

FATIGUE AND WORK

Fatigue is the state of feeling very **tired**, **weary** or **sleepy** resulting from insufficient sleep, prolonged mental or physical work, shift work, or extended periods of stress or anxiety.

Boring or **repetitive** tasks can intensify feelings of fatigue.

repetitive
repetitive
repetitive



One shift worker in five dozes off during a shift.



SIGNS

- increased vulnerability to illness
- sleepiness
- giddiness
- irritability
- loss of appetite
- depression
- digestive problems



Staying awake for **24 hours** straight affects the human body almost exactly like a blood alcohol level of **.10%**, which exceeds legal limit for drivers.



Night, evening, rotating and **irregular shifts** are associated with in increased risk of occupational injury due to **worker fatigue**, **less supervision** and **reduced co-worker support**.

Impacts of fatigue

DECREASED

- decision making ability
- ability to do complex planning
- communication skills
- productivity / performance
- attention and vigilance
- ability to handle job stress
- reaction time
- memory / ability to recall details

- tendency for risk-taking
- forgetfulness
- errors in judgement
- sick time and absenteeism
- medical costs
- accident rates

INCREASED

Fatigue is increased by...

- dim lighting
- limited visual acuity
- high temperatures
- high noise
- high comfort
- tasks over long periods of time
- long, repetitive and monotonous tasks

Tips for workers

- EAT** a healthy diet that promotes longer-lasting energy. Complex carbohydrates (starch) are preferable to simple carbohydrates (sugar). Avoid fatty foods and junk food.
- ADOPT** a steady exercise routine that includes cardiovascular, muscle strengthening and flexibility workouts.
- TRY** to get at least 7.5 - 8.5 hours of sleep per night.
- STAY** positive. Make a conscious effort not to be overwhelmed by negative circumstances.
- AVOID** driving if you are tired, especially in inclement weather where vision is impaired.
- AVOID** excessive noise.

Advice for employers

- ENSURE** the work environment does not promote fatigue. Try to avoid dim lighting, toasty temperatures, and excessive noise.
- VARY** job tasks to eliminate repetition or long periods of boring, monotonous work.
- INCORPORATE** and encourage taking breaks.
- TRAIN** workers on the importance of getting enough rest and how to achieve work-life balance.
- INTRODUCE** shorter shifts, and rotate shifts in the direction of the sun (morning, afternoon, night, in that order).

Fatigue is regarded as having an impact on work performance. Most accidents occur when people are more likely to want sleep – between **midnight** and **6 am**, and between **1-3 pm**.

