Take a nap during a break or before reporting to work. Short naps (20 to 30 minutes) can improve alertness on the job.

Work clockwise. If you work rotating shifts, request that succeeding shifts start later than your last shift. This will help your body adjust.

Plan ahead for changes in your shift-work schedule. Adjust your sleep times three days in advance of a change in your work schedule.

Avoid exposure to sunlight if you need to sleep during the day. Wear dark glasses to block out the sun on your way home.

If possible, have someone drive you home or take public transportation after a night shift. Drowsy driving puts you and others at risk.

Maintain a consistent nonwork schedule. Keep the same bedtime and wake time, even on weekends. Keeping a routine helps your body know when to be alert and when to sleep.

Eliminate noise and light in your sleep environment. Use room-darkening shades or drapes. Wear a sleep mask and/or ear plugs.

Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine. All three substances are known to disrupt sleep. While alcohol may induce sleep, the quality of this sleep is often fragmented.

Avoid heavy meals before bedtime. Junk food and foods with high sugar and/or fat content can increase your metabolism.

Relax before bed. Unwind after work. Engage in relaxing activities prior to going to sleep.

Seek professional help. If you experience ongoing sleep problems, ask a health care provider if melatonin, medications, bright light therapy, or a sleep study are appropriate options for you.