

FATIGUE FRIDAY

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FATIGUE KILLS

Irregular eating ... low blood sugar ... sleep debt ... eating the wrong foods at the wrong time ... dehydration ... ignored sleep disorders ... all contribute to FATIGUE.

AND FATIGUE KILLS

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PERSONAL CLOCK

- You cannot fight nature - just work with it
- Our bodies work in 24-25 hour cycles of sleeping, eating and being active
- Worst time of the day is midnight to 6 a.m.
- You are naturally drowsy after lunch - it has nothing to do with what you eat. But it may be worse if you eat fatty or sugary foods.
- Sleep during the day is not as effective as sleep during the night. You need more daytime sleep to have the same effect as a good night's sleep.

Want to work out when **YOU** will be most drowsy? What time did you go to bed? What time did you wake up? What is the mid point? Add 12 hours and you know when to expect a real dip in alertness. Be ready for it, especially if you're planning a trip.

SLEEP DEBT - IT'S LIKE MONEY DEBT ... you can't ignore it

- More than 90% of people need 8.5-11.5 hours of sleep a night.
- If you miss this, you need to make it up quickly.
- The good news is that you don't have to make it all up - if you miss 2 hours a day for 10 days you don't need to sleep

for 20 hours to make it up. A couple of early nights will fix it.

WHAT MAKES FATIGUE WORSE?

Activities ...

- Driving long distances without rest breaks
- Driving through the night, the early afternoon, or at other times when your body wants to be asleep
- Driving alone
- Repetitive tasks at work
- Driving on long, boring roads
- Traveling frequently e.g., business travelers
- Working shifts
- Commercial drivers

Health ...

- Taking medication that increases sleepiness or drinking alcohol
- People with bad sleep habits (staying up late and sleeping late)
- Poor diet - too many sugars and fats, not enough fresh food, eating late or irregularly
- Dehydration - your body needs around 8 glasses of water every day. (Not Soft drinks, coffee, or tea)

If you do these things, then look at your habits and lifestyle to see what changes you can make to reduce your own fatigue.

YOU KNOW YOU ARE FATIGUED WHEN....

- **You ...**
- can't remember the last few miles/minutes
- drift from your lane, or hit the curb
- have disconnect-
- ed thoughts, can't concentrate
- keep yawning

- can't control your eyes (they keep shutting and going out of focus)
- miss traffic signs or tailgate accidentally
- have trouble keeping your head up
- keep jerking your vehicle back in lane
- you mumble or mix up your words
- are irritable and easily angered

Fatigue accidents are typically ...

- one person in the vehicle
- between midnight and 6 am
- vehicle leaving the road and hitting a stationary object
- head-on collisions - no attempt at avoiding the crash
- deadly

Remember this ... a vehicle coming straight at you might have a sleeping driver at the wheel! It's up to you to be alert and take avoiding action.

MYTHS ABOUT BEATING FATIGUE

Coffee can help you stay awake

False. Stimulants are no substitute for sleep - they just make you feel more alert for a short time. If you are sleep-deprived, you will still have micro-sleeps even drinking coffee. Micro-sleeps (nodding off) can last 3-5 seconds and can kill you if you're driving. It takes around 30 minutes for caffeine to affect your system.

It's better to keep going. I can't nap.

False. Research shows that even people who say they are not tired will fall asleep in a darkened room.

If you think you can't sleep, recline the seat and lie down for 15 minutes anyway. You may be surprised. Remember to lock your doors and make sure the vehicle is ventilated. You want to wake up again!

Young people need less sleep.

False. In fact, teenagers and young people need more sleep than people in their 30s. Teenagers and people who get up early tend to feel alert in the evenings which makes them think they need less sleep. Young people's entertainment is stimulating which keeps them alert - but this plummets when the stimulation stops.

The only way to beat fatigue is to :

- catch up on your sleep debt - get a few early nights
- improve your diet habits so that your blood sugar stays more constant
- get into regular sleep and wake patterns
- understand your personal circadian rhythm and work with it

FATIGUE... IT CAN PUT YOU TO REST PERMANENTLY

RESOURCES WEB LINK

Alberta Workplace Health and Safety

Fatigue and Safety at the Workplace (Quick Facts)
<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/erg015-1.pdf>

Fatigue, Extended Work Hours, and Safety In The Work Place

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/erg015.pdf>