The Paydirt Swing-Life Playbook

Member Playbook #2 · v1 draft for founder review · Oct 2026

Free or near-free ways to fill the hours between shifts on swing. Stay fit, stay connected, keep your head clear, and keep the phone from eating your night.

Heads up: This is general information and peer experience, not medical or financial advice. Check with a doctor or physio before starting new exercise, especially with an injury or health condition. Always follow your site's fitness-for-work rules and your camp or house rules. Nothing here is paid or affiliate content.

How to use this playbook

You don't need to do all of it. Pick **one thing from each section** and try it for a swing. Keep what works, ditch what doesn't.

None of it needs you to leave camp, buy gear or spend much. Most of it works in a donga, a share house on a LAHA, or a camp with a gym and a basketball court nobody touches.

The last page is a one-page **swing planner** you can print, screenshot or copy into your notes app.

> FROM CONNOR
>
> At most camps there are things to do, like driving ranges, basketball courts and that, but a lot of people don't use them. What I do is either call home or go for a walk. If there's a gym, that's always good to keep fit. Otherwise some calisthenics are very helpful. We play cards, Jenga and other board games, crosswords and puzzles. Me personally, I study things I'm interested in, and work on side hustles and research markets when the wifi is good.

01. Why the off-roster hours matter

A 12.5-hour shift doesn't leave much. Take out travel to and from the pit, dinner, a shower and sleep, and you've got maybe an hour or two a night. Over a full swing, though, those hours add up to a fair chunk of time.

The easy default is the bed and the phone. Scroll, scroll, lights out late, up early, repeat. Nobody's judging. After a long shift it's the path of least resistance, and we've all done it.

The trouble is how you feel at the end of it. You get home flat, you haven't spoken to anyone properly, and the swing went past without anything to show for it.

This playbook is about making a few of those hours **yours**:

- **Body:** keep moving so the job doesn't wear you down.
- **People:** stay connected to home and to the crew.
- **Mind:** give your head something other than a feed.
- **Building something:** use good-wifi nights to learn or plan.

You don't need to fill every hour. Rest is part of it. The aim is choosing what you do, rather than the phone choosing for you.

02. Body

Use what's already at camp

Lots of camps have a gym, a pool, basketball or tennis courts, a driving range, walking tracks, or a rec room. Plenty of people never use them. They're already there, they're free, and nobody cares if you're no good at basketball.

- Ask at reception or check the noticeboard for what's on, opening hours and any rules.
- Some camps run comps or classes. Turn up once and see.

Go for a walk

The most underrated thing on this list. No gear, no booking, works on any roster.

- 20 to 30 minutes around camp after dinner is enough. Stretches out legs that have been in a machine or on their feet all day.
- Take a mate, or ring someone at home while you walk.
- Stick to lit paths inside camp boundaries, and watch for vehicles and wildlife. Carry water. In hot months, go after dark or early.

The gym, if there is one

- You don't need a program from the internet. Turn up, do a bit, go home. Consistency beats intensity on swing.
- Keep it moderate after a long shift. Plenty of people find mornings before a night shift, or days off on even-time rosters, are better for harder sessions.

No gym? Calisthenics in a small space

Calisthenics just means bodyweight exercise. It works in a donga or a bedroom with no gear.

A simple 15-minute routine (no gear)

Do each one for about 30 to 45 seconds, rest a bit, and go round **2 or 3 times**. Easy pace. Stop well short of your limit.

1. **Squats.** Sit back like there's a chair behind you. Use the bed edge as a target if it helps.
2. **Push-ups.** Hands on the bed, desk or wall to make them easier. On the floor when you're ready.
3. **Reverse lunges.** Step back, lower, step back in. Hold the wall for balance.
4. **Glute bridges.** On your back, knees bent, lift your hips and lower slowly. Good for a back that's been sitting all day.
5. **Plank.** On your elbows, body straight. On your knees is fine.
6. **Wall sit.** Back against the wall, knees bent. Short holds.

Finish with a few minutes of stretching: calves, hamstrings, hips, chest, shoulders.

> **GO EASY AFTER A LONG SHIFT.**
>
> You're already tired, and tired is when people get hurt. Start with fewer rounds than you think you need. Stop if anything hurts (sore muscles are normal, sharp pain isn't). Drink water, especially in the heat. Keep the noise down if neighbours are on nights. If you've got an injury or a health condition, check with a doctor or physio first. Never let training cut into the sleep you need to be fit for work.

CHECKLIST

- [ ] Find out what facilities your camp actually has
- [ ] Walk three times this swing
- [ ] Try the 15-minute routine once

03. People

Call home

Swing can make you feel a long way from everyone. A regular call helps you and the people at home.

- **Pick a set time** if reception is patchy, like after dinner or on your walk. A regular slot is easier for the family than random calls.
- A short call every day or two can beat one long one a week. Even five minutes counts.
- Video calls on good wifi, voice calls or texts when it's patchy. Voice notes work well when your times don't line up.
- With kids, read a bedtime story over the phone or set a little shared challenge for the swing.

Games with the blokes

Cards, Jenga, dominoes, chess, board games. Cheap, no wifi needed, and you actually talk to each other.

- Ask around. Someone in camp nearly always has a deck of cards.
- Many camp rec rooms have a games shelf. If yours doesn't, a deck of cards is the one thing worth packing.
- Easy ones that fit a short night: Uno, five hundred, euchre, poker for matchsticks (not money), Jenga, chess.
- A regular game night, same time each swing, gives people a reason to come out of their room.

Mateship

Plenty of people on swing keep to themselves. A lot of them would join in if someone asked.

- Knock on a door and ask if they want in on a game or a walk. That's all it takes.
- Look out for the new starter or the quiet one. You've been the new bloke too.
- The wet mess doesn't have to be the only social option. A walk, a game or a hit of basketball is just as good a reason to hang out.

If you or a mate is doing it tough: talk to someone. Your site will usually have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which is free and confidential. Ask your supervisor or HR how to reach it. Outside work: **Lifeline 13 11 14** (24/7) and **Beyond Blue 1300 22 46 36** (24/7). In an emergency, call **000**.

CHECKLIST

- [ ] Set a regular call-home time this swing
- [ ] Pack a deck of cards
- [ ] Ask someone new to join in on something

04. Mind

Puzzles

Crosswords, sudoku, word searches, jigsaws. They keep your head ticking without a screen. A cheap puzzle book from the servo or newsagent can last a whole swing. A jigsaw left set up in the rec room gets half the camp chipping in, and a crossword's better with a mate.

Reading

- Lots of camps have a book swap shelf. Take one, leave one.
- Your **local library is free**. Many Australian libraries lend ebooks and audiobooks through apps like Libby or BorrowBox. Ask yours which one they use.
- Download books, audiobooks and podcasts on good wifi. Audio suits tired eyes and walks.

Learn a skill offline

Pick one thing for the swing and chip away at it:

- A language (many apps let you download lessons for offline use).
- Sketching with a pencil and a notebook.
- A harmonica or ukulele, if camp and the neighbours are happy with it.
- Writing. A diary or letters home. Getting it on paper helps your head settle before bed.

CHECKLIST

- [ ] Pick up a puzzle book or start a crossword habit
- [ ] Check if your library lends free ebooks or audiobooks
- [ ] Pick one skill to work on this swing

05. Building something

Got energy and decent wifi? Work on something for later.

Study what interests you

- TAFE, universities and government sites offer free short courses on all sorts. Check it's a real provider before you hand over any details.
- Learn more about your own job: tickets, the next machine, the next role. Ask your supervisor what's worth it.

Research side hustles and markets

Good-wifi nights suit looking into side income ideas. **Research is the job, not spending.**

- Make notes. What's involved, what does it cost to start, and who pays?
- Be wary of ads promising big money for little work. If they're really selling you a course, a tool or a subscription, that's the product.
- Paydirt is putting together a guide on spotting dodgy "get paid for views" hustles. Watch for it.
- Bring your ideas to Paydirt's **#side-income** channel and get a sanity check from people who've tried things.

No guarantees, and no promises of money. Just spare time used to learn and plan, so you've got something solid to act on at home.

CHECKLIST

- [ ] Download anything you need while the wifi is good
- [ ] Write down one thing you want to learn
- [ ] Take one side income idea to #side-income for a sanity check

06. The phone-in-the-bag habit

You don't have to quit your phone. You need it for calling home, the roster and the alarm. The aim is just to stop it eating the whole night.

Pick a set time

- Choose a time each night when the phone goes **in the bag**, a drawer, or across the room. For example, 30 minutes before you want to be asleep.
- Use a cheap alarm clock, or leave the phone charging out of arm's reach with the alarm on.
- Tell the family. "I'll call at 7, phone's away at 8:30" is easy for everyone to work with.

Make it easier on yourself

- Turn on your phone's do-not-disturb or bedtime mode. Let calls from family through.
- Move social media apps off the home screen. A few extra taps is often enough to break the habit.
- Swap the scroll for something on this list: a puzzle, a few pages of a book, the stretches.
- Missed a night? Start again the next one. No big deal.

Sleep matters on swing. Fatigue on a mine site is a safety issue, not just feeling a bit crook. Getting off the phone earlier is one of the easiest ways to look after it.

07. Wrecked days: the low-energy list

Some shifts flatten you. That's normal. On those nights, don't force a workout or a study session. Pick one easy thing, or just rest.

- A slow 10-minute walk around camp
- Five minutes of stretching on the floor
- A short call or voice note home
- A shower, then lights off early
- A few pages of a book, or a chapter of an audiobook
- One crossword or sudoku
- Sit outside and watch the sunset or the stars
- Write one line about the day
- Make your crib for tomorrow so the morning's easier
- Put the phone in the bag early and go to sleep

Rest counts. A wrecked day is not a failed day.

08. Swing planner (one page)

Fill it in on your first night. Tick it off as you go. Share a win in #wins if you like.

My roster: _____ on / _____ off **Shift:** days / nights

Phone goes in the bag at: _____

I'll call home: _____ (who) at _____ (when)

Body this swing: _____

People this swing: _____

Mind this swing: _____

One thing I'm learning: _____

Tick each day (first 7 days)

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7
Moved (walk, gym, routine)							
Called or messaged home							
Mind (puzzle, book, skill)							
Phone in the bag on time							

HANDY NUMBERS

- Lifeline: **13 11 14** (24/7)
- Beyond Blue: **1300 22 46 36** (24/7)
- Emergency: **000**
- Your site EAP: _____

Paydirt Club shares general information and peer experience for education only. It isn't personal financial, tax, legal or medical advice. We don't promise income or results. Check with a doctor or physio before starting new exercise, and always follow your site and camp rules. Details checked October 2026.

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