# How ditching night shifts helped a nurse lose 40kg and reclaim her health



Life-altering events often emerge from unexpected moments, and for Sarah, a nurse with a demanding job, this revelation came in the form of a seemingly innocuous photograph. Captured after a muddy obstacle course with friends, the image forced her to confront a harsh reality: she no longer recognised herself. Weighing 120kg (265lbs), the snapshot illuminated the gap between her current state and the person she aspired to be.

Many people can relate to that critical moment of realisation—the stark confrontation with one’s own image. For Sarah, this was not merely about weight; it was emblematic of a deeper disconnection from her well-being, one that began to eat away at her sense of self. “It wasn't about numbers on a scale. It was about realising how far away I'd drifted from the person I thought I was,” she recalls.

Despite her role as an emergency nurse, where she routinely advised patients on healthy living, Sarah found herself grappling with the very advice she dispensed. Working long shifts fuelled by caffeine and adrenaline, she recognised the self-sabotaging behaviours that had crept into her daily life. The photo acted as a catalyst, igniting a desire to not just advise others, but to embody the principles she advocated.

The early days of Sarah's transformation didn’t involve fad diets or weight-loss gimmicks; it was about understanding the fundamentals of calories. She learned to discern the importance of food volume over mere caloric intake, swapping mindless munching for mindful eating. "Instead of eating mindlessly, I started paying attention to food volume," she explains. By focussing on high-volume, low-calorie foods, she could satiate her hunger without compromising her goals.

However, calorie counting proved to be a double-edged sword. While it initially provided a framework for understanding her eating habits, it soon became a drain on her mental resources. “I hated calorie counting,” she admits. “Knowledge is important, but having a good general awareness of calorie content has been far more important than striving for daily perfection.” This realisation is echoed by others within the shift work community, where striking a balance between healthy eating and the unpredictable demands of night shifts poses continual challenges.

Shift work presents a unique hurdle in the journey towards weight loss. The disruption to sleep and regular eating patterns can skew hunger signals and foster unhealthy eating behaviours. Other shift workers have shared similar experiences, recognising the pitfalls of late-night cravings and erratic meal schedules. An individual documenting their own weight-loss journey alongside shift work noted the necessity of creating ‘transition periods’ between shifts, facilitating better food preparation whilst navigating an unpredictable routine.

For Sarah, the turning point came when she decided to relinquish her night shifts altogether. This adjustment seemed to realign her eating habits almost effortlessly: "It was like I'd been playing on hard mode and suddenly switched to easy mode." This resonates with the experiences of other shift workers who successfully adopted tailored strategies such as meal prepping and incorporating flexible exercise routines to enhance their overall well-being.

With the initial 20kg shed through sheer determination and meal planning, Sarah faced a familiar obstacle: the plateau. To counter this, she sought support through Moshy, a digital health platform that offered practical guidance focused on energy balance and consistency rather than perfectionism. This was crucial in helping her lose a further 20kg, culminating in a total weight loss of 40kg (88lbs).

Reflecting on her journey, Sarah conveys a mix of sadness and pride when she revisits those early photos. “You’re not broken. You’re surviving. And when you’re ready to fight for yourself, you’re going to blow your own mind.” This transformation reveals a profound truth: genuine weight loss extends beyond physical changes; it is a comprehensive life overhaul.

As health narratives increasingly highlight the need for psychological and emotional support in weight management, Sarah's story stands as a testament to resilience, tailored strategies, and the pivotal role of self-awareness. For shift workers and others encountering similar battles, her insights emphasise the importance of planning, understanding one’s body, and cultivating sustainable habits that foster not only weight loss but overall well-being.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Paragraph 3
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14658093/Nurse-Ozempic-style-weight-loss-habits.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://myweighless.com/weight-loss-success-stories/reijas-weight-loss-story/> - Reija, a 55-year-old nurse, lost 65 pounds through a combination of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Hypnosis, and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). Previously weighing 16st 4lb, she now maintains a weight of 11st 5lb. Reija's weight gain was gradual, influenced by a love for sweets and comfort eating due to rheumatoid arthritis. After successful smoking cessation therapy, she sought weight-loss therapy, which led to significant weight loss and improved self-esteem.
3. <https://becomevibe.com/2025/03/13/the-night-shift-nightmare-my-real-journey-with-weight-loss-for-shift-workers-schedule/> - An individual shares their journey of losing 38 pounds over 14 months while working night shifts. They implemented strategies like creating 'transition periods' between shift changes, reimagining exercise routines to fit their schedule, and prepping food differently than traditional meal prep advice. The approach emphasized consistency, flexibility, and self-compassion, leading to sustainable weight loss and improved well-being despite the challenges of shift work.
4. <https://skinnynaturally.org/weight-loss-success-stories/> - This article presents multiple weight loss success stories, including Sarah's journey of losing over 115 lbs within a year by addressing emotional eating and adopting sustainable habits. Mike's story highlights a 75-pound weight loss over two years through strength training and a high-protein, lower-carb diet. Steve lost 45 pounds in nine months by incorporating healthy meal prepping and brief workouts into his busy schedule. These narratives emphasize the importance of addressing underlying issues, gradual changes, and consistency in achieving weight loss goals.
5. <https://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/ht2482/2024/02/29/en-belly-fat-begone-6-us-night-shift-nurses-reveal-how-they-lost-weight-on-a-tight-schedule/> - Six U.S. night shift nurses share their strategies for losing belly fat despite demanding schedules. Their approaches include incorporating short, intense workouts, practicing intermittent fasting, engaging in yoga and mindfulness to manage stress, embracing strength training, seeking therapy to address emotional eating, and maintaining consistent sleep schedules. These stories highlight the importance of individualized strategies, commitment, and resilience in achieving weight loss goals amidst the challenges of night shift work.
6. <https://triagemethod.com/shift-work-and-consistent-exercise-a-case-study/> - A case study of Sarah, a shift worker, demonstrates how to maintain consistent exercise routines despite unpredictable schedules. The approach includes efficient workouts combining strength training and high-intensity interval training (HIIT), prioritizing protein and fiber in nutrition, strategic meal prepping, and adjusting exercise intensity based on energy levels. After three months, Sarah reported improved energy, better sleep quality, steady weight loss, and reduced stress, showcasing the effectiveness of tailored strategies for shift workers.
7. <https://opanutrition.com/blogs/news/managing-weight-for-shift-workers> - This article offers strategies for shift workers to maintain a healthy diet and exercise routine. It emphasizes meal planning and preparation, such as batch cooking and using slow cookers, to accommodate irregular work hours. The importance of self-care and stress management is also highlighted, suggesting techniques like meditation and relaxation to improve overall well-being. These strategies aim to help shift workers overcome challenges and achieve weight management goals.