

## Assess and Adjust

During a recent workload assessment, I observed a Controller who completed the shift-change process thoroughly, then immediately set to work organizing his console. He rearranged the SCADA screens, moved the phone, pens, and paper to the opposite side of the desk, lowered the chair, and disinfected every exposed surface. His routine included organizing his work plan and goals for the shift. He explained that beginning his shift this way helped him sharpen his focus and eliminate distraction. I was positively impressed.

Preparing for a successful workday is the first step in experiencing one. Actually, the most successful plans begin the day before a shift with a good night's sleep. If you aren't enjoying a good night's sleep on a regular basis, you may need to make some adjustments in your sleep preparation habits. Make it a habit to use part of your off-duty time to prepare for sleep.

Evaluate your current habits related to sleep. Consider what changes are needed in order for you to get the recommended 7-9 hours of sleep. A good starting point may be using the Sleep Diary from our Fatigue Management workbook or a sleep tracker device or app to assess your current sleep. Next, decide what adjustments are needed for your plan.

Your company has a responsibility for providing you enough time off for eight hours of sleep. Your corresponding responsibility is to use that time for getting sleep. Have you made sleep a priority? Prioritizing and planning for a good night's sleep is key to getting a good night's sleep.

Like the shift-worker in this month's drawing, are you pondering how you can achieve more restful sleep? The calendar provides an opportunity to schedule sleep, making it a daily priority. Your assessment may also show that your environment could use some constructive change. Prepare yourself and your bedroom for relaxation and chances are good that you'll enjoy more restful sleep.

Here's a checklist to help you start the year as an energized and enthusiastic shift-worker.

- Assess your current schedule and habits.
- Make your bedroom clean and organized to help your mind relax.
- Cover your windows with blackout curtains or shades to block daylight and street lights.
- Turn digital clocks away from view as they can be distracting.
- Avoid caffeine overuse and consumption too close to bedtime to achieve deeper sleep.
- Eat a small portion of protein to avoid hunger and provide amino acids for tissue building and repair that occurs during sleep. Processed carbs can raise your insulin levels and contribute to excess weight, especially when consumed just before sleep.
- Reduce or cut out the nicotine. Nicotine acts as a stimulant, preventing your mind and body from relaxation.

Make adjustments that allow you to start the year fully energized and brimming with enthusiasm as you enjoy better sleep.

