

SW SHIFT WORKER™

Achieving a Healthy Balance.

Alliant
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Your MEAL CLOCK

Your body is designed to eat and process food at certain times, and how you time your meals can affect your digestion, sleep, energy, weight and overall health. To feel your best, eat meals according to the time of day, not your shift. More meal timing tips:



- ❖ **In the morning, before daytime sleep,** eat a light meal rich in complex carbohydrates and low in fat. Good choices: whole-grain toast, oatmeal with sliced fruit, brown rice, fruits and vegetables. Drink liquid sparingly so the urge to urinate won't wake you up.
- ❖ **Avoid going to bed hungry, but don't overeat.** It's a common misconception that a big meal will make you sleepy. In fact, it takes a lot of energy for your body to digest a big meal, so digesting heavy foods can keep you awake.
- ❖ **Before your afternoon or evening shift,** eat your main meal of the day after you wake up from daytime sleep. Mix complex carbohydrates with lean protein to keep you awake and alert over the long haul. **Good choices:** Chicken or fish, whole-grain pasta, fruits and vegetables, eggs or egg whites, low-fat cheese or Greek yogurt, and whole-grain bread.
- ❖ **On your meal break,** eat a high-protein snack low in added sugar and sodium to give yourself an energy boost. Remember that digestion naturally slows at night, so eat light. Try unsalted nuts (approximately 25), an apple with a teaspoon of peanut butter, whole-grain crackers, hummus, bean or low-fat yogurt dip with vegetables, berries, a hard-boiled egg or low-sodium soup.
- ❖ **Time your meals well and make healthy choices,** and you may find you are less tired, less hungry, and can bypass high-fat, high-sugar foods more easily in the middle of the night.

Shiftworkers are at increased risk

for a vehicle crash resulting from drowsy driving, so they must be extra vigilant behind the wheel. This may lead some to use hands-free systems that enable drivers to get directions, tune the radio, post to social media or a calendar, and perform other tasks without taking their hands off the wheel or eyes off the road. However, 2 AAA studies revealed that hands-free systems are distracting. In some cases, using them diverts our attention from the road as much as a cell phone conversation. When you drive, keep both hands on the wheel and your eyes — and your mind — on the road.

QuikRisk™ Assessment: Your Heart



Prevention is the key to good heart health.

Like their daytime counterparts, shiftworkers need to take care of their hearts, too. Take this risk assessment and discuss the results with your health care provider.

YES NO

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. I limit saturated and trans fats because they contribute to unhealthy cholesterol levels. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. I get at least 8 to 12 ounces of fish weekly, at least 3 servings of whole grains daily, and 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 cups of vegetables daily. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. I get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity, such as walking, weekly. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. I usually do at least 15 minutes of strength building twice a week on nonconsecutive days. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. I take time for daily relaxation to help lower my stress level. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. I get checked for type 2 diabetes, unhealthy cholesterol and high blood pressure as my provider advises. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. I keep my waist circumference below 35 inches (for women) or below 40 inches (for men). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. I don't use tobacco. Or, I am ready to ask my provider for help quitting. |

Scoring:

If you answered **yes** to at least 4 or 5 questions, good for you — and good for your heart.

If you answered **yes** to fewer than 4 questions, talk to your provider about adopting more heart-friendly habits. Your heart will love you for it.



Exercise: *What You Need*

Regular physical activity — everybody needs it, and that includes yours.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises you to get:

- At least 150 minutes of **moderate-intensity aerobic activity** weekly, or:
- At least 25 minutes of **vigorous-intensity aerobic activity** at least 3 days per week.

Moderate activity includes walking, cycling, swimming or dancing at a moderate pace. **Vigorous activity** includes jogging, higher-intensity fitness classes, circuit training, and cycling or swimming at a faster pace.

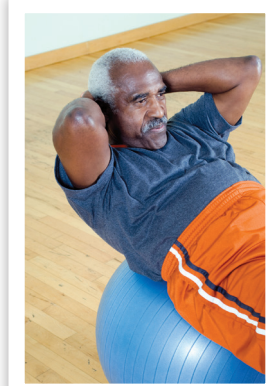
If you are trying to lose weight or improve metabolic processes, such as blood pressure, blood sugar or cholesterol, aim for 40 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity activity 3 to 4 times per week.

Remember, it's never too late to start exercising if you've

been inactive. Any amount of physical activity is better than being sedentary. Set a goal you can achieve, such as moving moderately for 10 minutes, and work your way up gradually.

If you're short on time, 10-minute segments that add up to your total goal are just as beneficial as a non-stop 30-minute session.

Regardless of your schedule or fitness level, fitting in even a few minutes of aerobic activity will help your heart.



Work at Your Best

Stay energized, alert and focused all shift long with these tips:

❖ **Brighten up.** Make sure your workspace is as brightly lit as possible, and avoid dimming the lights on the night shift. Light exposure triggers your body to feel more awake.

❖ **Get moving.** Even if you can't leave your immediate work area, even just getting up and shaking out your arms and legs or stretching can perk you up. If you can, take a brisk walk, or climb stairs.



❖ **Cool off.** Dress lightly, and keep your workspace as cool as is comfortable if you can control the temperature. Splash cool water on your face and neck for a boost.

❖ **Drink up.** Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, not just caffeinated beverages.



❖ **Exercise first.** At least 30 minutes of physical activity before you start your shift will help you feel more energized and alert at work.



❖ **Make friends.** Connecting with your coworkers, so you have someone to talk to during breaks or slow periods, can help you feel more energized.

Occasional negativity may be a positive at work, according to University of Liverpool researchers. For example, disagreement among team members can spark discussion and lead people to seek innovative solutions. The key is balance: A positive attitude makes work easier and more pleasant, but sometimes a lack of consensus may help highlight and resolve issues to move a project forward.

Power Naps



Naps: They aren't just for babies, the elderly and pets. According to the National Sleep Foundation, a 20- to 30-minute nap can improve alertness, productivity and mood. A well-timed nap can help you stay productive and alert throughout your shift, and even help you to be safer as you drive to and from work.

Know your employer's nap policy. While some employers allow naps at work, others have strict policies against napping on the job for safety or productivity reasons. Even if you can't nap at work, fitting naps into your routine can help you succeed at shiftwork.

Nap tips:

- ✓ The ideal nap is 20 to 30 minutes. You will wake up groggy after a longer sleep.
- ✓ Find a peaceful, cool, comfortable place to relax, so you can drift off quickly and maximize your naptime.
- ✓ Plan a specific time to nap, such as 15 minutes before you get ready to leave for your shift, or right before you drive home.

Don't feel lazy or embarrassed about taking a nap. Instead, focus on the boost to your alertness and productivity naps can bring.



The Smart Moves Toolkit, including this issue's printable download, **Watch These Calorie Traps**, is at personalbest.com/extras/20V1tools.

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