



## Fatigue Reduction: Night Working

### The challenges of shift work:

Shift work can mean long hours, which can make us more fatigued. But working at night or at odd hours also affects our body clock and it's harder to sleep when it's daytime. Thankfully, good habits can help you manage your sleep and keep you alert on duty.



### Preparing for night duty:

- The night before the shift, stay up later than normal to try and wake up later in the morning.
- Try to find some time earlier in the day to do some exercise (even if that's just a walk). Just after you've woken up can work well.
- Prepare food in advance for your shift, including your night time meal and some healthy snacks.
- If you're going to be out and about during the middle of the day, try wearing sunglasses. This will help you get more sleep in the afternoon before starting your night duty.
- After lunch is a good time to have a sleep. Set your alarm for 90 minutes (the length of one sleep cycle). You might experience sleep inertia (grogginess) when you wake up, so don't drive until you've been awake for 20-30 mins.
- Plan in advance. If you have a long shift and a long journey, talk to your manager about what you can do to reduce the increased risk of fatigue; consider sharing transport, or hotels.



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### During your shift:

- Drink water to keep hydrated and take regular small sips from a coffee flask to help boost your alertness. Eat the healthy snacks you prepared earlier.
- Midnight is a good time to have the light night time meal you prepared. Regular meals are important for keeping you alert, but overeating can reduce your alertness and make you drowsier.
- Discuss a safe time and place to have a 15 minute power nap with your manager or supervisor (whether this is allowed will depend on local rules). Just before you nap, drink some caffeine, it'll help minimise grogginess when you wake up.

### After your shift:

- If you're feeling sleepy after your shift, do not drive. Work with a manager/supervisor to arrange alternative transport (or a hotel), or as a last resort have a nap before you head home.
- Wear sunglasses when you travel home in the morning (if it's light), so you don't boost your alertness just before going to bed.
- Eat a light breakfast before going to bed.





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### What if I feel my alertness levels starting to drop partway through a shift?

- **Tell your supervisor or line manager;** they need to know about anything that impacts the safety of the team, including fatigue
- Take a break and go for a short walk (of course you'll need to discuss this with you supervisor first)
- Drink some coffee
- Have a 15-20 minute power nap (if appropriate and allowed in your area – always seek permission from your manager or supervisor)



### Team effort

Here's a checklist of things you can do to help look after your team

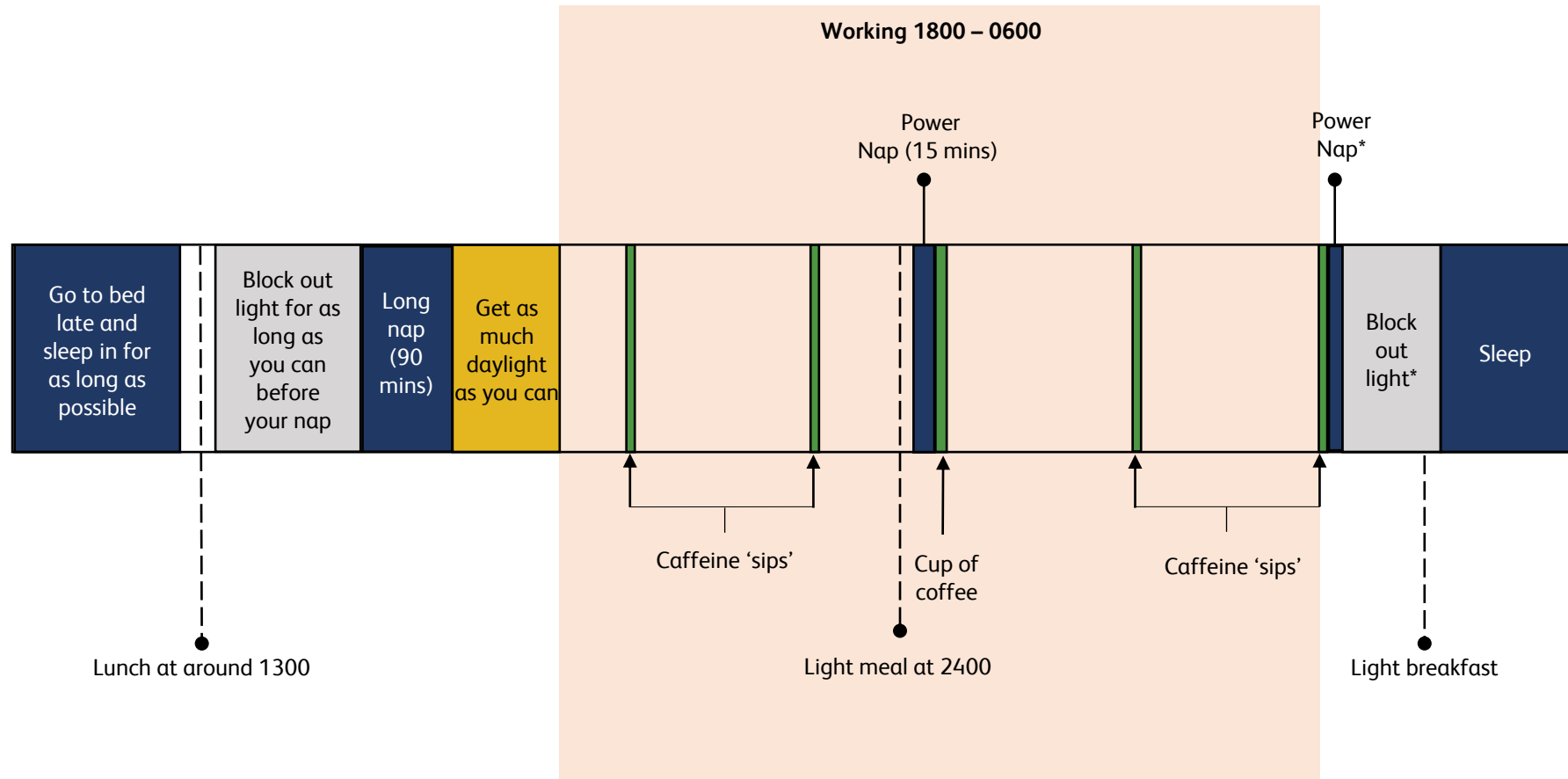
- Make sure everyone has breaks planned and takes them. Use them to have a snack and have a drink
- Chat to your team. Talking to someone helps you tell how fatigued they are, but it also helps boost their alertness. If someone is moodier or grumpier than usual, that could be a sign that they are fatigued
- Double-check each other's work. This means you can spot any errors that might have been made, and it also gets the team talking
- Buddy up with someone. You can look out for each other and keep watch for signs of fatigue



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### Example night shift time line

This is just an example to give you an idea of things you could do to maximise your alertness on a night shift. Not all staff will have somewhere safe to nap partway through a shift, or it might not be appropriate for their role. This should be tweaked to suit the individuals role, location, local rules and personal circumstances.



\*If it's bright out wear sunglasses on the drive home. Keep them on when you get home (or keep the lights off/curtains drawn)