



Improving Sleep Habits

Sleep is vital for health, performance, and well-being. Your brain needs sleep to restore and repair, form memories, and process new information. Sleep also plays a significant role in immune function, metabolism, learning, and other vital functions. Despite the critical role that sleep plays in both health and readiness, many Sailors and Marines do not get the sleep they need.

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) Health Promotion and Wellness (HPW) Department provides resources and tools to help Sailors, Marines, beneficiaries, and DoD civilians understand the importance of sleep and improve their sleep habits. The first step in improving sleep is increasing awareness of how much sleep one needs, what quality sleep is, and the importance of getting enough. Once the individual is ready to change their sleep habits, there are many tools and resources available to support these changes.

Awareness

The following sources include information that can be used to increase awareness of the importance of good sleep habits and the consequences of sleep deprivation. Targeted information is available for sub-groups such as wounded, ill, and injured service members.

- [Sleep and Fatigue \(Naval Safety Center\)](#)
- [Sleep Information and Resources \(NMCPHC\)](#)
- [Sleep for Wounded, Ill, and Injured \(NMCPHC\)](#)
- [Explore Sleep Deprivation and Deficiency \(National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)\)](#)
- [Sleep and Sleep Disorders \(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention\)](#)
- [Sleep Disorders \(Medline Plus\)](#)
- [Healthy Sleep: Why Sleep Matters \(Harvard Medical School\)](#)
- [Sleep and Brain injury \(Brainline.org\)](#)

SLEEP & WARFIGHTERS
DID YOU KNOW? SLEEP IMPACTS YOUR PERFORMANCE.

SLEEP NEED
Most people, including service members, need 7-8 hours of sleep each night to perform optimally.

SLEEP DEBT
Killing yourself isn't a badge of honor. It's a badge of shame. The more you sleep, the more you can do.

REPORTED SLEEP DEFICIT
Service members report an average of 2.5 hours of sleep deficit each night.

SLEEP LESS
The more sleep you get, the better your performance, focus, and mood. Sleep deprivation can lead to a 30% decrease in cognitive performance.

PHYSICAL FITNESS
Sleep deprivation can lead to a 30% decrease in physical fitness and a 30% increase in injury risk.

BRAIN
In order to recover and function, the brain needs sleep. Sleep deprivation can lead to a 30% decrease in cognitive performance.

PERFORMANCE
Sleep deprivation can lead to a 30% decrease in performance, focus, and mood.

AND YOUR LIFE!
Sleep deprivation can lead to a 30% decrease in mood, focus, and energy.

INCIDENT
Sleep deprivation can lead to a 30% increase in the risk of an incident.

WEIGHT GAIN
Sleep deprivation can lead to a 30% increase in weight gain.

RELATIONSHIPS
Sleep deprivation can lead to a 30% decrease in relationships.

AFTER DEPARTMENT
Sleep deprivation can lead to a 30% decrease in performance after deployment.

COMBATING SLEEP DEBT

REMEMBER - THE IDEAL COUNTERMEASURE IS TO AVOID ACCUMULATING A SLEEP DEBT IN THE FIRST PLACE!

BEST STRATEGIES

- ENVIRONMENT**
Keep your room cool, dark, and quiet. Use earplugs and eye masks. Avoid screens and bright lights before bed.
- WIND DOWN**
Start to wind down 30-60 minutes before bed. Turn off electronics and start using sleep hygiene practices like reading or listening to music.
- WAKE UP**
All the same time every day, even if you don't feel like it.

ON A PITCH

- CAFFEINE**
Avoid caffeine 6-8 hours before bed.
- SLEEP AID**
Use sleep aids only if necessary and under a doctor's supervision.

EXCESS CAFFEINE
Excess caffeine can lead to a 30% decrease in sleep quality and a 30% increase in the risk of an incident.

ALCOHOL
Alcohol can lead to a 30% decrease in sleep quality and a 30% increase in the risk of an incident.

HYDRATION
Stay hydrated throughout the day to avoid waking up at night.

IN MORE INFORMATION
Visit the HPRC website for more information on sleep and performance.

HPRC
HEALTH PROMOTION AND WELLNESS RESOURCES CENTER

HPWC-ONLINE.ORG
and click on SLEEP TIPS



Education

Below are educational resources that can be used to assess if you're getting enough sleep, improve your sleep habits, and know when to seek help from a professional.

- [Sleep Optimization Strategies \(Human Performance Research Center \(HPRC\)\)](#)
- [Your Guide to Healthy Sleep \(NIH\)](#)
- [National Sleep Foundation](#)
- [Sleep Video Stories \(Afterdeployment\)](#)
- [Sleeping Better \(University of Michigan Depression Center\)](#)
- [Relax, Relax Toolkit](#) was developed for use by Sailors and Marines who would like to reduce stress through deep relaxation and to optimize performance. One of the sections focuses on sleep relaxation. (NMCPHC)
- [Sleep Optimization Assessments, and Tools \(HPRC\)](#)
- [Insomnia Tools for Providers \(Center for Deployment Psychology\)](#)



The Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2) developed two mobile applications to assist in improving sleep.

- [Dream EZ](#), helps a person “rewrite” their nightmares to make them diminish in intensity and frequency. (T2)
- [CBT-i Coach](#) guides users through the process of learning about sleep, developing positive sleep routines, and improving their sleep environments. (Note: this app is intended is for people engaged in cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia (CBT-i) with a health provider, or those who have experienced symptoms of insomnia and would like to improve their sleep habits.) (T2)

Additional Resources

- U.S. Army Public Health Center:
<https://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/healthyliving/sleep/Pages/default.aspx>
- Military Health System and Defense Health Agency: <http://health.mil/Search-Results?query=sleep>
- Real Warriors Campaign: <http://www.realwarriors.net/active/deployment/sleep.php>
- American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org/topics/sleep/>
- Veterans Health Administration:
http://www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/PTSDCoachOnline/tools_menu.htm?cat_id=sleep
- Military OneSource: <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>