

## Here are 10 tips optimising life as a FIFO worker in Australia.

### 1. Get used to long hours

Expect to work long hours as a FIFO worker, it is not uncommon to work a 12-hour shift or longer on most days. A typical “swing” as they say in the industry, can be 14 days on, 7 days off, in which most workers would return to their home. However, this varies between sector and some employers are offering a 7/7 shift pattern in an attempt to boost career satisfaction.

### 2. Create a routine

Shift workers can often suffer from fatigue due to the long working hours and obscure shift patterns that the job entails. Shift work can play havoc with the body's natural sleeping cycle which is why it is crucial to develop a routine and stick to it whilst working and during periods of leave. While it is tempting to sleep in on your days off, if you are used to getting up quite early (say 5am everyday), switching your sleep pattern can seriously affect your general job performance and may even affect your health. Try to sleep no more than two hours over the usual time you wake up, to ensure your sleeping pattern is not disrupted.

### 3. Socialise

One of the benefits of being a FIFO worker is being invited into a community of other workers sharing the same work patterns. Get involved with the sociable activities after work, create new friendships with your colleagues and enjoy the time you have with each other. This can provide workers with a connection to the places they are working in when they are away from home, making them feel less lonely.

### 4. Stay healthy

Catered meals, buffet-style treats and a sociable dining atmosphere can make the temptation to pile your plate high hard to resist. It is common for FIFO workers to gain weight during their time away, which can lead to health problems and hinder your job performance. While it is vital to properly fuel your body for the hard work ahead, you might regret overdoing it when the weight

piles on. Try to also avoid consuming high levels of caffeine and alcohol, as stimulants like these are known to have a negative effect on the physical and mental wellbeing. In short, just because you are away from home, that doesn't mean you have to eat unhealthily.

### 5. Create a balance

Trying to juggle family commitments with friends and other activities during your time at home can be challenging. While seeing your family and partner may seem like the most important thing to you when you come home, try to make the effort to see your friends when you can to allow yourself a balance. Remember that this is your time to relax, so don't try to push yourself too hard to see everyone at the same time or else you will return to work feeling more exhausted than when you left.

### 6. Plan your long-term financial goals

Life as a FIFO worker can be incredibly financially rewarding, the challenging life away comes with a huge salary which means you can afford to provide your family with a comfortable lifestyle. Create financial goals and ensure you get the advise to optimise your finances to make the most of your high income, high tax threshold and large superannuation contributions.

### 7. Keep in touch with your family and friends

Advancements in technology have made it possible to stay connected to people when they are thousands of miles away from us. Staying in touch with family and friends via Skype, phone calls, texts and even letters will help you be there for your family emotionally when you're not there physically.

### 8. Find ways to manage stress

Like every job, being a FIFO worker comes with its own stresses. A lot of people find that the remote location combined with the time spent away from family can be difficult to deal with, so finding what helps you to manage stress is essential for any FIFO worker. Exercising may be the last thing on your mind after a hard day's work but it's still important to get regular exercise while you are working. Exercise can strengthen muscles, boost cardiovascular activity and more importantly help to reduce the levels of stress than can occur from working long shifts. When you exercise your body releases feel-good hormones

called endorphins, so you should feel more relaxed and content after a workout. There are many ways you could manage stress, watching your favourite TV show, playing a game of pool with your work colleagues or going for a walk are just a few of the many ways to blow off steam post shift.

### 9. Your partner may need a break too

Most partners and families will understand that your week off is a time for you to get some well-deserved rest, but looking after a family is a full-time job too and you should consider that your partner may also need some downtime. A lot of families find that it works well to let their FIFO partner sleep for the first day that they return home. Once they are adjusted, they can assign themselves responsibilities like picking the kids up from school and giving their partner some time off too.

### 10. Make the most of your time at home

As we've stated, you don't want to be over-exerting yourself on your week off, but by the same token you shouldn't waste this time. Many FIFO workers live in growing cities and there is no shortage of things to do in these places.