

NUTRITION TIPS FOR SHIFT WORKERS

Our body is regulated by its circadian rhythm, which means it's programmed differently throughout a 24-hour cycle. Disrupting this rhythm can have an impact on metabolic, digestive, heart and mental health. The good news is that you can significantly reduce the health risks and improve your general wellbeing and energy levels by implementing these tips.

TIMING

Aim for **three satisfying meals** across a 24-hour period

Eat your main meal in the earlier part of the evening to fuel your body

Avoid or **minimise eating between midnight and 6am**

Avoid large meals for 1-2 hours prior to sleep

Eat **breakfast before day sleep** to avoid waking due to hunger

Stick as closely as possible to a **normal day and night pattern** of food intake

Greatest cardiovascular and skeletal muscle strength

Peak in body temperature and blood pressure

Fastest reaction time

Melatonin secretion begins

Peak coordination

Bowel movements suppressed

Peak in alertness

Deepest sleep

Elevated testosterone

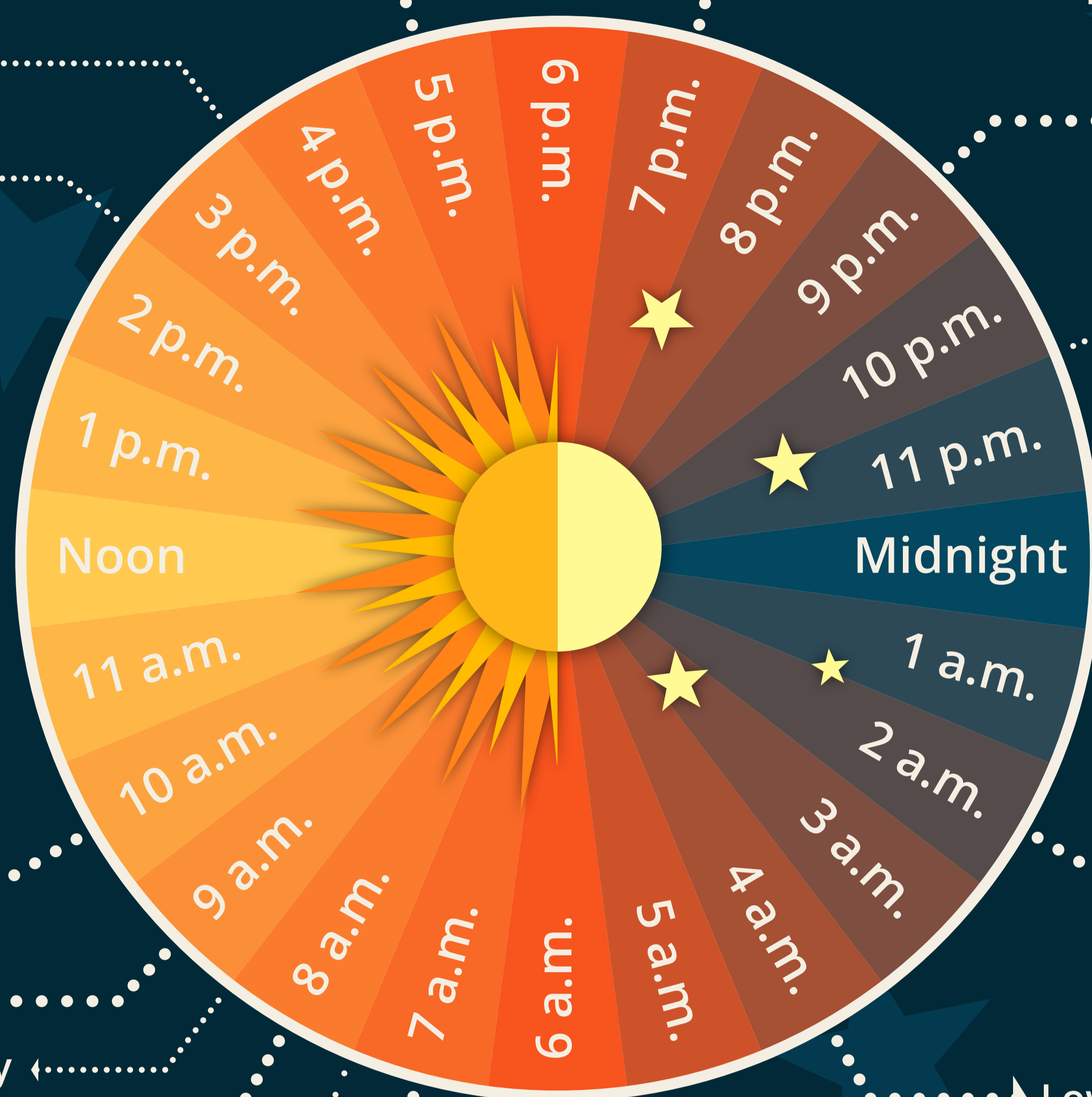
Bowel movement likely

Lowest body temperature

Insulin secretion with first meal timing

Melatonin secretion stops

Cortisol secretion begins



NIGHT SHIFT SURVIVAL KIT

Cool bag
Hummus, avocado, plain yogurt, one or two pieces of fruit, chopped crudites.

Store cupboard staples
Nuts, seeds, oatcakes, rye bread, canned beans, ready cooked quinoa or lentils, tinned sardines, tuna, salmon, nut butters.

USEFUL EQUIPMENT

A powerful blender

A slow cooker for home-made stews

Insulated or fruit-infuser water bottle

Food flask

Lunch box

A selection of snack boxes

FOOD & HYDRATION

Dehydration is a common cause for fatigue.

Sip water throughout your shift and aim for 1.5-2l every 24 hours

Choose **white or green tea instead of coffee** to give you a lift without spiking stress hormones

Take your own food with you to avoid temptations

Choose **whole foods**, vegetables, lean protein, eggs, nuts, antioxidant rich food such as berries and other colourful plant foods

Avoid sugar rich products such as soft drinks, bakery items, sweets and fibre-poor carb foods (high GI) like white bread

Avoid foods that are high in iron at night - such as red meat - as they can disrupt the liver's circadian rhythm

EXERCISE

At least 150 mins moderate aerobic activity and 2x strength training sessions a week.

Exercise just before your shift is energizing

SLEEP & RELAXATION

Take regular breaks
Find a technique that works for you: breathing, meditation, yoga

Minimise blue light and screen time before bed

HEALTH CHECKS

Vitamin D: working nights can mean reduced exposure to daylight.

Fasting glucose, to detect any risk of diabetes before it occurs.