



Daily Toolbox Talk: Be Safe, Be Well Rested

May 6, 2021

Do you ever feel exhausted during the day even after a full 8 hours of sleep? Or, do you routinely get less than 7 hours of sleep per night and struggle to stay awake during the day? The construction industry often comes with early hours, long commutes and nightshift work. This interruption with the Circadian Rhythm, your body's natural sleep/wake cycle, can have major consequences on your physical and mental health. For some, it can lead to substance dependency and even depression.

The good news is no matter what your sleep habits are, there are some simple things you can do to improve your quality of sleep, your overall well-being, and safety on the jobsite. Here are a few tips to improve your sleep quality tonight:

1. **Exercise:** Being physically active during the day can help you fall asleep easier. If you are not physically active while at work, be sure to take time periodically throughout the shift to get up, stretch and walk. Consider an exercise routine when you get home. The more energy you expel during the day, the easier it is for your body to enter a deep and restful sleep at night.
2. **Food and Beverage:** Avoid eating heavy meals before bedtime. Resist the urge for a "nightcap" before bed. Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but negatively impacts your quality of sleep causing you to wake up frequently. Also, avoid drinking caffeinated drinks (coffee, energy drinks) within 6 hours of bedtime.
3. **Sleep routine:** Keep your bedtime and your waketime consistent, even on the weekends and resist the urge to take naps. There is no such thing as "catching up" on sleep. Consistent sleep intervals help keep your body in a reliable routine of rest and rejuvenation. For those who work nights, do your best to keep a consistent schedule as well. Avoid bright light or sun exposure after your shift as it will make it easier for you to fall asleep.
4. **Sleep Quantity:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends most adults 18-60 should aim for 7 or more hours per night. Those 61 and older should try for 7-9 hours. Make it a priority to get to bed early enough to get the rest you require.
5. **Sleep Environment:** Your bedroom should be dark and free of distraction and noise. Avoid screen time a minimum of 30 min before bedtime (an hour is best). Use blackout curtains if necessary and keep it cool. Studies suggest that deep sleep is best at temperatures around 68 degrees.



Discuss ways your work has challenged your sleep quality. How can you prioritize better sleep, even with early hours or shiftwork?

Review these questions with your crew. Possible answers are listed below each question.

1. What are some warning signs that you or your co-workers may be sleep deprived?
 - a. *Excessive yawning*
 - b. *Dozing off on the job*
 - c. *Inability to stay focused*
 - d. *Excessive mood swings*
 - e. *Lowered self-control around food, especially craving sugar and carbohydrates.*
 - f. *Increased dependency on caffeine, energy drinks or alcohol.*
2. What are likely causes of potential sleep deprivation associated with our industry?
 - a. *Shift work or being required to work sometimes during the day and sometimes during the night.*
 - b. *Long commutes, getting home late and eating dinner right before bed.*
 - c. *Drinking coffee or energy drinks throughout the day, or even before the drive home.*
 - d. *The desire to stay up late when you get home so you can catch up on TV shows or other personal interests.*
 - e. *Having a drink or two before bed to help you “relax.”*
 - f. *Sleep Apnea and or excessive snoring which causes frequent interruptions in the sleep cycle (consult your doctor or dentist).*
3. What are some possible solutions to sleep deprivation that you can do tonight?
 - a. *Ensure you get to bed early enough to get at least 7 hours of sleep.*
 - b. *Stay active during the day.*
 - c. *Avoid eating dinner or drinking alcohol right before bedtime.*
 - d. *Stop drinking caffeine or energy drinks after lunch.*
 - e. *Go to bed at the same time and wake up at the same time as consistently as you can.*
 - f. *Avoid screen time (TV, Smart Devices, etc.) 30-60 min before bedtime.*
 - g. *Make sure your bedroom is dark, cool and quiet.*

Crew Signatures:
