



THE WEEKEND TIME WARP

BY CAROL MASS, LAT, ATC




See if this sounds familiar. You crush it all week – productive on the job, meals on point, and maybe even a workout or two squeezed in. A little weekend celebration for a job well done never hurt anyone. So, maybe you stay up late hanging out with friends or binging through *Abbot Elementary*, and maybe sleep a little too long on Saturday. It's harmless, right? You're finally catching up on rest after a long week on the production floor.

But weekends have a way of bending time, don't they? Before it's started, Monday hits and you're dragging. Your focus is off, and the job just feels heavier than usual. You're not just tired. Your internal clock's out of whack. There's a name for that Monday fog: *social jet lag*.

It's what happens when your body's natural rhythm and your weekend schedule stop syncing up. You shift your bedtime by a few hours, sleep in, then spend the first part of the week trying to reset. For industrial athletes, that shift doesn't just mess with rest. It messes with recovery, coordination, and focus when you're back on the floor. And when those three things are off, the risk for injury goes up fast.

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL JET LAG

Social jet lag doesn't just make you tired, it messes with the timing of your body's recovery cycle. When your sleep schedule jumps around, your system doesn't know when to rest, repair, or refuel.

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Backtracks Health: Irregular sleep schedules have been tied to a range of negative outcomes; from cardiovascular health and metabolism (think fasting glucose and A1C) to mood and inflammation. A consensus statement by [The National Sleep Foundation](#) shows how quickly your body feels the effects when recovery time isn't consistent.
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Disrupts Sleep: Even a 3-hour change between a weekday and weekend sleep schedule can make it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep once the new week starts. [These shifts](#) throw off melatonin production, which keeps your body clock spinning.
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Brain Fog Sets In: That same shift [slows your reaction time](#), focus, and decision-making. Sleep loss doesn't just make you tired. It makes you slower to think, easier to distract, and more likely to miss details you'd normally catch.

Catching up on rest isn't the issue, either. In fact, an extra hour or two on the weekend can help your body recover from a long week. The problem is changing your sleep schedule too much. Staying up several hours later and sleeping several hours longer throws off your body's internal clock. That's what causes social jet lag, and it's what leaves you foggy, sore, and a step behind when Monday rolls around.

PREVENTION FAVORS THE PREPARED

Don't let your mind flip and the time slip away. You don't have to overhaul your whole weekend, either. Just stay a little more consistent and try these tips:

- Find your magic hours.** Try to go to bed and wake up around the same time every single day. Yes, even on weekends.
- Implement a caffeine curfew.** That late cup can come back to bite you come 10pm.
- Keep mealtimes steady.** Eating too late can throw off your body's recovery rhythm.
- Move a little.** Some calming yoga or slow stretches preps your body for rest and recovery.
- Ease off the screens.** Blue light and "one more episode" can mess with your body clock fast.

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