

SURVIVING THE NIGHT SHIFT

Before

Use the 24 hours prior to maximise rest, have an afternoon nap in the day before your first night shift.

Keep hydrated, eat healthy and consider exercising before you start your shift.

During

Keep well hydrated and aim to maintain normal eating patterns/times as much as possible.

Choose healthier, satisfying options and minimise eating between midnight and 6am.

Be aware of the 4am dip, when you are at your lowest physiological ebb, double-check any critical decisions during this time.

After

If you are too tired, do not drive and use public transport where possible.

Wear sunglasses to reduce light exposure.

Have a light meal/snack 30 minutes before going to bed and get to bed as quickly as possible.

When you wake up get 20 minutes exposure to bright light and try some light exercise.

Recovery

After your final night shift have a 1-2 hour nap before midday and do 'normal activities' in the afternoon.

Aim for as close to normal bedtime and wake time as possible.

(Adapted from BMA - Anticipating and managing fatigue associated with Doctors' working patterns)