

SW SHIFT WORKER™

Achieving a Healthy Balance.

9.2022

INVEST in Your Sleep

Use this to-do list to create a stellar sleep environment that will have you asleep in no time. Choose from this list according to your unique needs.

- ❖ **Use a sleep mask** to block out light and distractions. Install room-darkening shades or blinds to keep out sunlight.
- ❖ **A fan** can provide a soothing hum. Or try a white-noise machine to block household and neighborhood noise. Set your phone to silent.
- ❖ **Set the alarm** on your phone or your clock so you can stick to your schedule.
- ❖ **Listen to a CD** or podcast of soft music or soothing sounds to help you drift off.
- ❖ **Post a Do Not Disturb sign** so household members know you are unavailable.
- ❖ **Use layered, light blankets** so you don't get too hot or cold. Wear comfortable, properly fitting nightclothes that aren't too hot or constricting. Use an air conditioner during hot weather.

Creating a soothing environment is the first step toward getting ready for rest. Making your sleep area more peaceful will have a big payoff in how energetic and rested you feel.



Relief for Tired Eyes

Working long hours and overnight can lead to tired eyes or even eyestrain. Prevent and deal with the most common eye symptoms with these strategies.

If you work on a computer, position your monitor so you are looking slightly downward at it while you work. Adjust screen brightness so you aren't straining to see or squinting from glare. Adjust lights, blinds and the angle of your monitor so you aren't dealing with glare.

Tip: Look at something farther away for at least 20 seconds every 20 minutes so your eye muscles can adjust and relax. Close your eyes periodically for a few minutes to give them a rest.

(Continued on back.)

Tips for Shiftworking Parents



Balancing shiftwork and family can be a challenge — but it's one you can meet head-on with a few parenting tips designed especially for your shiftworking lifestyle.

- **Sometimes**, your children may just need you to listen. Hear their concerns about your schedule and their time with you.
- **Don't** cut your children off from your job. In an age-appropriate way, share the challenges and joys you encounter at work.
- **Schedule** special time that is just for you and the kids. Turn off the smartphones, tablets and TV. Curl up on the sofa to watch a movie and eat popcorn. Take a bike ride together before you head off to sleep.
- **Team up** with your partner, extended family, teachers, coaches, neighbors, and friends. Can you create a cooperative that shares shopping, errands, cooking, or transportation to ease the burden? Trying to do it all alone will only leave you exhausted and stressed.
- **Remember**, to do more for your kids, you need to take care of yourself. Get your sleep, eat well, and take time to relax and rejuvenate.



A few caffeine facts:

Caffeine's effects wear off faster when you use it daily because your body builds up a tolerance to it. Try cutting back if you find you need more to wake up. Caffeine levels in the bloodstream peak within an hour of consuming it. Caffeine can take eight to 14 hours to clear your system. Ease off the coffee and other caffeinated drinks as your shift winds down.

Relief for Tired Eyes

(Continued from front.)

- ◆ **Over-the-counter lubricating drops can provide relief.** Use drops that are artificial tears and do not contain any preservatives or redness-reducing ingredients, as these can make your eyes feel more dry and tired.
- ◆ **Don't smoke, and avoid secondhand cigarette smoke.** If the air in your workspace or home is particularly dry, consider using a humidifier to help relieve eye dryness. Turn down the thermostat to avoid hot, dry air.
- ◆ **Fill half your plate** at every meal with fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ **Wear sunglasses** when outdoors to provide protection against harmful UVA and UVB rays, as well as a wide-brimmed hat.
- ◆ **Wear the proper eye protection** for your job.
- ◆ **Get your eyes examined** as recommended by your health care provider.

Practice prevention for healthier eyes.

At Home with Exercise

Let's face it — gyms and group exercise aren't for everyone. If you're the type who'd rather work up a sweat in the comfort of your home, here's how to make the most of your personal gym:

Create a dedicated space. Post a workout zone sign, or cover the area with a rubber mat. Stake your territory and you are more likely to use it.

Gear up. Choose shoes and clothing appropriate for your needs.

Make exercise a pleasure. Yes, you can. Get moving to your favorite show or to music (but not too loud — protect your hearing).

Exercise to TV, video or online fitness programs. Research online reviews to find ones best suited for you.

No room for equipment? How about crunches, jogging in place or dancing? Invest in portable, inexpensive exercise bands, hand weights, a step bench or yoga mat.

Note: Gradually progress to at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity exercise (e.g., brisk walking). Get your health care provider's advice first if you have a medical condition or are new to exercise.

Home exercise can be as effective as a gym workout with the added benefits of privacy and saving money and commute time.



The secret cell phone number: If you won't turn off your telephone ringer during daytime sleep because you worry that children or loved ones won't be able to reach you, keep your cell phone by your bed. Give the number only to your family and your children's school, and stipulate that it's for emergencies only. You can set your smartphone to Do Not Disturb so it will ring only when certain people call.

The Jet Lag Diet, Shiftwork-Style

Air travel across time zones and shiftwork have similar effects on your body, including fatigue and brain fog. Could a change in eating habits improve how you adapt to shift changes, as much as it helps those who travel the world?

More than two decades ago, researchers at Chicago's Argonne National Laboratory created a diet plan involving timed feasting and fasting.

Note: Although anecdotal evidence suggests the jet lag diet may help reset the body's internal clock, more research is needed to examine its full effects. Following the Argonne diet to the letter may also be too extreme for shiftworkers who change schedules frequently.

The key is to alter what and when you eat for a few days before a shift change to find out how your eating patterns affect your energy and sleep. Remember: Get your health care provider's OK before you significantly change

your diet.

The jet lag diet starts three days before a flight or shift change. Day one is a feast day, when you eat two high-protein meals to boost energy, followed by a high-carbohydrate meal as your last of the day to encourage sleep. On day two, you eat lightly and possibly drink one caffeinated beverage to wake up pre-shift. Day three, the first day of your new schedule, follow the same eating plan as day one.

It's important to eat a healthy breakfast as your first meal of your new day, even if it isn't your traditional breakfast time. This will trigger your body to feel energized and awake on your new schedule.

More to ponder ♦ Food isn't the only cue that helps your body adjust to a new schedule. Light exposure, room temperature, and naps can all help reset your body's internal clock, easing you from day to night.



Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, **Save Your Neck**, is at personalbest.com/extras/22V9tools.



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