## the**bmj** Visual summary

# Optimising sleep for night shifts

The below diagram describes a sleep strategy, based on the evidence included in the article by Helen McKenna and Matt Wilkes. It is supported by their wider reading and discussions with experts in the field, although they note that quality of evidence is low. They offer this as a starting point from which to develop your own sleep strategy.



### Day of first night shift

Goal: minimise sleep debt





2 Z Z





### During night shift

Goal: improve performance

Last few hours and way home



Stay active



Take naps of 10-20 minutes during the early part of the shift



Take caffeine before napping but make that the last caffeine of the night





Avoid caffeine and nicotine



Prescription wakefulness agents are likely effective but associated with side-effects



Eat lightly and to comfort



Build in checks during critical tasks to mitigate against reduced alertness performance



Try to avoid exposure to bright light (wear sunglasses even on a cloudy day)



Consider public transport rather than driving



Goal: minimise sleep debt

<sub>2</sub>Z Z

Bright lights

Screens Alcohol





Goal: re-establish normal sleep rhythm

, Z Z





<sub>2</sub> Z Z



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summaries













