

COMING OUT OF
THE PANDEMIC:

MILITARY SLEEP HEALTH

SLEEP DEPRIVATION

Sleep deprivation has been a deep-rooted part of soldier culture, but that culture is rapidly changing as military leaders recognize that quality sleep is vital for physical and mental health. Active duty service members are 34% more likely to report insufficient sleep than people with no history of military service. Sleep deprivation leads to poor performance and weakened cognitive abilities. Learning to sleep well in stressful environments can help military members maximize wellness.

Sleep Deprivation is part of military life. Operations, missions, and family life happen, and they may disrupt sleep patterns. The most important part of sleeping in stressful situations is to find different tips and strategies that work for you.

- Deployment related psychological conditions and/or physical injuries can affect sleep. Addressing these issues is imperative to achieving quality sleep.
- Sleep Banking is recommended to counteract the effects of sleepless nights. Get 10 hours of sleep for one week prior to expected sleepless nights. Go to bed earlier, and wake at your normal times to avoid changes in your body's circadian rhythm.



DEVELOP SLEEP READINESS: Train your circadian rhythm by implementing routines. Avoid electronic devices, find your favorite pillow, listen to music or take a shower before bed.



EXERCISE: Work out at least 30 minutes early in the day to fall asleep faster, and reduce night time awakenings.



WATCH WHAT YOU EAT: Stop eating 2-3 hours before bed. Limit caffeine, sugar or other digestive stimulants.



NAP STRATEGICALLY: When predictable nighttime sleep is unavailable, short power naps (no more than 30 minutes) have been found to increase alertness and performance.



GET COMFORTABLE: You spend one third of your life in bed, so you should be comfortable. Consider upgrading or replacing your mattress and/or pillows.



GO TO BED SLEEPY: If you aren't asleep in 20 to 30 minutes, get out of bed and do something else.



MAKE SPACE: If thoughts are keeping you from sleeping, jot them down to relieve your mind.