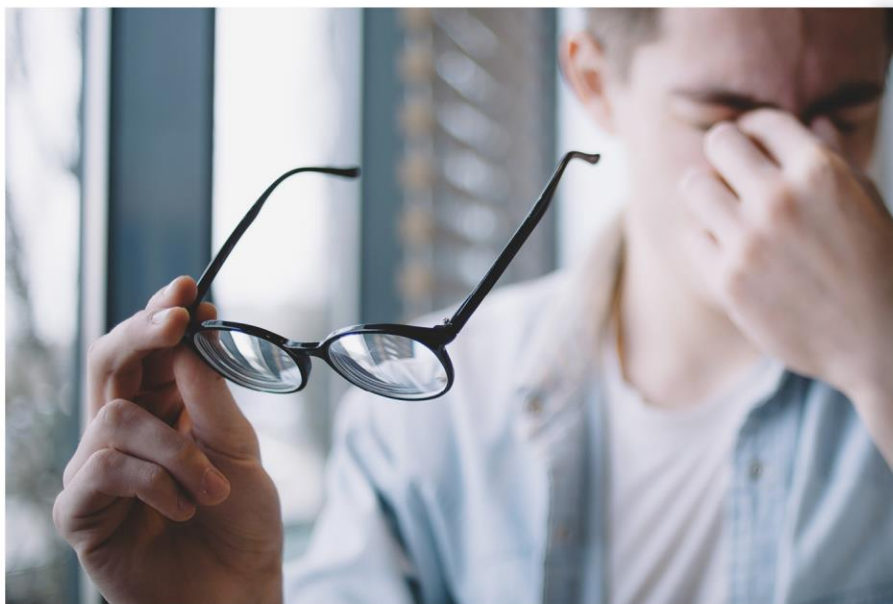# Safety Focused

For shift workers, unconventional schedules can take a toll on health and safety.

Presented by Absolute Integrity Insurance

Health Tips for Shift Workers

For shift workers, unconventional schedules can take a toll on health and safety. In fact, research shows that people who sleep during the day often struggle with getting an adequate amount of rest.

What's more, workers on a shift schedule tend to have poor eating habits and lack regular exercise, which can contribute to fatigue and stress. To combat these adverse health factors, shift workers should consider doing the following:

- Get enough rest before your shift begins. Eating well and getting plenty of exercise can help you sleep. If you are experiencing insomnia or other sleep issues, speak with your doctor.

- Take frequent breaks. If you begin to feel drowsy during the workday, consider going for a short walk or eating a healthy snack to re-energize.

- Hold your employer accountable when it comes to rotating schedules. Working one shift over and over can take a toll, and it's important to have occasional variety.

It's important to be mindful about your scheduling, and avoid permanent or consecutive night shifts whenever possible. In addition, employees should be allowed to gradually change from night shifts to normal shifts, as this gives the body time to recover and adapt to a new schedule.

Fatigue due to poor quality or lack of sleep can affect every aspect of an individual's life, and can severely hamper one's ability to perform at work. Speak to a doctor if you are concerned about the quality of your sleep or want more general health tips.
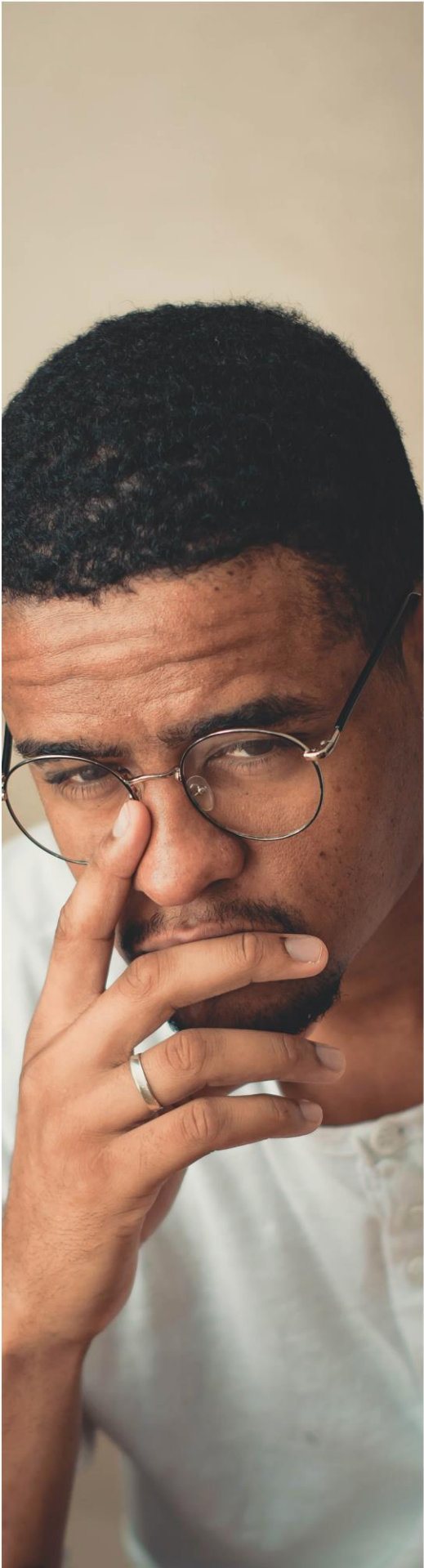
Minding Your Mental Health

For some, work can be a major source of stress due to heavy workloads, pressure to perform at a high level, job insecurity, long work hours, excessive travel and conflicts with co-workers.

Over time, this level of stress can lead to insomnia, anxiety, depression, low morale and drastic mood swings. Overcoming these symptoms isn't always easy, but knowing when to step back and evaluate your mental health can help.

Evaluating your mental health is incredibly useful when it comes to decompressing and alleviating stress caused by workplace factors.

While mental health and workplace stress can vary on an individual basis, the following are some examples of when speaking with a manager can help reduce workplace stress:

- **When you're distracted**—If your personal life is impacting your work, speak with your manager for assistance. Things like bills and relationship troubles can weigh on the mind, negatively impacting your performance. As such, it's important to set aside time to focus on addressing personal issues.

- **When you've been neglecting yourself**—People need time to recharge, especially if they lead an active work and social life. Work with your manager to find opportunities to refocus.

- **When you're burned out**—After stressful projects or long stretches of work with no days off, consider working with your manager to re-evaluate your workload. Taking the time to reorganize can improve your attitude and allow you to approach work with a positive outlook.

Keep in mind that the above methods are only effective in reducing stress. They should not be used as a substitute for professional medical advice regarding mental health conditions, like depression. Again, if you are feeling overwhelmed at work, speak with your manager.

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