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SHIFT WORK & FATIGUE





Shift Work

- What is “**Shift Work**” and why is it Important?
 - It is: Groups of people working together alternating with other groups to create a cohesive and productive workplace 24 hours a day - 7 days a week.
 - It effects: Staffing levels, schedules, workload responsibility and morale.
 - It is important because: We all deal with shift work - directly or indirectly.





Shift Work - Common Negative Effects

- Lack of Communication between staff on different shifts
- Lack of “Teamwork”
- Lack of concentration while on duty
- Potential Unsafe Conditions
- Stress/fatigue
- Shift Lag



What is “Shift Lag”?

- Shift Lag is a condition many workers suffer from, due to rotating schedules and non conventional hours.
- Shift lag usually comes in the form of:
 - Mental Symptoms and/or
 - Physical Symptoms



Mental Symptoms

■ Increased Irritability

- It's noted that shift workers become more irritable after working night shifts.

■ Overly Emotional

- "Snapping or losing it" is another symptom of shift workers.

■ Contrary Behavior

- Some workers are so stressed with shift work that they become easily upset and are prone to seeing problems that may not really be there.

■ Forgetfulness

- Forgetting to clock in or out and forgetting to do quality checks are two examples. Also many small tasks that are done automatically during the day are forgotten at night.



Physical Symptoms

■ Fatigue/Tiredness

- Being worn out and tired for days after night shifts, generally accompanied by a lack of concentration and motivation, especially for any activity that requires effort or skill

■ Loss of Energy

- These include activities like: going to work, gardening, home maintenance and recreational sports

■ Broken Sleep

- Working during the hours of 12 am - 5 am disrupts your circadian rhythms (normal wake and sleep cycle) and this can cause you to wake during your next sleep and then want to fall asleep during the next shift.

Continued...



Physical Symptoms (Continued)

- **Stomach Problems and/or Constipation**
 - Attributed to shift workers not eating properly.
- **Dehydration**
 - This can cause headaches, dry skin, nasal irritation, and make you more susceptible to any colds, coughs, sore throats and flu that are floating around in the work place.



What Causes Shift Lag?

■ Work Schedule

- Evidence suggests that it is best to work days, then evening and then nights otherwise if you work a different combination you can make shift lag worse.

■ Working all night

- The main cause of shift lag is working on a night shift, after 11:00pm and before 6:00am. This period is when the body naturally resets its daily biological clock.

■ Lack of Quality Sleep

- Many shift workers never fully recover from shift lag. Even if the shift work schedule is an easy one, like two nights on and five days off. The reason is the lack of quality sleep.

Continued...



What Causes Shift Lag? (Continued)

■ Dehydration

- Dehydration is a problem for shift workers. Drinking plenty of (non alcoholic and non caffeine) liquids will help reduce dehydration during the night.

■ Being the Wrong Person to do Shift Work

- Because people are different there is also a big difference to how much each person suffers from shift lag. Some can't do night shift work while others find it less stressful than most.
- Note: If you are one of those who finds night shift work very difficult, changing your job - if possible - may be the best long term solution.



Tips For Reducing Shift Lag

- **Quality Sleep after shift**
 - Quiet, dark, temperature controlled, comfortable.
- **Extra Exercise**
 - Exercise can make you feel better and reduce stress.
- **Support from Family and Friends**
 - An understanding partner and family does help.
- **Drinking plenty of Fluids**
 - An adequate intake of fluids during your shift will help reduce dehydration.



Fatigue at Home

- 40,000,000 Americans suffer from sleep disorders that effect the quality and quantity of their sleep.
- Only 35% of adults sleep the recommended 8 hours or more per night during the work week.
- 56% of adults report symptoms of insomnia a few nights a week.





Fatigue at Work

- 19% of adults report falling asleep at work.
- 18% of adults indicated that they have called in sick due to a poor nights sleep.
- 29% of adults indicated that they do not feel well rested when they get up for work.
- 27% of adults reported dozing off behind the wheel of an automobile.





Fighting Fatigue

- Establish a consistent bedtime routine.
- Engage in physical activity - like walking, biking, swimming, etc.
- Reduce alcohol, caffeine and tobacco intake.
- Eat a well balanced diet. Cut out large or spicy meals late in the evening.
- Get regular checkups and stick with your physician's recommended plan.