

# Mental Health Matters



## 10 Tips for Mental Wellbeing for People Working Unsociable Hours

Those working night shifts, early mornings, or changing schedules face unique challenges — like disrupted sleep, isolation, or limited access to services. These tailored tips aim to support wellbeing in ways that align with irregular hours and real-life demands. This resource is part of our **Mental Health Matters Toolkit**.

- ✓ **Create a Pre-Shift Wind-Up Routine** - include uplifting music or podcasts that are energising.  
Benefit: Helps you mentally and physically prepare for work.  
Doing a short routine before starting (like stretching, music, or a cooler shower) can help you feel more alert and focused.
- ✓ **Use Movement to Stay Awake** - regularly stand or move around to keep you alert and focussed.  
Benefit: Keeps blood flowing and boosts concentration.  
Standing up, walking, or doing light stretches during lulls can help maintain alertness without relying solely on caffeine.
- ✓ **Keep a Comfort Kit at Work** - choose items that matter for your week ahead.  
Benefit: Supports wellbeing during long or late shifts.  
Pack essentials like healthy snacks, a warm layer, headphones, or a calming scent — small comforts can make a big difference.
- ✓ **Keep a Journal or Voice Note Log** - use this to document the how you've overcome challenges and to note any support you might need to ask for.  
Benefit: Helps process emotions and track patterns.  
Shifts can be intense — jotting down thoughts or voice recording feelings can release stress and help spot what supports you best.
- ✓ **Limit Blue Light Before Sleeping** - end your shift or work with activity that isn't screen based, such as planning for the next shift.  
Benefit: Improves sleep quality and wind-down time.  
After a night shift, avoid phones or screens where you can. Blue light can delay sleep and make it harder to fully rest.
- ✓ **Explore Peer Support** - create a safe space forum for discussion about wellbeing and mental health.  
Benefit: Builds connection with others in similar roles.  
Talking to people who understand your hours and challenges can reduce isolation and create a sense of shared experience.
- ✓ **Plan “Anchor Points” in Your Week** - share your anchor points with friends, family or colleagues to help keep you accountable.  
Benefit: Provides something to look forward to and structure.

This could be a call with a friend, time outside, or a creative activity. Anchors help balance the unpredictability of shift work.

✓ **Set Gentle Expectations on Days Off** - pace your time to recover from your shift.

Benefit: Supports realistic rest and recovery.

It's okay if you don't "catch up" with everything on your day off. Prioritise what restores you, not just what fills the time.

✓ **Use Calm, Familiar Scents at Bedtime** - choose scents that remind you of home or positive memories.

Benefit: Triggers relaxation and helps signal sleep time.

Lavender, chamomile, or your favourite scent can become part of a calming ritual that helps your body wind down.

✓ **Acknowledge the Impact of Your Work** - Share your work successes with friends and family and encourage them to be curious about your work.

Benefit: Boosts self-worth and meaning.

Working unsociable hours often supports essential services and people. Taking a moment to value your contribution can help reframe tiredness or frustration.

These wellbeing tips are simple, practical actions that can help you feel more balanced, supported, and in control — even during unpredictable or demanding times. Whether you're working remotely, managing shift patterns, or navigating everyday life, looking after your mental wellbeing is not just something to do when things go wrong — it's something we can build into how we live and work every day.

Remember, wellbeing isn't about getting it right all the time. It's about making space for what restores you, recognising what you need, and knowing that small, consistent steps can have a powerful impact over time. No one approach fits all — the key is finding what works best for you, allowing yourself the flexibility to adapt when life shifts and asking for help when you need it.

**Need to talk to someone? Click [here](#) to access a range of support that's right for you.**