



PUTTING HAPPINESS TO WORK

*THE HANDBOOK
TO HAPPINESS 2.0*

A happy hospitality
career starts here

Tips, tricks and inspiration to add
a little more joy to your day.
At work, and at home.

planday
FROM XERO



Start beaming from ear to ear

Looking for a boost? Check out **the Happiness Hub** for even more ways to add a little more cheer to your hospitality life.

Visit the hub [↗](#)

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YOUR HAPPY SHIFTS START HERE

DID YOU KNOW: Only 23% of shift workers feel very happy in their current role?

Hospitality is happiness. We serve delight, joy and amazement. But it can feel like our guests' happiness is all that matters. When things get tough, or slow, going to work with a smile on your face can be hard. And coming home with one still there can be harder.

That's where this handbook comes in. Your cheatsheet to happiness is packed with simple ideas that can start making a difference, today:

- **Reset with short breaks:** A few minutes away can clear your head and re-energise you.
- **Practice mindfulness:** Be present, by focussing on a task or even just your breath.
- **Connect with your team:** A laugh together can lighten the mood and build camaraderie.
- **Celebrate small wins:** Acknowledging successes boosts morale and reminds everyone of their impact.

This is your guide to boosting wellbeing and finding joy in your daily work.

This handbook to happiness is our ode to you and the industry. Because there's nothing like working in hospitality. It's a passport to work anywhere, where worlds, backgrounds and cultures collide. It's a one-of-a-kind culture, packed with once-in-a-lifetime people. After a long, hard shift, it can be hard to remember that.

But we need to.

Happiness is one of the most important aspects of any hospitality team – and business. When we love what we do, it makes a difference; to our guests, business and wellbeing. But how do you keep that smile on your face?

By **clocking in for a happy shift.**

It's about balance, and on-the-fly tips for refocussing at any time, so you can remember why you do what you do. This is your guide to boosting wellbeing and finding joy in your daily work. We'll show you practical, free ways to make every shift happy.

But before we dive in, we wanted to say "thank you". Thank you for serving, providing and delighting. Thank you for keeping this amazing industry alive.

Now let's put happiness to work.



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TALKING SHIFTS

69%

of hospitality team workers get their schedules with a week's (or less) notice

The only predictable thing about hospitality rotas is that they're unpredictable, right? One week, you're covering five split shifts, the next, you're being sent home early because it's 'quiet'. That's part and parcel of the industry...

It shouldn't be.

Schedules play a **big** role in our happiness, and not only at work. Predictable, repeatable rotas make a big difference to our quality of life. Having more advance, consistent notice on your shift patterns massively reduces stress.

Rotas you can count on mean you can plan every aspect of your life – you can see friends and family, study or just chill. It also helps with your finances, too. When you know when you're working, you know how much you're earning too. Which makes it much easier to plan your spending and reduce financial stress.

When you're trying to put happiness to work, fair, predictable schedules are essential. They give you the power to plan your entire life...

This control over your time (and finances) leads to a far better balance and a greater sense of joy in your day-to-day life.

So, how can you shift from a reactive mindset and make your schedule work for you?

Hot tips for shift talking 🔥

Don't wait

Flag your scheduling needs with your manager as early as possible to make everyone happy. Then they can do what they can to help you out, without getting caught short-staffed, which can **increase the entire team's productivity by up to 25%.**

Tell them why

Instead of saying you 'just can't work Tuesdays', explain why. If you have class, or look after your kids at the weekend, tell your boss. Help them understand why your request's important, so that they can prioritise finding a solution.

Write it down

Send your manager a follow-up message or availability request to make sure your needs don't get forgotten when things get busy. Better yet, use your work's preferred messaging app (or [shift scheduling tool's](#) instant messenger 📱) to make sure your request doesn't get overlooked.

It's a game of give and take

Everyone's needs are important. If your manager can't approve a request, try to be flexible. Being collaborative won't only mean your boss is more likely to put you first next time – **it can reduce the entire team's odds of burning out by 60%.**

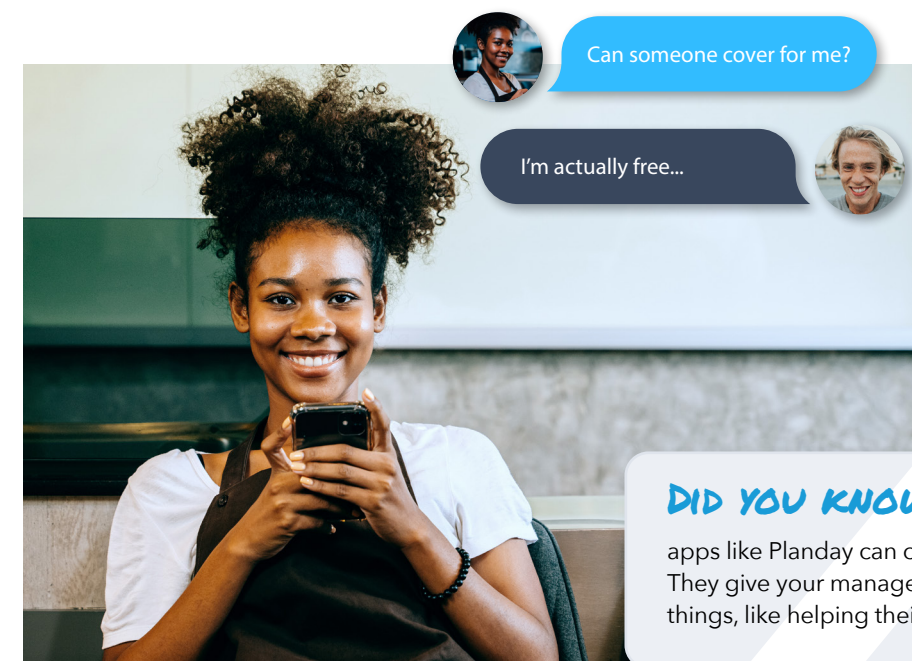
Being collaborative can reduce the team's odds of burning out by 60%

Rinse and repeat

Schedules shouldn't be a lottery. Having rotas you can count on, built around quick, easy-to-repeat templates, won't just help you out; they'll help your boss, too. Apps, like Planday, can bring that all-need stability and repeatability and transform your entire team's lives.

The flex

Life happens; you're under the weather, birthdays pop up or you need holiday funds. Enter 'flexibility'. Being able to trade or pick up more puts you in control of your work/life balance. Because you're not constantly bending life around work. Adapting and responding to life makes your working life feel more manageable, less stressful and, ultimately, *happier*.



DID YOU KNOW;

apps like Planday can cut scheduling admin by up to 80%. They give your manager more time to focus on important things, like helping their teams nail work/life balance.



ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME:

Tod Hollow

Who?

Ever worked in a pub? Then you're going to have to follow Tod Hollow. He pulls pints of hilarious, painfully relatable content for anyone who's ever worked in hospitality. His short, snappy skits perfectly capture all those weird customer requests, the chaotic moments and that "we're all in this together" vibe of shift working. If you need a laugh and want to feel seen, drop him a follow. He's an everyday reminder that the grind is real. And that it's solid gold.

Where?

Instagram @tod.hollow
TikTok @tod.hollow



BREAK time

Breaks aren't a sign of weakness. Skipping them's a sure-fire way to end up feeling exhausted and unhappy.

Hospitality shifts are full. on. Even when you're done, you've got to get everything done. Lots of us push on and work through breaks. That's not the best way to handle things. If you don't ever let up, you'll burn out.

Breaks aren't a sign of weakness, they're the not-so-secret ingredient in the happiness recipe. They give us time to reset, recharge and come back, raring to go. **Skipping them's a sure-fire way to end up feeling exhausted. And unhappy.**

Your boss should value breaks as much as you do....

Downing tools

Even 10-minute breaks have a big impact. They **reduce fatigue, boost energy and improve focus**. So, max out your *you* time:

Be mindful

Swap doom scrolling for guided-breathing. Close your eyes, breathe in deeply (in through your nose, hold for five) and exhale slowly through your mouth. Doing this for a couple of minutes calms you down, reduces stress and clears your head.

Stretch it out

Who needs a gym membership when you're in hospitality? You're on your feet, moving or lifting. Stop the DOMS with quick stretches. Roll your shoulders, stretch your neck, do some arm circles or reach for your toes. You'll feel better physically and mentally.

Quench your thirst

Feeling parched? Then grab a drink. **Because problems arise when your body's water levels drop by as little as 1%.** Productivity plummets, and tiredness and headaches begin. Have a drink and healthy snack, like nuts or fruit, to keep your energy and focus up.

Take a walk

A breath of fresh air, even for a couple of minutes, does wonders for your mood and focus. Strolling around the block, or even just stepping out into the natural light, can clear your head, provide a change of scenery and help you go back in feeling refreshed.

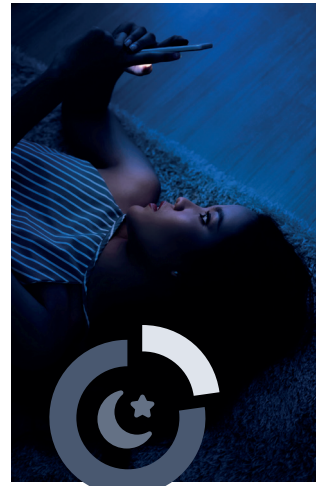


Switch off

Memes kill time – and rest, too

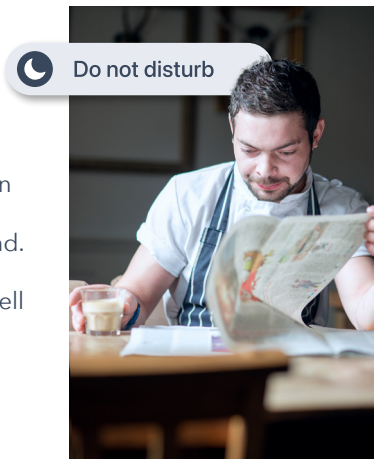
Phones emit blue light, which reduces melatonin production by up to 23%, and slams your sleep and mental recovery.

So disconnect, down devices and give your brain the break it deserves.



Separate work from life

You're on break, and your phone's full of notifications. The work WhatsApp's blown up just as you're trying to take a few minutes to unwind. So mute chats when you're on your breaks. Better yet, tell your manager about apps, like Planday. They can help you switch off by keeping work from spilling over into your spaces, like your DMs.



Your boss should value your breaks as much as you do, and make it easy for you to take them. That way you can focus on putting happiness to work.

Well-managed, scheduled and tracked breaks help everyone recharge, and come back more energetic, productive and happier, too.



DID YOU KNOW: 70%

of managers still use pen and paper or Excel to schedule and track shifts and breaks?



No one's an island in hospitality, or a cog in the machine either. We're teams, working together. The relationships you build with your colleagues shape your day. Strong team bonds turn tough shifts into shared victories. When teams properly work together and support each other, even through the hardest parts, they put happiness to work. Because they make demanding moments feel manageable – and they create a one-of-a-kind sense of being.

Team culture doesn't just come from managers – it's down to *all* of us.

Y'know what that smells like? Team spirit.

DID YOU KNOW:

28%

of hospitality team workers work 41-50 hours a week. They spend almost as much time with their team as they do their families...



We're all in this together

Team culture isn't on managers; it comes from all of us. Sometimes it's instinctive, sometimes you need to work at it. And when you want to create a positive work environment, you might need some tips on how to put happiness to work...

Help out

If a team mate's swamped with orders or having a moment, help out. Small things – running a dish, wiping down a counter or asking if they need anything – go a long way in building team bonds and strengthening that sense of shared responsibility.

Talk it out

Whether it's about a task, a customer question or a shift change, communicate clearly. And listen, too – give others your full attention. Open, respectful conversation creates an environment where everyone feels heard and understood.

If you don't laugh 🤔

You're team *mates*. Jokes during down time, chatting about your weekend or unwinding together after a shift can lighten the mood, reduce stress and bring you closer together.



The we team

We all want to provide the best service, as smoothly as possible. When we work together, share information and support each other, the whole team benefits. Work feels less like *work* and more like a shared win.

Care

Everyone has good days and some... not-so-good days. If someone's off, approach them with understanding rather than judgement. Empathy makes a big difference in how supported someone feels.

Appreciate you



'Thank you' goes a long way. Compliments on a job well done, or noticing someone's effort, provide an immense morale boost.

Regularly showing gratitude reduces stress hormones by up to 23%.

Even better, small acts of gratitude create a great atmosphere, too.



We can't force culture, but we can all work to come closer together. Tight bonds with team mates make it easier to get through busy periods. We approach problems more creatively and we enjoy our time at work more because we feel supported, important, useful.

Sure, you can't force culture, but you can take small steps each day that put happiness to work.

ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME:

The Burnt Chef Project

Who?

Ever felt hospitality's heat? Planday pals The Burnt Chef Project are flipping the script on mental health. This UK charity's all about real talk and no judgement – building a community where it's okay to not be okay.

Follow them for honest stories, cool resources and a supportive space that actually gets the grind. Wellbeing should be their middle name.

Where?

@theburntchefproject @theburntchefproject



YOUR



PLACE

The beach, a festival, wherever your friends are – everyone has their own happy place. And for lots of us in hospitality, that's the industry. Because it's a melting pot that makes us happy – and our guests too.

But it's tough.

Over the last 12 months, **85% of hospitality workers experienced poor mental health**. Rush hours are peak, and wild customer asks take their toll. But a positive mindset shouldn't be fleeting, it's a key tool. Here's how to manage stress, stay optimistic, prioritise mental health – and make hospitality your happy place.

DID YOU KNOW:

71%

of hospitality team workers believe **feeling unhappy at work impacts their ability** to do their job?

Stress-busting techniques

Even in the middle of a mad shift, there are things you can do to stay positive and manage stress. Like these:

Appreciate little moments

When things are busy, it can be easy to get caught up in tasks, which can be overwhelming.



Give yourself 30-60 seconds to think about something positive – a compliment, a team effort, something like that.

Taking a few seconds to appreciate your accomplishments can create tiny joy-pockets in each shift.

A positive mindset is a fundamental tool for anyone trying to put happiness to work.



Feel grounded

If your mind's racing, try this simple grounding exercise to calm down. Look around you and focus on



five things you can see,



four you can feel (like the feel of your clothes, maybe),



three you can hear,



two you can smell and



one you can taste.

This helps you focus and can move you past anxious thoughts.

Rest your mind

Step away from your shift for a minute or two if possible. Find somewhere quiet to reflect when things are choppy, and give your brain a brief reset.

Be your own cheerleader

When things get tough, trade negative self-talk for internal pick-me-ups. **Swap 'I can't do this' for 'I'm doing my best, and I'm taking this one step at a time'.** Your inner dialogue massively impacts your mood and performance.

If you want to put happiness to work, focus on self-love and setting boundaries. So, don't neglect breaks, learn the power of "No" and make time for things you love. **Talk to your boss about making The Single Biggest Shift possible.** These simple changes can turn any shift on its head, remind you why you got into the industry, and help make hospitality your happy place.

DID YOU KNOW: apps like Planday, can help you keep work at work, with built-in messaging tools? That way you don't have to worry about your DMs being flooded by work chat.



A hunger for HAPPINESS



We know we've got to sleep better and take our breaks. And in our breaks, we know we should eat *something* to get our energy up. Just don't forget that food's not just *fuel* for the machine.

What we eat has a huge impact on our energy, mood and performance. Simple, balanced meals (and snacks) don't just nourish us, they put happiness to work. Because they leave us feeling better, clearer, more resilient and give us a more positive outlook.

Making (meal) plans

Time can be tight when you're on shift. These tips could help you make tasty, nutritious choices, even when you're pressed for time.

One prep ahead

Meal prep sounds long, **but it saves you 4-6 hours a week.** Beat the "what's for dinner" worries by getting ahead. Chop ingredients, make a one-pot wonder or portion out grains. You don't have to make the whole meal, just lay the culinary foundations.



Plan to eat

Shift work hampers regular meal times for over **66% of team members.** Change that by approaching them strategically. Pack a hearty, on-the-go breakfast for early starts, and prep an easy-to-digest dinner for when you're on lates. Don't skip meals – you have to maintain body sugar and energy levels.

DID YOU KNOW:

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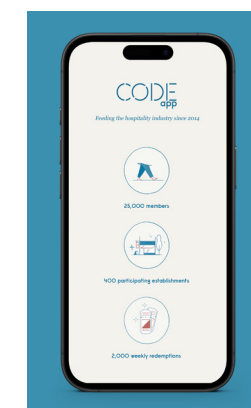
Snack smart

Feeling that mid-shift hunger? You're not alone; **56% of us** hit an energy slump. Beat it with grab-and-go snacks, like nuts, fruit or veggies and hummus. It'll make you feel good and stop you craving something less nutritious.



Go all out, without the price tag

Aiming for a more balanced diet doesn't mean you can't treat yourself. And treating yourself doesn't have to break the bank. Planday Pals CODE offer some offer some healthy 🍌 discounts you can make the most of. It's time to make Hawksmoor Tuesdays a thing.



Have a meal together

If your workplace offers shift dinners, don't skip them. They can be a great way for the entire team to come together before or after a big shift, unwind, chat and enjoy preparing something as a unit.

Your rota doesn't just tell you when you're working; it's also a guide for meals and making more balanced choices. Think about your nutrition, because it impacts how you cope with your job, energy and positivity. And all of these add up to how well you're equipped to put happiness to work.

Drink, drink, drink!

Did y'know our brains are about

70% water?



JUST A 2% DROP
IN HYDRATION

impairs mood, slows you down
and increases tiredness.



So **sip water**
throughout your
shift.



ALL WORK AND NO PLAY

...doesn't just make life dull, it stops us from shining at our brightest.



Work's a massive part of our identity, but it doesn't define us. It's part of us, but if it doesn't give us time to pursue other passions, then it stops us from putting happiness to work.

You have to make time for your hobbies, interests, friends and all the other things you love. They provide a necessary escape, chance to recharge the batteries and a reminder of who you are outside of work.

Life/work balance

The holy grail's work/life balance, but sometimes to be your best at work, you have to put life first on that scale. Here's how to make time for happiness, even around a hospitality schedule.

Focus in

Figure out what makes you feel happy. Is it reading, hiking, painting, playing sports or spending time with friends and family? Once you know what truly matters, you can prioritise it.

Book it in

Carve out time for your life, just like you would a shift. Treat these appointments with yourself (or with loved ones) as non-negotiable commitments. Putting them in your calendar helps you mentally prepare for them and makes them less likely to slip.

Be spontaneous

Sometimes, plans won't work out. And that's okay. Stay flexible and spontaneous. Can you reschedule? Can you find something else that fits the window? A little adaptability goes a long way. Plans changed and need some inspo? Check out Planday Pals, CODE. Their app's packed with top deals and discounts.

Double down

Can you meet a friend for a walk or a run instead of just a coffee? Can you listen to an audiobook or a podcast while commuting or doing chores? Combining activities can help you get more from your time.

You don't need hours of free time to enjoy yourself. Even short bursts can be impactful.

DID YOU KNOW

64% of shift workers think a better work/life balance is the number one thing that would make them happier at work?

Embrace the moment

You don't need hours of free time to enjoy yourself. Even short bursts can be incredibly impactful. Read a chapter of a book during a break, listen to music on your commute, spend 15 minutes sketching, or call a mate for a quick chat. Everything adds up.

Be realistic

Don't overload your schedule. **People who overcommit are 2.6x more likely to burnout.** It's better to consistently do a few things you love than trying to do everything and feeling overwhelmed.

To make the work/life scales balance, you need to make time for life outside of work. It'll provide you with a sense of wellbeing, which will help you put happiness to work – professionally and personally. Remember, what you do is a part of who you are – it's not the whole story.

ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME:

The Dodo Micropub

Who?

In brewing, there are two constants; running a microbrewery can be tough. The other? That being a woman in beer can be even harder. But small-business owner Lucy's a dab hand at overcoming both problems. Her Insta and TikTok are full of fun, funny content. And unlike her business' namesake, her feeds are alive and kicking.

Where?

 @thedodomicropub

 @thedodomicropub



WORKING IT OUT*

*Endorphins are always a good idea

When you move, you release endorphins – ‘feel good’ hormones that boost your mood, reduce stress and increase energy levels...

Sometimes getting through a hospitality shift feels like an Olympic feat. You’re on your feet all day, dashing between tables, taking orders, lifting, carrying, repeating.

All that movement is physically and mentally good for you. It releases endorphins, those ‘feel good’ hormones that boost mood, cut stress and increase energy. But constant activity takes its toll. So it’s a good idea to work a few simple exercises into your routine to help you manage the demands of your work.

The hospitality workout

You don’t need a gym membership to exercise. Here are some quick, easy ways to add a little movement into your busy lifestyle that’ll make you happier and healthier.

Step to it

Did you know **the average hospitality shift worker takes 16,000-18,000 steps** over an eight-hour shift? 🙄 Walking’s incredible exercise, it’s great cardio, for strengthen bones and muscles and it can even improve your mental wellbeing, too. So let’s set a PB and try to smash it.

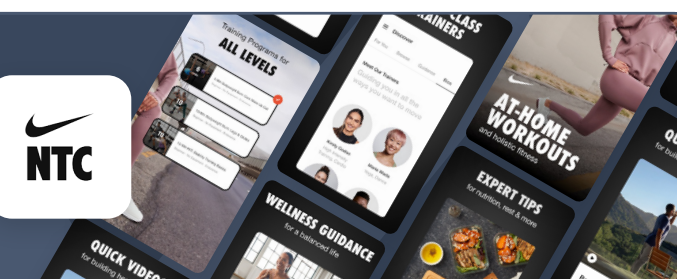
Take the plunge

If our Danish heritage has taught us anything, it’s that there’s nothing Nordic-cold water can’t cure... Cold plunges can be a great way to relieve muscle stress and even release feel-good hormones. So why not visit your local spa or sauna, do it like a Dane and dive into the ice?



GET APPY:

Want to commit without getting your bank involved? Check out the Nike Training Club app. It’s free and has an entire library of workouts for all experience levels, so you can take your exercise up or down a level whenever you’re ready.



DID YOU KNOW: The average hospitality shift worker takes **16,000-18,000 steps** over an eight-hour shift

Leg it

Noticed your legs swelling? It could be because you’re on your feet all day. Hospitality’s a hotbed for edema (that’s water retention). Beat it by laying on your back and lifting your legs up above your heart and holding them there for about 15 mins. Sound tough? Use a wall or cushion to keep ‘em in place.

Weight for it

Do bodyweight exercises like push-ups (even against a wall), planks, crunches and tricep dips using a chair at home. These can be done in short bursts, perhaps 10-15 minutes, a few times a week, from your bedroom.

Love what you’re doing

You’re more than twice as likely to stick to a workout you enjoy than one you don’t. Don’t force yourself into activities you dread. Whether it’s dancing, practicing yoga, joining a team or walking with mates, exercise in a way that brings you joy. When it’s fun, it’s easier to stay active and consistently improve your mental and physical wellbeing.

Work out together

Suggest starting a work team – like a five-a-side squad or group activity. Exercising together **builds team spirit, reduces stress and boosts overall happiness, making it more social and enjoyable.**

When you feel physically healthy, vibrant and well-cared for, you’re better equipped to handle your hospitality role with a smile, making your life more fulfilling and joyful – so it’ll be easier to finally put happiness to work.

SLEEP TIGHT

Hours can be long and irregular in hospitality. Which can make getting a good night's sleep feel like a dream at times. But if you're serious about putting happiness to work, you've got to prioritise bed time.

Even one bad night's sleep can have a big impact. Getting less than seven hours' slows your reaction times and makes it hard to focus. More than one night will put you in "sleep debt", which can seriously impact your emotions and even your immune system.

To get a good night's kip and that all-important shuteye, stop counting sheep and give these sleep-inducing tricks a go.

7 ways to bring on the Zzzs...

Note it down

If something's keeping you up and your mind won't switch off, jot it down in a notebook beside your bed. This frees up mental space – 'downloading' thoughts from your head so you can relax.

Meditate

Meditation helps you destress before bed. Apps, like Calm or Headspace offer guided sessions for slower breathing and a lower heart rate that'll gently ease you into the land of nod.



Ditch the doom

Want to sleep? Then switch off your screens well before bed. Phones emit a 'blue light' that disrupts melatonin (the sleep hormone) by up to 23%. Aim for at least an hour of no-screen time before settling down.

Work it out

Exercise helps you fall asleep faster and get better quality sleep. Aim for 10-15 minutes of moderate activity most days (brisk walking, swimming or cycling). Finish workouts at least three hours before bed. Exercising too close to bedtime can leave you feeling too pumped to sleep.

Relax

You have to wind down before sleeping. Jumping into bed with a buzzing mind makes nodding off hard. Build a routine that tells your body it's time to rest, like reading, stretching, listening to calm music or taking a warm shower. Keep it light and avoid anything stimulating.

DID YOU KNOW; getting **less than 7 hours' sleep** a night can have a big impact on your body? If you don't get enough sleep, your reaction times **suffer and it becomes hard to focus.**

Cut the caffeine

An afternoon coffee might power you through a tough shift – but it could also keep you up all night.



(that's the time it takes for something to halve in quantity)

So if you have a cup of coffee at 6pm... **HALF** of that caffeine could still be in your system by midnight, making falling asleep difficult.



Switch to caffeine-free pick-me-ups for later in your shift.

Make your bedroom sleep-friendly

Keep your room dark, quiet and cool. Blackout blinds, earplugs or a white noise machine can help. Keep your room a clutter- and stress-free space that's dedicated for relaxing and sleep. This helps your brain associate it with rest, making it easier to shut down.

When your hours are more stable, it's far easier to establish a consistent sleep routine, leading to greater wellbeing and success in all areas of your life.



GOOD TO KNOW:
**Hospitality
Action**

Why follow them?

As chefs, waiters, housekeepers and even managers, sometimes it can feel like you don't have the voice that you need. And that's what Hospitality Action is for. Whether you're a cook, sommelier, concierge, receptionist or anyone in between, Hospitality Action's there to give you the help, advice and support you need, no matter how tough things get. Drop them a follow for bite-size, on-the-fly tips and advice. Isn't it good to know that someone has your back?

Where?

@hospitalityaction



Room for more?

Get monthly tips, tricks and tutorials from the industry's hottest pros, straight to your inbox.

Get The Dish



 **planday**
FROM XERO