



Confronting Shift Work

What is Shift Work?

-Employment practice designed to make use of, or provide service across, all 24 hours of the clock each day of the week (often abbreviated as 24/7).

-Practice typically sees the day divided into shifts, set periods of time during which different groups of workers perform their duties.

Who Works Shift Work?



- Maintenance Workers
- Road/Plow Workers
- Industrial workers
- Hospitals/Healthcare workers
- Police, Fire, EMS and Emergency 911, Corrections
- Hotels/Food Service workers
- Transportation services-trucking, airline workers
- Others

Reasons for Working Shift Work

- **Nature of the job**
- **Allows for better arrangements for family or childcare**
- **Only option available (seniority)**
- **Personal preference**



Types of Shifts and Hours

Shifts

- Days
- Evenings
- Nights

Hours

- 8hr
- 10hr
- 12hr

Weekends and Holidays?

Rotating days off/Set Days?



Working Long Hours

**Shift workers
work about 400
hours more per
year than
Monday-Friday
workers.**

- Cornell University

Voluntary Overtime



- Signing up for pre-planned available shifts.
- Weighing extra money vs. family/personal time.
- Keeping track of your schedule.
- Can you handle it? Is it too much?
- Taking too much OT and not factoring in mandatory possibilities.



Mandatory Overtime

- From Home?
- Held Over?
- Timing issues
- Never convenient

Root Causes

- Short Staffing-management rights
- Injury/illness of employees
- Cover for Vacations



Lack of Sleep

***Being awake for 18 hours straight makes you drive like you have a blood alcohol level of .05 (.08 is considered drunk). If you have been awake a full 24 hours and drive it's like you have a blood alcohol level of .10**



***Sleepfoundation.org**



Sleep

Circadian Rhythm- The Body's Internal Clock

Body Rhythms are motivated by...

- -Internal Cues
- -External Cues

....which are synchronized to achieve a balance within the body.

A well balanced, synchronized human will....

....sleep at night and
....be active during the day.



Circadian Rhythm

- Internal Rhythms will also be in balance so that...

...body temperatures

...and hormonal levels

rise and fall at appropriate times throughout the 24hr cycle, in sync with the external cues.





Circadian Rhythm

-Out Of Balance-



- When out of balance, there is a confusion of signals to the part of the brain that triggers circadian responses
- When work hours keep people in a constant state of imbalance, it is impossible for the rhythms to get resynchronized for numerous body functions involved.



Example of Circadian Rhythm

- **Body Temperature drops to its lowest point around 4AM, then rises slowly again at about 6AM...**
...this affects performance, activity and alertness as they reach a low point from 4-6 AM
...is the most difficult time to stay awake and alert.



Circadian Rhythm

- Once disrupted, the body tries to adapt by re-synchronizing all the affected functions.

But, different systems take different amounts of time to reach the new rhythm- the longest is about 3 weeks for the liver function and bone repair to catch up with the rest of the body.

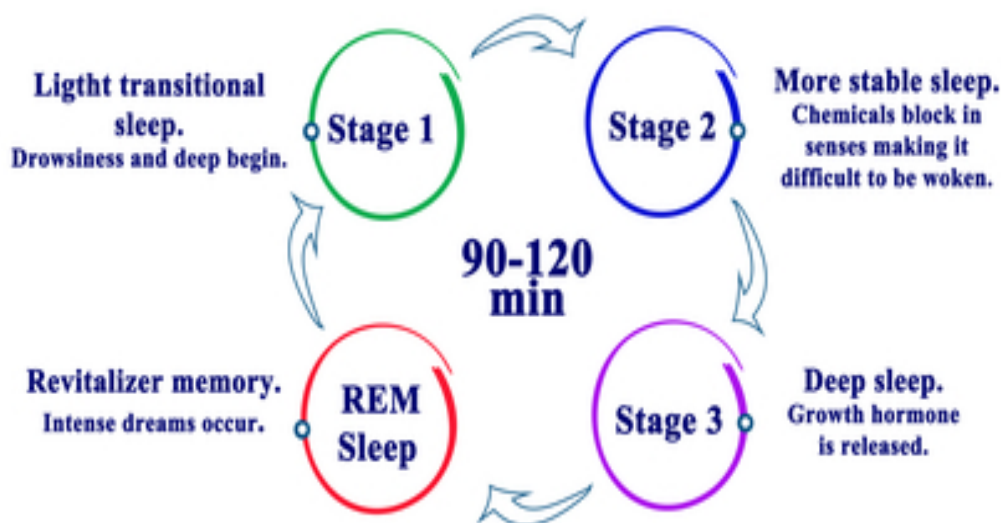
*If the cycle is disrupted within the 3-week period, the body needs to adjust again.

REM SLEEP

A kind of sleep that occurs at intervals during the night and is characterized by rapid eye movements, more dreaming and bodily movement and faster pulse and breathing.

**Provides energy to the brain and body, supports daytime performance.*

Sleep Cycle Stages



A Sleep Debt is Never Paid Up

- Most believe that they can make up for lost sleep over days off, however that is a myth.
- It is more about the quality of sleep rather than the extra quantity.- Cornell University





Sleep Deprivation Can Reduce...

- *Concentration
- *Memory
- *Handling complex tasks
- *Logical thinking
- *Critical thinking
- *Decision Making skills
- *Creativity
- *Motor Skills and coordination
- *Analysis of new information





What is Cortisol?

- Cortisol is a steroid hormone that
- helps control blood sugar levels,
- regulate metabolism,
- reduce inflammation
- assists in memory formation.
- It has a controlling effect on salt and water balance and helps control blood pressure.
- It also helps the body respond to stress.
- Often called the “stress hormone”.

Signs of High Cortisol Levels

- Irritability
- Mood Swings
- Weight Gain
- A Puffy Flush Face
- Higher Susceptibility to Infections
- High Blood Pressure
- Increased Anxiety
- Acne & Other Skin Changes
- Excessive Thirst





How to Cope with Shift Work

- **Put YOURSELF first, take your breaks!**
- **Make sleep a priority. (Avoid the temptation to stay up).**
- **Take advantage of wellness benefits.**
- **Manage your Leave and plan your vacations.**
- **Devote time daily to exercise.**
- **Limit caffeine and sugar.**



How to Cope with Shift Work

- **Stay dedicated to finding a good work/life balance.**
- **Communicate your schedule with your family and friends.**
- **Prep meals for the week ahead, avoid fast food.**
- **Prep your bedroom with room darkening shades/fan.**
- **Avoid broken sleep.**



How Can Activists Help?

- Keep track of overtime levels-specifically mandates.
- Hold management accountable for contract language rules/regulations regarding overtime.
- Evaluate your contract...work with your LRS to correct bad/unfair policies and procedures.
- Encourage members to seek help if shift work is negatively affecting their lives.



How Can Activists Help?

- Encourage management to fill positions wherever possible.
- See that management is keeping track of lone workers at night. (WPV law)
- Take a look at SH-900/OSHA 300 logs and look for patterns.
- Listen to the members-how can everyone improve conditions.



-Questions/Comments???