

Sleep

For additional Sleep
Readiness tools and skills,
scan the QR codes:



Sleep may be the most important biological factor that determines Service member health and combat readiness.

However, approximately 76% of Service Members sleep less than 7 hours per night, compared to 37% of the civilian population.

- Pentagon Report on Sleep Deprivation and Military Readiness (March 2021)

“In peace and war, the lack of sleep works like termites in a house: Below the surface, gnawing quietly and unseen to produce gradual weakening which can lead to sudden and unexpected collapse.”

- MG Aubrey Newman

Sleep

Key Points:

1. Sleep is necessary for achieving peak performance, full recovery, and sustaining wellness.
2. Hit the target: **7-9 hours** of sleep per night (American Sleep Association).
3. Sleep deprivation is a major cause of both decreased mental and physical health.

Sleep Benefits

- Improves creative thinking & problem solving
- Facilitates memory retrieval & learning
- Improves mood & management of emotions
- Improves cardiovascular health
- Supports physical and mental recovery
- More resilient to experiences of pain
- Supports gains from fitness training

Negative Consequences – Sleep Deprivation

- Higher emotional and physiological stress
- Impaired cognitive functioning
- Decreased work execution and results
- Weight gain and other metabolic concerns
- Higher prevalence of accidents
- Higher levels and experience of pain
- Chronic sleep loss can lower life expectancy

Unit Leadership’s Role in Sleep Readiness

In both garrison and operational settings, leaders set the expectations for sleep. To increase the performance, sustainment, and recovery of the formation, sleep must be a deliberate discussion..

Set Conditions

- Leaders require adequate rest and sleep to make critical decisions. Ensure you and your staff have ample time to recover (especially during field exercises and 24hr operations).
- When operational settings require sleeping in shared spaces, be the one to turn out the lights and quite everyone down. Encourage this down to the lowest level.

Lead by Example

- Serve as role models for the unit by demonstrating good sleep habits and maintaining healthy work-rest schedule.
- In garrison, leave the office at appropriate times and avoid responding to emails on rest periods or weekends.
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Educate and Encourage

- Talk about healthy sleep behaviors on a routine basis, including how stress levels impact sleep readiness.
- Bring in sleep readiness experts to discuss sleep strategies for all echelons.
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Prioritize and Plan

- Create policies that reflect the prioritization of sleep and recovery.
- Consider reverse cycle fitness training
- Consider allowing rotating naps on garrison shift work duties, such as staff duty or CQ.

	Optimal Caffeine Intake for Alertness	Coffee: 80 - 100 mg (8 oz)
Amount	< 200 mg/time	Black Tea: 40 – 60 mg (16 oz)
OPTEMPO < 24 h	4- 6 hours/ stop at 1800	Military Energy Gum: 100 mg/piece
OPTEMPO > 24 h	4 -6 hours, as needed	Energy Drinks: Monster: 160 mg Rockstar: 160 mg Reign: 300 mg

Sleep

Sleep Tips and Strategies:

Sleep Hygiene: Create cold, dark, and quiet conditions the best sleep environment.

- Keep the room cool, aiming for 62-68°F
- Disconnect from electronics 30min before laying in bed
- Use a sleep mask to block out light and relax your eyes
- Consider white noise to calm the mind and block distractions
- Consider using fan to help keep you cooler and to create soft white noise
- Use deliberate breathing and/or mental imagery to clear your mind

Stimulus Control: Some foods and substances are known to interrupt sleep patterns.

- Avoid large meals 1-2hrs before bedtime
- Stop caffeine intake 5-6 hrs before bedtime
- Stop tobacco intake 5-6hrs before bedtime
- Stop alcohol intake 2-3hrs before bedtime

Tactical Napping: Short naps are recovery tools that boost reaction time & alertness.

Adults need 7–9 hours of sleep each night. When you get less sleep than your body needs, you acquire a “sleep debt” that accumulates over time. There are days when sleep deprivation is unavoidable, but engaging in “tactical napping” minimizes impacts of the “debt”.

Strategic Napping: Nap for 30 minutes or less to temporarily combat sleep deprivation.

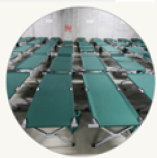
Longer naps help make up for sleep loss, *but* causes grogginess and reduced sleep pressure.

Sleep Extension or “Banking”: Preparing for known reduced sleep with longer sleep.

Sleep is like a bank account. Each day you make a withdraw. Each sleep period you make a deposit. The more consistently you make large deposits then the less sleep debt you’ll acquire - and you may actually feel rested! Meaning, the more consistently you have the right quantity of sleep (7-9hrs), the better you’ll perform.

If you know an event is approaching that will result in decreased sleep hours, plan to extend your current sleep schedule to increase the “deposit”. While this is essentially catching up on prior sleep debt, these extra sleep “deposits” will prepare you for the upcoming reduced sleep.

How to extend sleep: 1-2 weeks prior to the upcoming event, plan to sleep 9-10 hours each night. Repeat following the event to recover your sleep debt.



SURFACE

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Soft, yet firm sleeping surfaces (mattresses/cots/pillows)



LIGHT

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Darkening shades during sleep
Bright light exposure upon awakening (for at least 1 hour)



AIR QUALITY

A

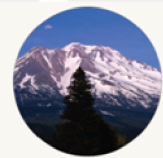
Air filters
Sleeping quarters away from burning waste



NOISE

N

White noise machines/loud fans/ear plugs
Sleeping quarters away from military operations



TEMPERATURE

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Air conditioner or heat (65-67 degrees while sleeping is optimal)
Proper blankets/insulation