

USC Center for Work & Family Life

Tips To Help Manage Your Shift Work Schedule

If you have control over your work schedule, here are factors to keep in mind to make the adjustment easier.

Night shifts

- Try to keep the same sleep and wake times each day, even on your days off. This will help regulate your circadian rhythm, improve your sleep quality, and also help you be alert during your shift.

Rotating shifts

- Rotate shifts clockwise. A schedule that rotates clockwise is usually easier to adjust to. This means it's preferable to go from a day shift, to an evening shift, to a night shift, rather than rotating the other way, or rotating without a pattern.

To prepare for a new shift, adjust your sleep and wake time gradually. If you begin adjusting your sleep and wake time for three days prior to your shift, it will be a smoother change. If you're rotating clockwise, this will mean you'll delay your bedtime and wake up time by an hour or two each night (depending on the new schedule).