

# USC Center for Work & Family Life

## Tips to Help Shift Workers Nap More Effectively

Napping can help you feel alert and help make up for lost sleep. It's important to nap strategically (when to nap and how long to nap) because not doing so can actually compound your sleep troubles. Follow these tips for beneficial naps:

- 1 Nap before your shift.** When you don't sleep well or when you're awake for long periods, your "sleep drive" (the pressure to sleep) increases. If you nap, even for 20 minutes, it can relieve some of this sleep drive and make you more alert during your shift.
- 2 Try sleeping in two stretches.** Sleep once when you get home from work, and again before your shift starts. It's often hard for night shift workers to sleep a full seven to nine hours continuously during the day, so if you sleep for five hours at once and take a two hour nap before your shift, you're getting closer to your daily sleep requirement.
- 3 Take short naps (15-20 minutes) during your shift breaks if your employer allows this.** You may want to talk to your employer about having some nap-friendly policies in the workplace, which can increase productivity and cut down on workplace errors and injuries.
- 4 Allow some time to "snap" out of your post-nap grogginess.** Try, if possible, to take a brief walk or stretch after your nap to get your brain back on 'work' mode.