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LIFESTYLE

# Office blues

*Long-term shift work hampers memory*

**L**ONG-TERM SHIFT work can help you earn more but it could adversely affect your brain functions, such as memory and processing speed, says research. Disruption of the body clock as a result of shift work could generate physiological stressors, which may in turn affect the functioning of the brain, the researchers suggested.

“The cognitive impairment observed in the present study may have important safety consequences not only for the individuals concerned, but also for society as a whole, given the increasing number of jobs in high hazard situations that are performed at night,” the researchers warned.

However, the study led by Jean-Claude Marquie of the University of Toulouse in France found that once people stop working in shifts, it is possible for them to recover the memory loss. But it could



take five long years.

The researchers tracked the cognitive abilities of more than 3,000 people who were either working, in a wide range of sectors, or who had retired, at three time points: 1996; 2001; and 2006.

The data showed that

those who currently, or who had previously, worked shifts had lower scores on memory, processing speed, and overall brain power than those who had only worked normal office hours.

The second set of analyses looked at the impact of work-

ing a rotating shift pattern and found that compared with those who had never worked this type of shift, those who had, and had done so for 10 or more years, had lower cognitive and memory scores.

The study appeared in the *British Medical Journal*. IANS

## Get fit

*Exercise may reduce breast cancer risk*



**EVERYBODY IS AWARE** of the fact that exercise is good for your health, but very few know that it can help in preventing breast cancer too, says an expert.

Middle-aged women, who regularly partake in some form of exercise each day, are significantly reducing their chances of getting cancer. And it is said that just 30 minutes of exercise a day, such as a game of squash or a spinning class reduces the risk of cancer by a fifth, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Scientists have found that obese women are 50 percent more likely to get cancer than those who have a healthy Body Mass Index (BMI). Also those women who did three hours of exercise per week were 21 percent less likely to get breast cancer.

Currently 1 in 8 women get breast cancer, which equates to 50,500 a year, however this new evidence is positive in showing that a healthy lifestyle can reduce the probability of a woman being affected.

Researchers at Oxford University have spent three years monitoring 126,000 women going

through menopause and noted if they got the disease or not. They filled in questionnaires about their exercise levels, weight, diet, drinking and smoking.

Scientists believe that being obese increases the risk of cancer, most likely due to the fat cells containing oestrogen which encourage the growth of tumours.

“What’s really interesting about this study is that (reduction in breast cancer risk) does not appear to be solely due to the most active women being slimmer, suggesting that there may be some more direct benefits of exercise for women of all sizes,” said Tim Key, a Cancer Research UK scientist from the cancer epidemiology unit at Oxford University.

“We don’t yet know exactly how physical activity reduces risk ... but some small studies suggest that it could be linked to the impact on hormone levels in the body,” he added. Tim Key also says that more research is still required to find the link between women’s hormone levels and the prevention of cancer. IANS

## ALIGN YOUR LIFE

*Ditch the garbage*

**M**ANY YEARS AGO I was summoned to Mumbai by the family of a famous Bollywood singer, who was much in demand. They had a very unusual problem on their hands. The singer and her family had moved into their new palatial home. Within a few days of moving in, the singer started falling ill. Initially it was just a cough and cold, but soon she lost her voice and was unable to sing. No amount of voice therapy or medication was able to help her. According to the medical opinion, there was nothing wrong with her voice box and yet she was unable to sing. She was losing out on good work and money. As a last resort I was asked to visit and help with the situation.

Upon visiting her apartment, I was a bit confused. Her apartment in general had good Feng Shui and the prosperous area had active energy and her recording studio. Therefore getting work and money were not her concern. Upon inspecting her bedroom, I realised that she was not sleeping in her good direction and got her bed location changed immediately. The singer was now sleeping in Mountain star 8 (as per Flying Star school of Feng Shui) and in my opinion her health would have improved. However she continued to deteriorate and her voice was not back. And so armed with my Lo Pan (compass) I spent many hours reviewing her house plan and doing the calculations and yet I was not able to find a flaw. And then it struck me that maybe the problem was not inside the house but outside. And so I immediately stepped out of the building to review the surroundings and what I found was simply disturbing. Just below the bedroom window of the singer there was a huge open garbage collection area. The garbage of the entire neighbourhood was collected here. There I had my answer. The bad energy generated from the garbage was seeping into the bedroom of the singer and this was the main cause of her mysterious illness. Once I convinced her to change her bedroom and tapped into her good sleeping direction, she was back on her feet and returned to singing full time.

Any kind of garbage in general can create havoc with your health and the energy in your home. When selecting a villa, one must check the entrance has no garbage bins opposite the main door. When renting an apartment ensure that the entrance of the building is garbage free and your apartment is not located next to a garbage chute or facing a dumping ground. Avoid placing garbage bins at the entrance and see the health of all family members blossom!

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