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Shift work is often a part of the health care profession and can be hard on the body. What is shift work? Shift work is considered work outside the normal 9-5 or daylight hour's period. This uneven and often changing schedule does require making extra focus on self-care. Taking care of yourself when faced with the demands of shift work can be difficult, however taking care of yourself will allow you to enjoy your work and personal life more. Let us look at some ways to take care of yourself when it comes to shift work.

Sleep



Sleep is the big one and often the most difficult to manage because of the varying schedule you may have. One day you are up at 5 am and working until 1pm, the next you are working from 1pm to 9pm followed by another 5am start. These wild swings can make getting to sleep difficult since you are coming home from a busy day and you are still engaged from the day's work and now you have to go to bed to get rest for tomorrow. Without that quality sleep our health takes a major hit. Sleep allows our body and mind to heal from the stresses of the day. These changes in our schedule shift our sleep schedule and the normal routine can be disrupted making quality sleep more difficult. So how do we manage sleep during this time?

Taking Care of Yourself When Working Shift Work

- 1- Maintain your bed time routine. Have a routine that tells your body that it is time to go to sleep, maybe a book to read, brush your teeth? Maintain that routine to signal your body it is time for bed.
- 2- Use Black out blinds to keep your bedroom dark.
- 3- Try to rotate from day shift to night instead of the reverse as it is easier to adjust too.
- 4- Try to avoid multiple days in a row of evening shifts.
- 5- Try to limit coffee late in your shift. Caffeine can keep you up or make your sleep less restful.

Remember shift work is hard on the body and taking care of yourself is key to maintaining your own health.

Exercise



Exercise is always a great way to take care of your body, however with shift work you will have to be more mindful of what you are doing. Not exercising is not the answer, but dialing it back a little can help.

What is your Circadian Rhythm?

This is a physical, mental and behavioral routine the body has. Things like; when you wake, when you sleep, sunlight, eating time will affect your Circadian rhythms. It can influence sleep-wake cycles, hormone release, eating habits and digestion, body temperature, and other important bodily functions this is why shift work can be challenging on the body. Because these routines are disrupted your body's clock can be put out of sync

One of the best ways I have found to test how hard I should train is some parasympathetic breathing exercises. To start your workout, take a few deep breathes through the nose and exhale through the mouth and gauge how difficult it feels to breathe. If you have a smart watch that tracks stress or HRV then use that. This can help you determine how stressed your system is.

If the breathing is labored and out of sync or your tracking apps say you are stressed, then dial it back which can be done by dropping the weight or volume. If it is a cardio session lower the speed or distance you are training at and instead focus on some mobility work. A body weight workouts is a great option. If you have wearable technology that can be a great way to monitor your training. If you are tired try to keep the heart rate a little lower.

Hydration



Drinking enough water as a health care provider can be difficult throughout the day. Again often you are with patients and focused on their needs, leading you to be dehydrated. Even a 1% dehydration can negatively affects your mood, attention, memory and motor coordination. Dehydration will also make you feel more fatigued. Since you are messing with your routine and you are already likely a little fatigued this will only make that fatigue more pronounced. When you are more fatigued it is also easier to skip your workouts. Try to find a way to drink more water as you go through the day. Carry a water bottle with you and make sure you grab some water when you walk by a water fountain or cooler.

Mindfulness.



Try to take a minute and relax. For many people we run on the sympathetic system and not enough on the parasympathetic system, be it from lack of sleep, stress or just not taking some time to unwind. We tend to run our body at our max too much of the day. Taking a few moments throughout the day can help you lessen the stress on your body. Try taking some time in your day to enjoy a hobby,. Things like playing an instrument, or reading a book can help relax the body. Breathing exercises are an excellent relaxation exercise and they can only take a minute or 2 to complete.

Eating



Shift work can play havoc on your eating. You are changing your routine and eating is often based around our routine. This change will also affect your food intake. Here are a few things to keep in mind when you are working shift work.

- 1) It is easy to eat poorly when working shift work, you are tired and when you are tired it is easier to just grab the easy processed food. Try packing lunches at home and bring them to work.
- 2) Try to eat close to your regular meal time. This will help you maintain your regular routine and keep you from getting your circadian rhythm to out of sync.

Remember taking care of yourself is extremely important. Keeping your body running at peak ability is important for you, your job and your family.



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**PASS IT
ON!**

TO YOUR CO-WORKER

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RULES & CONDITIONS APPLY

Ask us for more details!

A foam roller can increase mobility?

EQUIPMENT IN THE GYM

TWO **2**



FOAM ROLLER



STRETCHES

That help to increase mobility of the chest, back and shoulders.

2

ANGEL SWEEP

1. Support both your hips and your head on the roller.
2. Bring your arms down alongside your body with your palms facing up. Maintain a neutral spine, stabilizing your core through the movement.
3. Inhale to slowly sweep your arms out and up like a snow angel, keeping your fingertips brushing the ground the entire time. Pause at the top to feel the stretch through your chest and shoulders.
4. Then, exhale to slowly sweep your arms back down by your sides.



1

OVERHEAD REACH

1. Begin with your arms down alongside your body with your palms facing in.
2. Extend your right arm over your head and reach through your fingertips. At the same time, keep your left hand down by your side, reach your left fingertips towards your feet.
3. Hold for a moment to feel the stretch through your shoulders and lats, then switch sides.





**February
7th - 21st**

2019
2020

**Edmonton
NW**

SQUAT

**Calgary
Stonegate**

CHALLENGE!

Record how many Squats you complete each day on the white board in your Pulse Generator - EMS Gym between
February 7th -21st

TEAM WORK

This is an EMS gym to gym challenge. We are working together to "**Squats**" our team totals as high as we can!

WHY?

Bragging rights and everyone loves the results we get from squat!

TRACKING OUR TOTALS

Team Edmonton vs Team Calgary updates will be posted regularly in your gym. You can also look for this poster on the Pulse Generator Facebook page.





EDMONTON

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FIT EMS

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MON: Jan 27th & Feb 3rd

WEDS: Jan 29th & Feb 5th

11:45AM-12:15PM

REGISTER FOR MORE

MON

Feb 10th - Mar 16th

4 classes for \$24

(No class Mon, Feb 17th)

WEDS

Feb 19th - Mar 18th

4 classes for \$24

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NOT A PULSE
MEMBER?

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register for
fitness classes.

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CALGARY GYM

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