

The demanding nature of working on board an inland vessel has unique challenges that can have an impact on the mental health of crew members. The seclusion of a barge, the long periods away from home, irregular working hours and the risk of dangerous situations can lead to stress, anxiety and other psychological problems. Fatigue greatly affects mental health and can affect almost all physical abilities, which in turn can lead to incidents.



POSSIBLE DANGERS

- Fatigue can negatively affect physical abilities, such as:
 - concentration;
 - responsiveness;
 - decision-making;
 - coordination;
 - balance;
 - strength;
 - speed.
- Chronic stress can lead to burnout.
- Working at night increases the risk of injury.
- Untreated mental health problems can lead to depression and substance use.
- Feeling of isolation and loneliness.

MEASURES

- Regular exercise improves sleep quality.
- If you have concerns, talk to someone about it. A manager or the appointed confidential advisor in the office.
- Provide variety and make room for relaxation and exercise. Play cards with each other, watch a series or do some exercises. Humor can also provide the necessary relaxation.
- Take the time to do your job. If you get stressed from the workload, discuss this with the office.
- Keep in regular contact with the home front.
- Create a pleasant and open culture on board, get to know each other and be interested in the people you work with.
- Avoid strenuous exercise before bedtime, as this makes sleeping difficult.
- Tips against fatigue:
 - Eat small healthy snacks while working. Eat protein and slow carbohydrates at night. This keeps your energy going.
 - Drink plenty of water. Dehydration can make you feel more tired.
 - If you find yourself tired, try to sleep for 10-20 minutes. A power nap can give the necessary energy again.
 - A lot of light can also help your body stay alert.
 - Keep a sleep routine. For example, brushing teeth and reading a book. This way you give your body the signal that it is time to relax.
 - Make sure the bedroom is dark and fresh, about 18°C. If necessary, use earplugs to mute sounds.
 - If you can't fall asleep, get up to do something quiet. For example, read a book or magazine.
 - Do not drink coffee, tea, energy drinks or cola (caffeine) within 5 hours before bed.

Referenties/Bronnen:

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-faqs/how-to-stay-awake>

<https://oshwiki.osha.europa.eu/en/themes/effects-shift-work-health>

<https://waterwelljournal.com/safety-is-extra-important-at-night/>