

Residents working long hours can increase alertness

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(HealthDay)—Medical residents can take steps to maintain their energy

and alertness during long shifts, according to an article published in the American Medical Association's *AMA Wire*.

For seasoned residents, shifts can last up to 30 hours, and physicians who have worked these long shifts recommend arriving rested. It is also important for residents to know when to ask for relief, as the opportunities for sleep during a daylong shift may be few and far between. One study of more than 200 internal medicine residents, for example, found that they were sleeping fewer than three hours per overnight shift.

It is also important for residents to stay organized and task-oriented. Finally, residents should monitor their intake of caffeine. Most residents drink some caffeine, but too much can result in medical issues such as heart palpitations.

"Having small snacks is also important. Particularly when you get really tired, having a healthy snack can be helpful. Eating big meals can be kind of detrimental because you can get kind of sleepy after eating a big meal," Taylor George, M.D., an emergency medicine resident at the Naval Medical Center in Portsmouth, Va., said in the article.

More information: [More Information](#)

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