

STAYING AWAKE

How to Keep From Dozing at the Wheel

Fatigue is one of the greatest dangers in the trucking industry. A drowsy driver is an unsafe driver. It's extremely important that you learn to deal with sleepiness and monotony.

Warning Signs

You should begin to take steps as soon as the first stages of fatigue get to you. It may be difficult to keep your eyes open. Your neck muscles may feel stiff and you may have trouble concentrating or remember what you passed in the last mile or two of driving.

Get of the road at once when this starts to happen, and take a rest period.

Regain Alertness

Get out of your cab and do some simple exercises. It should help you regain your alertness. Deep breathing can also be helpful. Try walking, bending or stretching to get your circulation going.

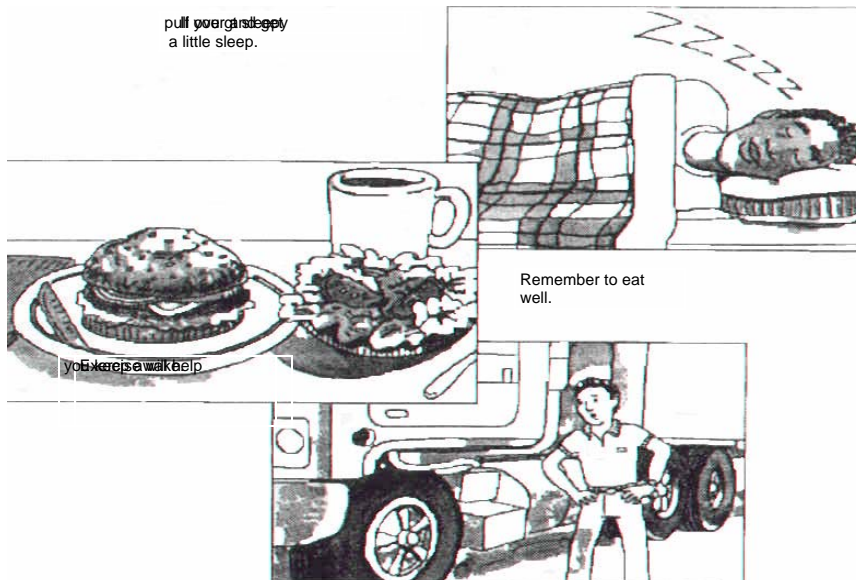
These routines will provide additional oxygen to your brain to combat drowsiness.

If none of these helps, it might be time for some sleep.

Don't put it off. It's far too dangerous to yourself and others to drive while fatigued. Often a 10 to 15 minute catnap will restore your sense of alertness.

Make Yourself Comfortable

Aching muscles, particularly



your back, contribute to road fatigue. It's best to drive with a straight back and a firmly supported lower back.

Keep your cab a comfortable temperature. Most authorities say air conditioning is the best way to achieve this. A well ventilated cab reduces the danger of carbon monoxide--especially if you smoke. But remember, the noise and wind from an open window can increase your drowsiness if you're not well rested.

Eyes Right

Eye-strain is a big factor in fatigue. Good sunglasses are a must to cut down on daylight glare. Move your eyes in a sweeping pattern, from one side of the road to the other, then back to the center. This helps you keep an eye out for hazards along your route--and keeps your eyes from getting tired. It also helps you avoid another self-induced danger: highway hypnosis.

This can happen often on long, dull stretches of highway when your mind may wander from your driving. By keeping your eyes moving and away from a fixed point, you can avoid this.

Don't Take Chances

Staying awake and alert is too important to your safety and the safety of others to take chances. You are the only one who can avoid accidents caused by fatigue. You should know your limits of endurance and take appropriate steps when your body starts telling you it's tired.