



Reduce harmful work stressors

Improve job quality and health

Work Stress Solutions

Reducing long work hours/shift work

Long work hours become a major health risk when someone works over 50-55 hours per week regularly. Not enough work hours (irregular hours) may also cause financial and job security stress. **Shift work** is when someone is working nights or rotating shifts, common in many 24-hour industries. Hours and shifts can disrupt sleep, work-family balance, exercise and eating behaviors, and have been shown to increase the risk for depression, high blood pressure, stroke and cardiovascular diseases.

I. Workplace Policies & Practices

The U.S. does not have many laws that limit or guarantee a minimum amount of work hours. These recommendations and resources will help organizations to implement changes to reduce long work hours, help shift workers, and improve employee health and well-being.

- **WORK HOURS LAWS** - [US Department of Labor – The Fair Labor Standards Act \(FLSA\)](#); [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#).
- **REDUCE LONG WORK HOURS** - Establish firm limits to avoid excessively long work hours (especially regular work weeks in excess of 55 hours/week).
- **ELIMINATE** mandatory “forced” overtime wherever possible. In some states, this is banned for healthcare workers.

- **AVOID** “on-call scheduling” wherever possible, or pay workers to be on call, and give an employee reasonable advance notice of their on-call schedule.
- **AVOID ROTATING SHIFTS** - frequent rotations between night and day shifts should be eliminated (when possible) due to evidence this kind of shiftwork heightens cardiovascular diseases and events.
- **RECOGNIZE FATIGUE** - and the dangers (and productivity costs) of disrupted sleep and fatigue due to shift work and long work hours. Consider redesigning the work schedule, redistributing the workload, hiring more staff, and offering longer recovery times.
- **OFFER** shift workers [educational programs](#) and resources to improve sleep strategies, exercise and diet programs, and relaxation techniques.

II. Healthy Work Strategies Case Studies and Resources

- [Reducing work stress and improving the mental health of hospital workers \(Quebec, Canada\)](#)
- [NIOSH Training for Nurses on Shift Work and Long Work Hours](#) - An online training program to educate nurses and their managers about the health and safety risks associated with shift work, long work hours, and related workplace fatigue issues, and relay strategies in the workplace and in the nurse’s personal life to reduce these risks
- [OSHA Long Work Hours, Extended or Irregular Shifts, and Worker Fatigue](#) - This webpage focuses on worker fatigue and includes information about the impact of demanding work schedules and measures workers and employers can take to prevent worker fatigue and fatigue-related injuries and illnesses by providing or participating in education, training and fatigue management programs.

III. Making Changes Beyond the Workplace

- [Laws prohibiting mandatory overtime for nurses](#)
- [US Department of Labor – The Fair Labor Standards Act \(FLSA\)](#)
- [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#)