



# TIRED ALL THE TIME? WE CAN HELP

We all feel tired occasionally. Usually this is down to burning the candle at both ends, whether it be due to too many late nights, a heavy workload or a new baby.

However, if you keep feeling tired, you should try to figure out what is really making you so. It can be helpful to think about:

- Parts of your life, such as work and family, that might be particularly tiring
- Events in your life that make you tired, e.g. relationship problems
- How your lifestyle may be making you tired.

It may be helpful to talk to your GP/occupational health provider.

They will look at the psychological, physical and lifestyle causes of tiredness.

These can include:

- Stress, anxiety or depression
- Physical causes such as anaemia, an under-active thyroid or sleep apnoea
- Too much alcohol, caffeine or your unsociable hours of work.

---

## PRACTISING SLEEP HYGIENE...

If you have problems sleeping, then sleep hygiene can help. This means doing things that are known to improve sleep and avoiding those that are known to disturb sleep. Here are some things that may help:

- ✓ Avoid caffeine at least four hours before you go to bed
- ✓ Avoid nicotine at least one hour before you go to bed
- ✓ Avoid alcohol near bedtime as it can disrupt sleep
- ✓ Don't eat a BIG meal before bed
- ✓ Do regular exercise but stop two hours before bed
- ✓ Make your bedroom a nice, tidy place to be in
- ✓ Avoid making your bedroom too hot or cold
- ✓ Keep your bedroom dark and quiet at night
- ✓ Keep your bedroom just for sleeping
- ✓ Try to maintain regular sleep patterns
- ✓ Try a sleep diary to track your sleep patterns and to find out what keeps you awake at night.



# EXERCISE - THE ULTIMATE CURE-ALL

**Regular exercise has been found to be helpful to many aspects of physical and mental health - including sleep.**

20 minutes a day or 150 minutes a week, especially if you have a sedentary job, e.g. desk-based, will help to relax you, make your body and breathing work better and lead to a more restful sleep.

The easiest way to get moving is to make activity part of everyday life, like walking or cycling instead of using the car. The more you do, the better you will feel and taking part in exercise will make you even healthier!



---

## FOCUS ON HEALTH

**When you're working a shift schedule, your eating and exercise habits can suffer.**

People working shifts may miss meals, eat irregularly, eat unhealthy food and may find it hard to keep up regular exercise.

Shift workers are at higher risk for weight gain and heart disease as well.

**Healthy eating and exercise help improve your sleep and your overall health.**



**Here are some tips to help:**

- Drink plenty of fluids. Bring a water bottle to work and fill it often
- Have healthy foods available at home and work
- Prepare meals before your shift, so they're ready to eat when you get home or bring them to work
- Eat small, frequent, regular meals, as opposed to large heavy ones
- Sit down to eat. Pause for meals and eat at a relaxed pace
- Limit caffeine intake four to five hours before the end of your shift
- Talk to family and friends about how shift work affects you
- Exercise moderately. Try to take walks, climb the stairs, or stretch before or after your shift or during your breaks
- Get the sleep you need. You can space out sleep with naps if a single period of rest isn't possible with your schedule.

# SHIFT WORKERS ARE VALUABLE

Shift work is vital in many organisations and we rely upon shift workers to provide important services out of normal business hours.



Unfortunately, shift work can be very disruptive to a person's health and wellbeing, with only 63% saying their work schedule allows them to get enough sleep.

Shift workers are more likely to sleep fewer than six hours on workdays, to work more hours per week on average, and to have experienced drowsy driving at least once a month in the previous year (NSF).

## GETTING TO SLEEP CAN BE A PROBLEM, NOT ONLY FOR SHIFT WORKERS

- Try some relaxation or sleep apps such as [www.sleepio.com](http://www.sleepio.com) or [www.headspace.com](http://www.headspace.com)
- Turn off electronics and don't look at your watch if you are trying to sleep
- Don't worry if you can't fall asleep. Your body will eventually take over and help you sleep
- For more information, there are some great resources at [www.sleepcouncil.org.uk](http://www.sleepcouncil.org.uk) including a free 30-day sleep plan.



Sources: NHS, National Sleep Foundation, Sleep Council