

CLIENT RESOURCE

The Shift Worker's Guide

Sleep, caffeine, and consistency for your schedule

Built Around Your Actual Schedule

Most nutrition and training advice assumes you wake up, work a day shift, and sleep at night. That's not your reality, and it doesn't need to be for this to work. Whether you're on a consistent day shift, a consistent night shift, or flipping between the two, the principles below are built around your wake time, not the clock on the wall.

Know Your Shift Type

The strategies in this guide apply a little differently depending on your schedule. Find yourself below.

Day Shift

A consistent daytime schedule. Your "day" runs roughly from a normal morning wake-up to an evening bedtime, closest to a traditional schedule.

Night Shift

A consistent overnight schedule. Your "day" starts when you wake up in the afternoon or evening and ends when you go to sleep after sunrise. Treat that block as your day, regardless of what the clock says.

Rotating / Split Shift

Flipping between day and night shifts, the most demanding schedule to manage. The goal isn't perfection, it's minimizing how much each flip disrupts your sleep, energy, and eating.

Caffeine Timing

Cut caffeine off roughly halfway through your day, using your day, not the clock on the wall.

- Day shift example: if you're up by 6 to 7am, aim to cut caffeine off by around noon.
- Night shift example: if your "day" starts when you wake up around 6pm and ends when you sleep around 8 to 9am, your cutoff is roughly the halfway point of that stretch, somewhere around 1 to 2am.
- Rotating schedule: recalculate your cutoff each time your wake time shifts. The rule stays the same, halfway through your day, even when the clock time changes.
- Caffeine has a longer half-life than most people realize. Cutting it off early gives your body a real chance to wind down before you need to sleep.

Sleep Habits

These are the same fundamentals from your Supplements & Daily Habits guide, worth repeating here because they matter even more with a non-traditional schedule.

Cold, Dark, and Quiet

Keep the room cool, use blackout curtains or an eye mask to keep it fully dark regardless of the time of day, and cut down on noise. Earplugs or a white noise machine can make a big difference when you're sleeping while the rest of the world is awake.

Protect the Wind-Down

Limit screens in the 30 to 60 minutes before sleep and run the same wind-down routine every time, regardless of what time it is when you start it. Your body learns the routine, not the clock.

Managing the Flip

Rotating between day and night shifts is the hardest transition to manage. A few strategies make it easier.

- Shift your sleep schedule gradually in the day or two before a flip if your schedule allows it, even an hour or two of adjustment ahead of time helps.
- Use light strategically. Bright light (sunlight or a bright room) when you need to be alert, and dim light or sunglasses when you're trying to wind down or heading home after a night shift.
- Keep your meal timing anchored to your wake time, not the clock. Your "breakfast" is whatever you eat first after waking, whenever that is.
- If you need a nap, keep it short, 20 to 30 minutes, so it doesn't interfere with your main sleep block.
- Stay ahead of hydration. Disrupted sleep schedules can blunt your thirst and hunger cues, so don't rely on feeling thirsty as your only signal.
- Go easy on alcohol around a flip. It disrupts sleep quality even more than usual when your schedule is already adjusting.

Consistency Over Perfection

You're not going to get this perfect every rotation, and that's fine. The goal is to protect your sleep and energy as much as possible within a schedule that isn't always predictable. Text me anytime if a rotation is throwing things off, we'll adjust your plan around it.

Coach Myles