



# Safety Talk



## Fighting Fatigue

### Luckily, there are ways to fight fatigue

### What is fatigue?

Fatigue is the state of feeling very tired, weary or sleepy resulting from insufficient sleep, prolonged mental or physical work, or extended periods of stress or anxiety. Boring or repetitive tasks can intensify feelings of fatigue. Fatigue can be described as either acute or chronic.

Acute fatigue results from short-term sleep loss or from short periods of heavy physical or mental work. The effects of acute fatigue are of short duration and usually can be reversed by sleep and relaxation.

Chronic fatigue syndrome is the constant, severe state of tiredness that is not relieved by rest. The symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome are similar to the flu, last longer than six months and interfere with certain activities. The exact cause of this syndrome is still unknown.



- Get a minimum of 8 hours a sleep before work
- Always follow the same sleep routine
- Take all scheduled work breaks
- Use earplugs, soft music, or a fan to block out noise when trying to sleep during the daytime
- Eat a well-balanced diet; do not eat great quantities before bed.
- Avoid any caffeine, alcohol, and cigarettes as they can cause sleep disturbances.
- Stretching and walking can help a person stay awake.

Some research studies have shown that when workers have slept for less than 5 hours before work or when workers have been awake for more than 16 hours, their chance of making mistakes at work due to fatigue are significantly increased.

Research has shown that the number of hours awake can be similar to blood alcohol levels. One study reports the following:

- 17 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.05
- 21 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.08 (legal limit in Canada)
- 24-25 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.10



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