

C ontributors

... THE BEST OF THE BEST

Weigh-Less Magazine seeks to bring our readers only the most relevant and accurate articles that add value in a way that is both measurable and sustainable. As such we seek to call only the best South African contributors available to comment on our articles. This month these experts (in addition to many others) contributed to our Magazine:



JENNI RIVETT:

Jenni is an international fitness and nutrition consultant armed with an impressive history in the field of health and fitness. Author, fitness journalist, and creator of four DVD's, Jenni was once voted Britain's top fitness trainer by the 'Best of British' publications.

RIANNE HALL:

RiAnne Hall is a certified Zumba trainer, esteemed fitness model, and motivational lifestyle coach. She was also named Miss S.A. Toned Bikini in 2012 in addition to holding the titles of Miss World Fame Fitness model 2009, Miss Fame S.A bikini 2008/2009 and Miss Fame S.A. Fitness model 2008/2009.



PETRO THAMM:

Petro Thamm is a leading Sleep Sense™ Certified consultant, specialising in baby and toddler sleep. She specifically helps parents struggling with their children's sleep problems by using positive sleep solutions; www.goodnightbaby.co.za.

MEGAN BOSMAN:

Megan is a Nutritional Therapist (Dip Clin Nutrition). She treats all areas of health with a passion and hope of helping others regain their health. Megan encourages people to care for their bodies as a whole - both inside AND outside.



MARTIENS BARNARD:

Martiens Barnard is the Head of Investment Strategy and Technical Marketing for Discovery Invest. He has an honours degree in Actuarial Science from the University of the Free State and is currently in the process of furthering his studies to become a fully qualified Actuary.

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Shift work SHOCK!

Alarming research

A study published in the May issue of the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* stated that working nights can affect your waistline. Isabella Zhao and her colleagues from the University of Queensland School of Nursing and Midwifery in Brisbane surveyed more than 2 000 nurses and midwives in Australia, and contacted them again two years later. Participants who switched from working evenings and nights to working during the day saw their Body Mass Indexes (BMIs) decrease by three units on average. In contrast, participants who continued to work the night shift, or who changed from working the day shift to working the night shift, saw an increase in their BMI of about 0.5 units, the researchers said.

Similarly, in another study conducted in 2011, Dr Joan Tranmer told the Canadian Cardiovascular Congress, that based on her research of female shift work participants, she could deduce that approximately one in five middle-aged women who do shift work have at least three risk indicators for heart disease. From the group of participants, 17% had metabolic syndrome (with at least three of the identified indicators), 38% had high blood pressure and 60% of the participants had a waist circumference greater than 80cm.

Closer to home, the results of Discovery's inaugural Healthy Company Index revealed that night-shift workers have a higher Vitality Age (physiological) compared to the rest of the survey population. The difference between the Vitality age and Actual (chronological) age was higher by a third of a year (9.7%) for shift workers. The night-shift workers tended to have a younger age profile and a higher female percentage than the balance of the respondents. In addition, the Discovery Healthy Company Index survey also found that night-shift workers were significantly at high risk of smoking, consuming bad food and stress.

Why are shift workers at risk?

Dr Craig Nossel, Head of Vitality Wellness at Discovery explains why shift work could possibly be causing an incline in health problems, "There are likely to be several issues at play that may lead to shift workers having a higher Vitality Age. Firstly the sleep patterns will have an impact as late-night shifts may disrupt the body's internal clock and result in overeating. In addition, they have less opportunity to exercise based on their lifestyle. There is also the increased risk of unhealthy snacking and poor diet choices of high fat or sugary convenience foods

Shift work is a reality for many South African doctors, nurses, policemen, firemen, security guards, miners and factory workers (to name but a few). But new research suggests that many of these professionals, though often dedicated to taking care of others, are doing so at the expense of their own health. According to three different international studies, shift work not only wrecks havoc with your sleeping patterns, it can also be harmful to your waistline, in addition to increasing your chances of getting heart disease and having a stroke. **By Samantha Watt**

owing to the late night working hours, all putting shift workers at greater risk for obesity and other chronic conditions," he explains.

Petro Thamm, certified sleep consultant in South Africa adds, "Circadian rhythm is our biological clock – and it determines our 'awake-sleep cycles' in a 24 hour period. It is greatly influenced by light, our human biological tendencies as well as the hormones that get secreted in our bodies to wake us up or make us drowsy. It is also influenced by external stimuli such as what we do at certain times of the day, as well as when we eat (our metabolic rhythm)."

She says that you can develop a sleep disorder as a shift worker particularly as you are not following a 24-hour cycle. "Consequently this affects your health as you do not get the sleep that you require. This in turn makes you sleep deprived, which, according to studies ultimately leads to you grabbing more carbohydrate-rich food."

TIPS TO OVERCOME SHIFT WORK SHOCK

Dr Nossel says that with knowledge and prevention, it is possible to reduce the health risks related to shift work. He adds that possible solutions could include:

- ➔ Longer breaks to prevent fatigue at work. Breaks should include standing and walking around.
- ➔ Ensuring that your working conditions mimic daytime as much as possible, with bright lighting used to simulate daylight.
- ➔ Providing access to healthy foods while at work.
- ➔ Wearing earplugs to block out external noise as well as an eye mask to ensure darkness when sleeping during the day.

DID YOU KNOW? Compared to people who worked the day shift, shift workers were nearly 23% more likely to suffer a heart attack, and 5% more likely to have a stroke.

Megan Bosman, nutritional consultant provides the following tips for people looking to eat healthy, but struggle due to night shift:

- Instead of taking your meal break in the middle of your shift, try to eat before or just after your shift starts and then again just before your shift ends.
- Remember to include snacks in between.
- Try to steer clear of high carbohydrate, sugary snacks, despite feeling as though you need something sweet to keep you going through the night it will only make you more tired later on.
- Drink at least two litres of water as you would if you worked in the day.

Example of formula shuffle for a shift worker

Heidi Lobel, resident Weigh-Less dietician suggests that you should shuffle your

Formula around if you are a shift worker. For example, she says that you should have a bigger breakfast and instead of one complex carbohydrate, have two. She adds that you will then have a lighter 'supper' with one complex carbohydrate (if you omit it at snack time). "If you are a shift worker it is imperative that you tell your Group Leader so that she can show you how to shuffle around your Formula for the entire day.

Petro adds the following sleep advice for shift workers:

- Make sure that you get your eight hours of sleep within a 24 hour cycle.
- Try to eat at regular times (i.e. similar times every evening).
- When you do sleep make the room as dark as possible (block-out curtain lining is great!)
- Leading up to your sleep time, implement a standard bedtime routine which will inform your brain that sleep is coming.

SHE DID IT - SO CAN YOU!



Kristy Mathioudakis, a Weigh-Less Woman of the Year 2011 Finalist and a registered nurse lost 40.8kg, despite her hectic night-shift schedule. She gives the following tips:

- ✓ Use your days off to prepare food for days when you are working odd hours. This will prevent you from snacking on junk when you get home instead of having a proper meal (remember to take food out the freezer before you go to work!)
- ✓ Being a nurse, I know that sometimes you are too busy to stop and have your snack. Don't use this as a reason to overindulge later on in the day. Keep a few nibbles in your pocket if you can.
- ✓ Whatever you do, drink your water. Put it in a place where you know you walk by often in your shift so that you are reminded to drink a glass every time you go past.

If you work night shift, you may be among some of the most respected men and women of our society. But, if you do not look after yourself, the likelihood of you getting chronically ill is high. Turn to Weigh-Less to help you to focus on eating healthier, it will not only improve your waistline, but your health risk factors too. ■

Go to www.weighless.co.za for more info.