Sleep Meeting Kit

THE TOLL OF INSUFFICIENT SLEEP ON WORKERS

It’s not only night shift workers who find it hard to stay awake on the job. As North Americans work extended hours, routinely take work home, and juggle two or more jobs on top of long commutes, sleep has become a casualty of the race for time. But lack of sleep undermines performance and can create a vicious cycle of working more hours to compensate for diminished productivity and having less time to sleep.

This high-pressure lifestyle is taking its toll on health and well-being. As anyone who has had a sleepless night knows, sleep deprivation affects mood, increasing anxiety, depression, irritability, and impatience. According to the National Sleep Foundation’s annual Sleep in America survey, 65 percent of Americans experience sleep problems. This means that the workplace is often a less than productive or congenial environment.

HOW TO SLEEP AT WORK

1. Be clear on what is and isn’t allowed.

If you’re new, consult your handbook, other resource materials or someone in HR about the rules for sleeping at work. If it isn’t allowed, you can try to win your boss over by touting the benefits of power naps.

2. Use the designated nap areas.

If your company allows napping, then they’ve probably reserved areas specifically for that. They’ll also probably have storage space for any personal sleep accessories you choose to bring, from your own pillow to maybe even a change of clothes.

3. Establish sneaky nap areas.

If it’s a “nap at your own risk” situation, be sure to find some pretty regularly quiet zones in which to do your snoozing. Search out empty conference rooms, offices or even an out of the way break room with a couch.

4. For car owners: a bed on wheels.

Your ride can also be a vehicle for successful napping. Turn it into a power nap zone worth bragging about to your friends. Fill up your gas tank in the morning, so you can take that much-needed snooze with the AC on high.

5. For city dwellers: rent-a-beds.

If you’ve never heard of a nap room, Google it immediately. Spas, clubs and other facilities are all making these zones more available, especially in urban areas.

MANAGE DAYTIME SLEEPINESS AT WORK.

1. A shot of caffeine: Caffeine is a stimulant, meaning it increases activity in the brain and nervous system. It can improve your thinking ability and mental performance, and help you fight off sleepiness. Head over to the break room for a coffee, or take a short walk to a local cafe.
2. Take a power nap: If you have your own office, shut the door and lay your head on the desk. Or sit in your car and recline the seat. A 15 or 30-minute nap might give you enough energy to power through the day. Don’t forget to set your alarm clock or you may oversleep!
3. Get up from your desk: Sitting in one spot for too long can worsen daytime sleepiness. Periodically rising from your workstation and walking around gets your blood flowing. It can also help you stay to awake and concentrate on your work.
4. Listen to upbeat music: If you’re sleepy at work, having to do your job in silence can be a drag. You may feel as though you’ll fall asleep at any moment. To wake up your brain, listen to upbeat music. If you can’t turn on a radio, get permission to listen to music through earbuds – the more

upbeat music, the better.

5. Eat a light lunch: Eat a light lunch to keep your energy up. You want to feel satisfied but not stuffed. As you pack your lunch, choose healthier sources of energy. This includes boiled eggs, chicken, berries, nuts, vegetables, and whole grains.
6. Keep your workspace bright If you’re fortunate to work in a space with windows, open the shades and let in some natural light. Sunlight in your office can increase alertness and energy.
7. Splash cold water on your face: If you’re struggling to stay awake at work, go to the bathroom and splash cold water on your face. This quick and simple hack can reenergize you and provide a much-needed pick-me-up.
8. Turn on a fan: When you’re feeling sleepy, point the fan in your direction and turn it on full blast. Just like the natural breeze outside, the cool air of the fan can increase your alertness.
9. Stay busy: Without much to do, you may start to feel even more tired. Ask your boss for some light responsibilities, if possible. You might be able to assist with overflow work.

Tips to be Well Rested

- Get at least seven hours of sleep. Studies vary on exactly how much each person needs, but the consensus is between six and eight hours.
- Shut your TV off and place your phone face down. Blue light and other light sources can disrupt your sleep.
- Avoid naps during the day. Naps can throw off your internal clock for rest at night. If napping is a must during the day keep it under 20 minutes.
- Keep your room between 68 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit. This is the range that is best for sleeping conditions for most people.
- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every night. This keeps your internal clock on track and your body gets into a routine.

FINAL WORD

Research has shown up to 40% of Americans are sleep deprived. This causes many issues in the workplace and at home while completing tasks. For example, driver sleepiness is a factor in about 100,000 car accidents each year, resulting in about 1,500 deaths. Studies have also shown that sleep deprivation can significantly reduce workers’ reaction time, motor control, decision-making ability and situational awareness. This creates an unsafe condition where a worker, or a whole jobsite, is exposed to a potential incident that could cause injury.