may have unrealistic expectations; set reachable and manageable goals.

SLEEP more. Don't let fatigue cause you to miss family events or slow down productivity. Exhaustion means you aren't at your best for anyone. Make getting enough sleep priority No. 1 and better balance will follow.

PROTECT your leisure time. Avoid filling all your off-work hours — leave some of them for fun, family, friends and relaxation.

REACH OUT for support. Be honest about how shiftwork affects you, and tell people when you are tired, need to sleep, or need to reschedule or cancel commitments. Ask for help — you may be surprised by the support network you have. Talking with a counselor, minister, mentor or trusted friend can help when you are overwhelmed.

NURTURE yourself. Do you tend to make all your obligations about others? Take a few minutes every day to relax quietly and enjoy "me" time.

BANISH guilt. Taking care of yourself means saying "no" sometimes. If that allows you to approach life and work with more energy, then there's no reason for guilt.

