



## LEADER GUIDE

# SLEEP WORKBOOK: TOOLS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR SLEEP

CHAMP



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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Sleep Workbook, a guide designed to help you optimize your Sleep Readiness.

Sleep is essential to health, wellness, and performance. Getting the recommended 7–9 hours of sleep each night can support Human Performance Optimization (HPO) across all domains of Total Force Fitness (TFF). But Service Members often don't get all the sleep they need to sustain peak performance.

This workbook includes 7 challenges to help you address some common issues that affect your sleep quality and duration. Each challenge offers an actionable tool to help you build a personal strategy to implement necessary changes.

An avatar will accompany you throughout this journey, progressing through all 7 challenges. At the beginning, you'll see an exhausted avatar struggling to perform. As you navigate the Sleep Workbook challenges, observe your avatar's energy level improve with each completed task. You, too, can experience similar changes in your sleep readiness.

The order in which you complete each challenge matters. Challenges 1, 2, and 3 focus on mindset and behavioral changes to establish a foundation for regular and adequate sleep. As this overall journey might be filled with roadblocks, Challenge 4 serves as a checkpoint to help you assess your progress, identify barriers, and restrategize the way forward. Mastering Challenges 1–4 is essential to effectively implementing the strategies to manage operational fatigue.

Challenge 5 provides an overview of how you can use strategic napping. Naps are powerful tactical tools, but they don't replace nighttime sleep. In Challenge 6, you'll learn strategies you can implement before, during, and after night and sustained operations to manage fatigue. But these will be more effective if you get regular, adequate sleep.

Finally, Challenge 7 encourages you to share the benefits of adequate sleep with your peers and help create a network of like-minded Service Members who invest in their sleep readiness.

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## CHALLENGE 1: BOOST YOUR MOTIVATION TO MAKE SLEEP A PRIORITY



## BENEFITS OF GETTING 7–9 HOURS OF SLEEP

Sleep benefits the whole body: your brain, heart, lungs, muscles, hormones, digestive system, and immune system. As a result, sleep supports your performance across all domains of TFF.

**Physical Fitness.** Sleep is key for muscle relaxation and repair, which help you recover from any level of activity. For this reason, adequate sleep reduces the risk of musculoskeletal injury (MSK-I). In addition, adequate sleep helps you learn and refine motor skills and improve your speed, accuracy, reaction time, and endurance.

**Mental Fitness.** Sleep enhances your ability to regulate emotions and inhibits impulsive behaviors. It also acts as a reset button for your stress-response system, bringing stress hormones back to baseline. The mental rest that comes with sleep improves decision-making, creativity, critical thinking, attention, learning, and memory.

**Social Fitness.** The benefits of sleep for your *mental fitness* positively affect your *social fitness*. Adequate sleep increases empathy and openness to others. Inversely, *lack* of sleep increases aggressive behavior and the tendency to blame others, contributing to poor communication and reduced conflict resolution skills. In a military setting, sleep deprivation can affect group performance, unit morale, and cohesion.

**Nutritional Fitness.** Sleep helps regulate your hunger hormones and blood glucose levels, which contributes to healthy body weight. Inversely, *lack* of sleep can increase hunger and can lead to your consuming more than 300 extra calories a day. In addition, sleep deprivation can intensify your cravings for sweets and fatty foods. Over time, sleep loss can contribute to weight gain and metabolic disorders such as obesity and type 2 diabetes.

**Spiritual Fitness.** The benefits of sleep for mental fitness directly support your spiritual core. Self-regulating your emotions and behaviors is essential to living out your values. But, when sleep deprived, people are not themselves and can act in ways at odds with their values and beliefs.

**Medical Fitness.** Sleep replenishes your immune system and helps prevent and fight diseases. For example, immune cells that remove cancerous cells from your body increase during sleep. The amount of sleep you get relates to how well your body responds to immunization. When individuals don't get enough sleep, they might struggle with frequent viral or bacterial infections, slow recovery from sickness, and increased pain sensitivity. In addition, chronic sleep deprivation increases the risk for hypertension, cardiovascular disease, metabolic imbalances, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cancer.

**Financial Fitness.** The benefits of sleep for financial health are tied to your self-regulation and decision-making. A well-rested mind thinks more clearly, makes better decisions, and manages resources more effectively. Self-regulation from getting enough sleep helps reduce your the risk of giving in to impulse buying and risky investments. In contrast, people who are sleep deprived can find it hard to cut down on their spending **now** to save for a bigger reward **later**.

Learn more about the benefits of sleep and the effects of sleep deprivation on health and performance in the [Sleep and TFF Leader Guide](#).

## SLEEP AND TFF SELF-CHECK

### Poor sleep traps: Surprising ways a lack of sleep can hurt your performance

Now that you know the benefits of getting 7–9 hours of sleep every night, use the Sleep and TFF self-reflection tool to assess how poor sleep has hurt your performance in the past. Does recalling these events motivate you to make sleep a priority?

Read these sentences about how sleep deprivation affects each TFF domain. Think about how you usually feel when you don't get enough sleep. Then, go through the list of poor sleep traps and identify how sleep deprivation has negatively affected you. Check each poor sleep trap you fell into. Write any details of that sleep trap experience so you can be mindful about getting more sleep going forward.

#### Physical Fitness

- ☐ A lack of sleep accelerates my fatigue and decreases my stamina.
- ☐ A lack of sleep affects my ability to learn new motor skills.
- ☐ A lack of sleep might have contributed to my past and current injuries.
- ☐ A lack of sleep decreases my coordination, speed, reaction time, or endurance.
- ☐ A lack of sleep is affecting my physical fitness goals (e.g., muscle gains).

#### Mental Fitness

- ☐ A lack of sleep makes it harder for me to regulate my mood.
- ☐ A lack of sleep reduces my ability to control my impulsive behaviors.
- ☐ A lack of sleep increases my stress levels.
- ☐ A lack of sleep makes it harder for me to focus, think critically, and make decisions.
- ☐ A lack of sleep makes it easier for me to make mistakes.
- ☐ A lack of sleep impairs my attention and alertness.
- ☐ A lack of sleep reduces my ability to learn and remember things.

#### Social Fitness

- ☐ A lack of sleep increases my aggressive behavior.
- ☐ A lack of sleep increases my tendency to blame others for problems.
- ☐ A lack of sleep increases my feelings of loneliness.
- ☐ A lack of sleep reduces my ability to accurately read others' emotions.
- ☐ A lack of sleep decreases my willingness to solve conflicts.

## Nutritional Fitness

- ☐ A lack of sleep increases my hunger and cravings.
- ☐ A lack of sleep increases my desire for fatty foods and carbs.
- ☐ A lack of sleep makes me eat fewer fruits and vegetables.
- ☐ A lack of sleep makes me want to eat close to bedtime.

## Spiritual Fitness

- ☐ A lack of sleep reduces my self-control.
- ☐ A lack of sleep increases my impulsive behavior.
- ☐ A lack of sleep makes it harder for me to live out my values.

## Medical Fitness

- ☐ A lack of sleep makes me get sick more often.
- ☐ A lack of sleep makes me feel “off.”
- ☐ A lack of sleep increases my sensitivity to pain.
- ☐ A lack of sleep might have contributed to my unwanted weight gain.
- ☐ A lack of sleep might have contributed to my health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease.

## Financial Fitness

- ☐ A lack of sleep increases my tendency to buy things I want now, instead of saving for a bigger goal.
- ☐ A lack of sleep affects my ability to make wise financial decisions.

## Reflection, Part 1:

Now, take a moment to reflect on and identify any of your core values or meaningful goals that might be negatively affected by poor sleep.

**Examples:** *When I'm sleep deprived, I don't have energy for relationships and often ignore my child.*

*Sleep deprivation is making me drift away from my partner.*

*When I don't sleep well, my one-rep maximums decrease.*

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SLEEP AS A TFF TOOL: PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING BENEFITS OF SLEEP

Reflect on a time when you got amazing sleep and felt fully rested and energized for the day. Then, evaluate your readiness on those days for each area of TFF. This activity helps you to be mindful of how sleep can be a performance and well-being enhancer.

			Social Fitness	Physical Fitness	Financial Fitness	Spiritual Fitness	Medical Fitness	Nutritional Fitness	Mental Fitness
1	Recovery	Debilitated, depleted, ill, injured, broken, or disconnected							
2	Restoration	In the process of addressing injury, illness, or difficulty							
3	Maintenance	Sustaining baseline health and performance							
4	Enhancement	Proactively preventing injury and difficulties, or actively growing							
5	Optimization	Thriving, energized, connected, and approaching peak performance							

Reflection, Part 2:

List 1–3 insights about the importance of sleep that will increase your motivation to prioritize sleep in the future.

**Examples:** *I'll make sleep a priority because it helps me maintain healthy relationships.*

*I'll make sleep a priority because it boosts my mental performance and I feel more productive at work.*

*I'll make sleep a priority because it helps me to live out my values.*





## CHALLENGE 2: IDENTIFY YOUR SLEEP DURATION SWEET SPOT

Hopefully, Challenge 1 has increased your awareness of the benefits of sleep and motivated you to prioritize sleep. If you're ready to invest in your sleep and make the necessary changes, Challenge 2 enables you to identify how much sleep you need to optimize your health and performance.

Most people, including Service Members, need 7–9 hours of sleep every night (or within every 24 hours when on night operations). Once you learn where you fall within this range, you can adjust your schedule to meet your sleep goal most days of the week.

Sleep is comprised of 4 stages based on changes in your brain and body during sleep:

- **Stage 1** is the lightest sleep and marks the transition from wakefulness to loss of consciousness. Your brain activity slows and your muscles relax.
- **Stage 2** is still light sleep, but your brain activity decreases even more and your muscles continue to relax.
- **Stage 3** is deep sleep. Your muscles are completely relaxed and your brain patterns show as long, slow waves. This deep sleep is essential for physical restoration, hormone balance, immune function, and brain-waste removal.
- **REM sleep.** Your brain is intensely active and your eyes move rapidly. Your heart and respiratory rates increase, and you can experience body paralysis. This stage is essential for learning, memory, and mental performance.

Cutting back on sleep means your body doesn't have enough time to rest, heal, repair, and rebalance itself to support your health and performance. Sleeping for the recommended 7–9 hours every night means you spend enough time in each stage and can experience all the benefits listed in Challenge 1. While different strategies can help you mitigate *fatigue*, nothing can replace all the benefits of good sleep—except regularly getting enough sleep.

### SLEEP SELF-STUDY

The main goal of a sleep self-study is to learn how many hours of sleep *you need* to wake up rested and energized. Your sweet spot can fall anywhere within the 7–9-hour range. It's rare, but some people do fall slightly outside this range. But fewer than 6 or more than 10 hours of sleep are considered unhealthy. Once you learn how many hours of sleep you need each night, you can set consistent wake-up and bed times.

The first requirement for a successful sleep self-study is sleeping as long as you need and waking up without an alarm clock. It might be easier to conduct a self-study when you're on leave. After you find the ideal week, follow these tips for success:

- **Wake up without an alarm clock.** Your goal is to let your body decide how much sleep it needs.
- **Get sunlight exposure after you wake.** Stepping outside for 10–15 minutes as soon as you wake can help you fall asleep faster at night.

- **Avoid caffeine after 2 pm.** You can also try to avoid caffeine altogether and notice how your alertness and tiredness levels change.
- **Limit tobacco close to bedtime.** Like caffeine, nicotine can make it hard to fall asleep—even when you're tired.
- **Avoid alcohol within 4 hours of bedtime.** Alcohol might make you feel drowsy and help you fall asleep, but it [reduces your sleep quality](#).
- **Nap during the day if you feel the need to do so.** But avoid long naps and napping close to bedtime.
- **Stop stimulating activities within 1 hour of bedtime.** Activities that increase your mental and physical arousal levels—video games, movies, and books with emotional content—can make it hard to calm your mind and fall asleep.
- **Avoid exposure to screens within 1 hour of bedtime.** Bright light from handheld devices, monitors, and TVs can make it hard to fall asleep.
- **Go to sleep when you get tired.** Listen to your body, and don't procrastinate once you start to feel drowsy.
- **Track your sleep.** Your main goal during a sleep self-study is to learn *how much sleep your body needs to fully rest and recover*.

## What to expect during the Sleep Self-study

Let your body teach you how much sleep it needs. You should not set a goal for how many hours of sleep you get. Simply observe what happens when you allow your body to sleep as long as it needs.

- When you get less sleep than you need, you accumulate sleep debt. If that's the case, you can expect to sleep longer and nap more frequently during the first few days. That's your body making up your sleep debt.
- Don't worry if you feel you're sleeping too much. Healthy people can't oversleep. Once sleep debt is paid off, you'll learn your sweet spot for sleep duration. This will probably happen toward the end of the Sleep Self-study.
- You might notice that you can't sleep longer or you wake up feeling tired, despite sleeping for 7–9 hours. These might indicate insomnia or sleep apnea, common sleep disorders among Service Members. Pay attention to the signs below, and see a healthcare provider as soon as possible.
  - » Insomnia: trouble sleeping and staying asleep, waking up much earlier than desired despite the opportunity to sleep longer, constant fatigue, low physical and mental performance during the day
  - » Sleep apnea: loud snoring, waking up gasping for air, night sweats, frequent urination, constant fatigue

## How to use what you learn during the Sleep Self-study

After you pinpoint your sweet spot for your needed sleep duration, adjust your schedule accordingly.

- Choose a wake-up time that works for you most days of the week, including weekends.
- Set a sleep time that allows you to meet your daily sleep requirements.
- Add 30 minutes to your needed sleep hours to find your bedtime. It's common to take up to 20–30 minutes to fall asleep. If you need 7.5 hours of sleep, your bedtime should be 8 hours before your wake time.
- Use the HPRC Sleep Habits Self-Check (Challenge 3) to identify tips to improve your sleep quality and duration.

## SLEEP DIARY

Sleep tracking is an essential component of the Sleep Self-study. The goal is to learn more about how your body responds when you can sleep as long as you need. Many sleep-tracking devices are available, and you can use one during your sleep self-study. But, manually tracking your sleep can have some advantages. Writing information down increases your engagement with it. Simply put, when you use pen and paper, you spend more time processing and thinking about the information you write down. As a result, you retain that information better. So, pen and paper can help you get the most out of your sleep self-study week.

The HPRC 10-Day Sleep Diary also allows you to track other activities that might affect your sleep: alcohol intake, caffeine consumption, exercise, medicine, or dietary supplement intake. To learn more about how these and other habits affect your sleep, check out the [HPRC Sleep Habits Leader Guide](#).

Use the copy of the Sleep Diary provided during your sleep self-study. The Sleep Diary starts at noon, so start tracking your activities on the first afternoon of your Sleep Self-study.

- Write the date, day of the week, and type of day (work, school, or off) in the designated space.
- Follow the key in the sleep diary to track activities that happen between 1200 and your bedtime (for example, drank alcohol, had caffeine, took dietary supplements, worked out, took medicine, etc.).
- Use the letter "X" to track when you go to bed.
- The next day, estimate how long it took you to fall asleep the night before. Track your sleep hours using the letter "S."
- Rate your energy level in the morning:

5	4	3	2	1
<b>Extremely energized</b>	<b>Very energized</b>	<b>Moderately energized</b>	<b>Slightly energized</b>	<b>Not at all energized</b>

- Track activities that happen in the morning.
- Start a new row at noon.

**What you can expect after using the HPRC Sleep Diary.** After tracking your sleep for several days, here's what you can expect to learn about your sleep:

- How long you usually take to fall asleep.

- The effects of specific habits on your sleep quality and duration.
  - » Some people find it difficult to fall asleep if they exercise close to bedtime, but others might benefit from it.
  - » Caffeine timing, medication, and dietary supplements can affect sleep in different ways.
- Your ideal sleep duration.

## TWO-WEEK SLEEP DIARY

### Instructions:

- Write the date, day of the week, and type of day: Work, School, or Off.
- Follow the key to add the appropriate letter in each box.
- Leave boxes unshaded to show when you woke up at night and when you were awake during the day.
- Rate in the last column how energized you felt the next morning. 5–extremely energized, 4–very energized, 3–moderately energized, 2–slightly energized, 1–not at all energized.

**Sample entry below:** On Monday, I jogged on my lunch break at 1 p.m., drank a glass of wine with dinner at 6 p.m., fell asleep watching TV from 7–8 p.m., went to bed at 10:30 p.m., fell asleep around midnight, woke up at 4 a.m., slept from 5–7 a.m., and had coffee, a multivitamin, and medicine at 7 a.m. I felt moderately energized.

**A:** Drank alcohol

**C:** Drank coffee, cola, energy drink, or tea

**D:** Took any dietary supplement

**E:** Exercised

**M:** Took any medicine

**S:** Was asleep at night or took a nap during the day

**X:** Went to bed for the night

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## CHALLENGE 3: BUILD HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS

### SLEEP HABITS SELF-CHECK

After you learn how many hours of sleep you need each night, then you need to identify habits that can help you *improve your sleep quality and duration*. Sleep strategies aren't one-size-fits-all, though. It's important to learn the science behind each tip so you can find what works best for you.

### The sleep-wake cycle

The sleep-wake cycle is complex and tightly regulated by 2 different processes: pressure to sleep and your internal clock.

**Pressure to sleep (or Process S)** is the gradual increase in fatigue that happens throughout the day. From the moment you wake up, pressure to sleep builds as a result of chemicals building up in your brain. The longer you stay awake, the stronger your need to sleep. During sleep, the level of the sleep-inducing chemicals goes down. If you get 7–9 hours of good-quality sleep, the sleep-inducing chemicals reach their lowest point and lead to your waking up. As soon as you wake, the process restarts.

Your **internal clock (or Process C)** uses the light-dark cycle of the day to further regulate the sleep-wake cycle. When you see sunlight, the timekeeper in your brain adjusts to promote wakefulness and support performance. When it gets dark, the timekeeper responds to the absence of light and makes you sleepy. Your internal clock also controls other body functions such as body temperature, strength, heart rate, and hormone levels in response to the light-dark cycle. Both processes, S and C, work together to enable good-quality sleep, and understanding them can help Service Members work with their biology to optimize their sleep.

Check out these sleep tips below to see if they might work for you. It's wise to focus on learning or stopping only 1 to 3 habits at a time to increase your chances of success. Trying to focus on too many changes at once can make you feel overwhelmed and this can lead to frustration. After successfully implementing the first couple of tips, work through the self-check tool again and identify habits that can potentially further improve your sleep quality and duration.

## SELF-AWARENESS

1. I make sleep a priority by choosing it over work, social events, or watching “just one more” TV show when appropriate.

☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

2. I know how much sleep I personally need to optimize my health and performance by doing a [sleep self-study](#), and how [different lengths of sleep impact my energy and focus](#) (most adults need 7–9 hours each night).

☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

## DAILY HABITS

3. I have a consistent wake-up time for most days of the week.

☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

4. I get early morning and regular exposure to sunlight (or artificial bright light when sunlight isn’t possible) that helps me set my body clock and be ready for sleep at night.

☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

5. I have a regular exercise routine that helps me be physically tired at the end of the day.

☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

6. I avoid naps close to bedtime.

☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

7. I avoid stimulating or energizing physical or mental activities at least one hour before bedtime. (It’s normal to have an energy boost one hour before bedtime.)

☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

8. I turn off devices at least one hour before bedtime and dim the lights.

☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

## SLEEP NUTRITION

9. I stop consuming [caffeine](#) at least 6 hours before I go to bed.

☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

10. I avoid drinking alcohol before bed because it disrupts the quality of my sleep.

☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

11. I don’t go to bed hungry. And I [avoid large meals](#) close to bedtime. I also clear my bladder and avoid

drinking lots of liquids before bed.

- ☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

## ENVIRONMENT

12. I keep my bedroom quiet, dark, comfortable, and cool (65°F is optimal for some).

- ☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

13. I only use the bed for sleep and sex. I don't watch TV, go on the computer, or do work in my bedroom close to bedtime.

- ☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

14. I put the bedroom clock where I can't see it to avoid checking it throughout the night.

- ☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

## BEDTIME ROUTINE

15. I have a "going to bed" ritual and consistent bedtime to signal to my body that it's time to get ready for sleep.

- ☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

16. I have a regular [gratitude practice](#) that can boost my length and quality of sleep.

- ☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

17. I have a [relaxation response activity](#)—such as [mindfulness](#), [progressive muscle relaxation](#), or [deep breathing](#)—that I practice regularly.

- ☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

18. Before bed, I try to clear my mind of worry by distracting myself with [calming mental games](#) that consume my attention. Or I journal my concerns and a plan of action to address the next day.

- ☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

19. When I can't sleep (or fall back to sleep) after 20–30 minutes, I get out of bed and do something relaxing under low light until I feel drowsy.

- ☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.

## PROFESSIONAL HELP

20. I talked with my doctor or a sleep specialist to explore [cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia \(CBT-i\)](#) and other strategies to help me get better sleep.

- ☐ I already do this. ☐ This will not work for me at this time. ☐ I want to try this strategy.



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## CHALLENGE 4: ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

Congratulations! You've spent the past few weeks optimizing your sleep readiness! From identifying how adequate sleep can support your goals to figuring out how much sleep you need to build healthy sleep habits, you've made progress toward your optimized self. Now it's time to debrief!

**Use the space provided to journal about the following questions:**

- How have your sleep and energy levels been over the past week?
- What changes have you tried to improve your sleep?
- Have you successfully applied these changes?
  - » If so, what's enabled your success?
  - » If not, what went wrong, and what have you learned from it?
  - » What can you do differently moving forward?
- If you were successful in making these changes, how have they affected your sleep and energy levels?
  - » What would you like to sustain?
  - » What would you like to do differently?
- What have you learned from this process?
  - » How can you apply this to optimize your sleep readiness moving forward?

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## CHALLENGE 5: LEARN THE DIFFERENT WAYS YOU CAN USE NAPS

### NAPPING TOOL

Napping is an effective strategy to manage fatigue, refresh alertness, and boost memory. But, if used incorrectly, it can hurt your night's sleep. So it's important to learn when you can benefit from a nap, the best time of the day to doze off, and how long to shut your eyes. Deciding what, when, and how long can be confusing, so HPRC created this napping decision tree.

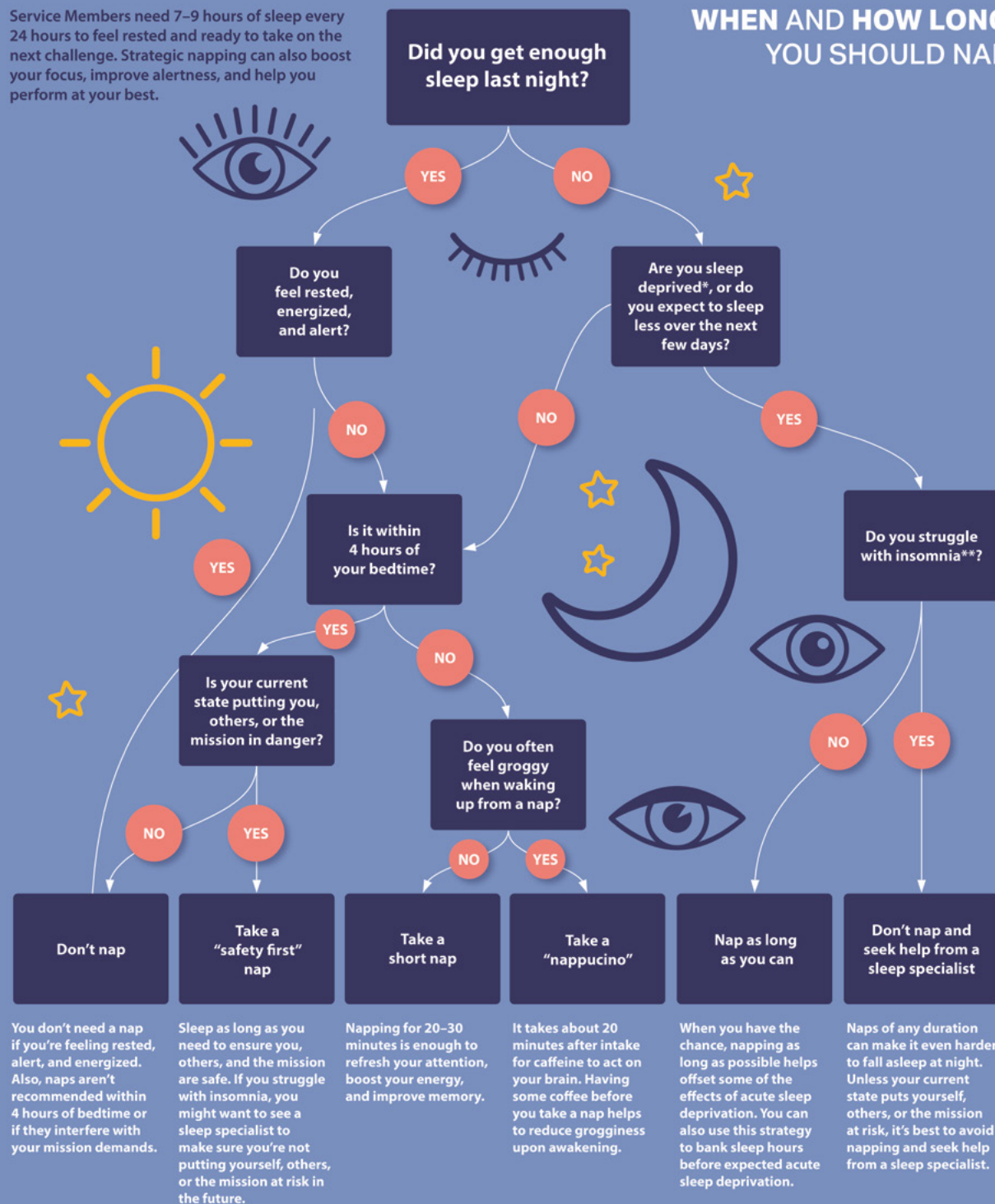
As with any decision tree, start at the top and keep answering the questions until you reach one of the outcomes below:

- **Don't nap.** You don't need a nap if you're feeling rested, alert, and energized. Also, naps aren't recommended within 4 hours of bedtime or if they interfere with your mission demands.
- **Take a "safety first" nap.** Sleep as long as you need to ensure you, others, and the mission are safe. If you struggle with insomnia, you might want to see a sleep specialist to make sure you're not putting yourself, others, or the mission at risk in the future.
- **Take a short nap.** Napping for 20–30 minutes is enough to refresh your attention, boost your energy, and improve your memory.
- **Take a "nappuccino."** It takes about 20 minutes after consuming caffeine for it to act on your brain. Having some coffee before you nap helps to reduce grogginess when you wake up.
- **Nap as long as you can.** When you have the chance, napping as long as possible helps offset some of the effects of acute sleep deprivation. You can also use this strategy to bank sleep hours before expected acute sleep deprivation.
- **Don't nap, and seek help from a sleep specialist.** Naps of any duration can make it harder to fall asleep at night. Unless your current state puts yourself, others, or the mission at risk, it's best to avoid napping and seek help from a sleep specialist.

# NAPPING FOR MILITARY PERFORMANCE

Service Members need 7–9 hours of sleep every 24 hours to feel rested and ready to take on the next challenge. Strategic napping can also boost your focus, improve alertness, and help you perform at your best.

## WHEN AND HOW LONG YOU SHOULD NAP



\*Sleep deprivation happens when you consistently sleep fewer hours than needed. It can be over a couple of weeks (acute) or over the years (chronic). Since sleep deprivation relates to sleeping less than you need over time, you can still be sleep-deprived—even if you got enough sleep the night before.

\*\*Insomnia is defined as having trouble falling asleep, having trouble staying asleep and awakening frequently during the night, waking up earlier than desired, having a nonrestorative sleep, or experiencing daytime impairment in performance.



## CHALLENGE 6: BUILD YOUR FATIGUE MANAGEMENT PLAN

### FATIGUE MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

Military missions often require night and sustained operations. Because of this, it's challenging for Service Members to sustain performance during long waking hours or when their internal clock is set to sleep. These conditions negatively affect physical and cognitive performance. You can't train for sleep deprivation, but you can create a fatigue management plan to help you offset the effects of sleep deprivation on your military performance. This worksheet provides a list of evidence-based tips you can implement before, during, and after shift work and sustained operations. Use this tool to identify the strategies that work for you and create your personalized **fatigue management plan**.

An *effective* fatigue management plan is key to supporting performance and enhancing safety during night and sustained operations. Exploring available options and identifying appropriate courses of action before these operations can contribute to a successful overall strategy. For example, if you know from previous experience on night shifts that around 0100 is when you feel sleepy, plan to either get some extra sleep before then or have 200 mg of caffeine around this time. *Especially* if this time is during a mission-critical period.

Sleeping for 7–9 hours as regularly as possible is the foundation of an effective fatigue management plan. Getting fewer than the recommended sleep hours leads to sleep debt. Avoiding sleep debt is *crucial* for the success of a fatigue management plan. Those not scheduled for night operations and exercises should maintain a consistent wake-up time for most days of the week, including weekends.

This fatigue management plan consists of 3 phases: preparation, execution, and recovery.

### PREPARATION PHASE

Adequate sleep during regular daytime operations is the foundation of an effective fatigue management plan. Check out what you need to support your sleep readiness:

- ☐ Learn how much sleep you need to sustain your optimal health and performance.
- ☐ Develop good sleep habits.
- ☐ Maintain a consistent sleep schedule to help you get 7–9 hours of sleep.
- ☐ Learn the different ways you can use strategic napping to optimize your performance.

Up to 2 weeks prior to shift work or sustained operations, bank sleep hours to help offset the effects of sleep deprivation. The more hours you bank, the better. Check off which strategy works for you:

- ☐ Sleep longer during the night
- ☐ Nap

Write down specific days and times you plan to bank sleep:

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Get as much sleep as you can one day before shift work or sustained operations. Check the strategies that work for you:

- ☐ Delay PT until the afternoon.
- ☐ Sleep as long as you can in the morning.
- ☐ Nap as close to the start of your shift or mission as possible.

List what steps you need to take. For example, speak with your partner about your schedule:

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## EXECUTION PHASE

After being awake for 18 hours, your performance will degrade. Here are some strategies you can use to manage fatigue during shift work and sustained operations:

- ☐ Nap! Try “safety-first” naps or “nappuccinos” to reset your alertness.
- ☐ Get exposure to natural sunlight.
- ☐ Perform a short bout of high-intensity exercise.
- ☐ Consume up to 200 mg of caffeine every 4 hours as needed, but don’t exceed 600 mg of caffeine in 24 hours.

Plan out your shift-work schedule and apply these tips as you can. Be as specific as possible. When might you nap? What type of caffeine might you consume? When and where will you exercise and get exposure to natural sunlight?

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If you're on a shift-work schedule for a few days or weeks, a consistent sleep schedule can improve your overall performance:

- ☐ Consider your social and family commitments. Find the best time to get uninterrupted sleep.
- ☐ Adjust the temperature and reduce light and noise to create an optimal sleep environment.
- ☐ Strive for 7–9 hours of sleep in a single stretch. If this isn't possible, meet your daily sleep requirements with two shorter periods of sleep.
- ☐ Keep a consistent daily schedule. Try to sleep and eat at the same time every day.

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## RECOVERY PHASE

Write down your schedule and the steps you'll take to optimize your sleep after and between shifts or sustained operations using these tips. After your shift or sustained operations, catch up on lost sleep as soon as possible:

- ☐ Time your last dose of caffeine so you can finish your shift (or get home) safely but still get to sleep quickly.
- ☐ Sleep as soon as possible and for as long as you can after your shift.
- ☐ Optimize your sleep environment—temperature, light, and noise—as best you can for good sleep.
- ☐ Fall asleep more easily with mindfulness, deep breathing, or progressive muscle relaxation techniques.
- ☐ Pay off sleep debt through strategic napping.

List your schedule and identify the hours dedicated to uninterrupted sleep. List the changes you can implement to create an optimal sleep environment.

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Back on daytime operations:

- ☐ Get exposure to sunlight as soon as you're up in the morning to help reset your internal clock to a consistent sleep-wake schedule.
- ☐ Maintain healthy sleep habits.
- ☐ Continue to get the required 7–9 hours of sleep daily.
- ☐ Use strategic napping to pay off sleep debt if needed.

List the steps you need to take to return to your normal daytime operations. Be as specific as possible.

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## CHALLENGE 7: SPREAD THE WORD

You're at the final Sleep Workbook challenge. Congratulations!

Let's use the positive changes you've made to be a "force multiplier" and encourage others to invest in their sleep readiness. Supporting your peers in their HPO journey is an expression of care. In addition, being around like-minded people makes it easier to keep working on your own health and wellness goals.

When engaging with other Service Members, share your personal journey with the Sleep Workbook. Use your experiences to inspire their positive changes. Storytelling encourages a personal connection to the topic being discussed. For example, people relate better to, "I became a better parent after I started sleeping more," than "Sleep can support healthy relationships." Share the *tangible* benefits you got from completing the Sleep Workbook—but steer clear of telling others what to do.

If you're active on social media, use it to spread the word about your sleep optimization journey. Feel free to tag @hprconline in your posts, and encourage your virtual community to join the conversation.

For additional guidance on using this information during training or one-on-one sessions, refer to the HPRC Sleep Leader Guides listed below. Your story can spark a ripple effect, contributing to optimized sleep readiness within the military community.

### SLEEP LEADER GUIDES

[Leader Guide: The impact of sleep on Total Force Fitness](#)

[Leader Guide: Sleep Self-study to optimize sleep duration](#)

[Leader Guide: Sleep habits to optimize performance, mental health, and resilience](#)

[Leader Guide: Strategies to manage operational fatigue](#)