







## EMPLOYEE SERIES

### Tips for maintaining wellbeing when working rotating shifts.

Adapting to changing rosters at work can be particularly challenging. Rotating shifts can impact your ability to experience your world as predictable, knowable and reliable. However, it is important to be aware of the physical and mental impacts of rotating shifts and create a plan to mitigate the negative effects and ensure you feel healthy inside and out.

The following tips can be helpful in maintaining your physical and mental health when working rotating shifts:

-  **Health Checks.** Rotating shifts disrupt the body's ability to heal and recover from physical stress. For this reason, it is important that you have a GP that you trust and who knows you well enough to track your physical health. Checking in regularly with your GP will enable you to be supported to prevent illness and promote optimal functioning.
-  **Sleep Routine.** Working rotating shifts has shown to lessen the length and quality of your sleep as you are often required to sleep outside the times directed by your circadian rhythm. To counteract this, create a wind down routine that you can take anywhere. It may include no screens for 1 hour before bed, light stretching and a mindful moment. You may use items such as the same kind of pillowcase, an eye mask, ambient music and soothing scents to cue your mind and body to rest.
-  **Healthy Eating.** Disruptions to your working routine can interrupt other processes of your life, particularly your eating habits. You may find yourself snacking and choosing convenient food options which can cause vitamin deficiency and obesity. To ensure your body and mind have all the nutrients needed to function well always choose the healthy option or prepare on your days off a range of meals you can freeze and eat later. Most importantly eat at regular intervals – before work, half way through your shift, at the end of your shift. Add in some healthy snacks in between and you will feel energised, alert and able to meet the demands of the job.
-  **Regular Exercise.** Maintaining a flexible and functioning body will ensure that you live and work well. Rotating shifts can disrupt attendance at exercise classes that may motivate you to remain fit. However, adding daily movement into your schedule regardless of your shift is possible. You may consider waking 1 hour earlier and going for a walk or work with an online physical trainer who will book sessions to fit in your rotating shifts.

If you would like to book an appointment and /or speak with one of our Counsellors, it's as easy as calling 1300 66 77 00 or New Zealand 0800 327 669 or visit our website [www.accesswellbeingservices.com.au](http://www.accesswellbeingservices.com.au)



**Socialise.** Being unable to attend the family function or regularly catch up with friends due to rotating shifts can be isolating. It is important, however, that where possible that you prioritise connections with others just to shoot the breeze or to share more deeply about your experience and inquiring in kind about theirs.



**Maintain Connections.** Working rotating shifts not only impacts you but also your immediate family. It is important to regularly check in with them about how your changing routines are affecting them and work together to find solutions that prevent the relationships from being negatively influenced. You may consider booking regular holidays, having 1:1 time with each member of your family by phone or in person as well as setting annual family goals to work together as a team.

#### References:

Website: <https://www.ohsrep.org.au/shiftwork - health effects>

Article: Ferri et al. (2016). The impact of shift work on the psychological and physical health of nurses in a general hospital: a comparison between rotating night shifts and day shifts. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5028173/>

Article: Gardner, et al. (2018). Mental health and well-being concerns of fly-in fly-out workers and their partners in Australia: a qualitative study. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5855220/>

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