Shift Worker Survival Kit - Checklist

Sleep Environment Essentials

- **Blackout Curtains or Sleep Mask:** Block daylight to mimic nighttime.
- **White Noise Machine or Earplugs:** Cancel daytime noises like traffic, neighbors, or family activity.
- **Cool Room Temperature:** Aim for 60–67°F (15–20°C) to promote deep sleep.
- **Comfortable Bedding & Pillow:** Supportive and breathable fabrics for restorative rest.

Light Management Tools

- **Blue-Light Blocking Glasses:** Wear on the commute home to signal “night” to your brain.
- **Bright Light Therapy Lamp:** Use during your “daytime” (early shift hours) to stay alert and reset your circadian rhythm.
- **Strategic Sunlight Exposure:** Step outside after waking to reinforce your internal body clock.

Food & Drink Strategies

- **Meal Prep:** Pack balanced meals to avoid relying on vending machines or fast food.
- **Avoid Heavy Meals Before Bed:** Prevents indigestion and disrupted sleep.
- **Limit Caffeine:** Stop intake at least 6 hours before your planned sleep.
- **Hydration:** Steady water intake during shifts, but taper off before sleep to avoid nighttime wakings.

Stress & Recovery Tools

- **Relaxation Rituals:** Short meditation, journaling, or stretching before sleep.
- **Exercise Timing:** Light workouts help energy, but avoid intense exercise within 2–3 hours of bedtime.
- **Mindfulness or Breathing Apps:** Use to transition between high alertness at work and calmness before sleep.

Lifestyle Supports

- **Consistent Sleep Schedule:** Stick to the same sleep/wake times even on days off, as much as possible.
- **Nap Strategy:** Short naps (20–30 minutes) before or during long shifts to boost alertness.
- **Social Boundaries:** Communicate with family and friends about your sleep hours - so they understand daytime rest is just as important as their nighttime rest.
- **Health Monitoring:** Regular checkups - shift workers are more prone to heart, digestive, and metabolic issues.

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