



# Sleep

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Good sleep is vital to good health. In this section you will learn the basics about sleep, sleep rhythms, and the importance of getting enough sleep.



### 1.1.4 Getting Enough Sleep

While the amount of sleep needed for good health and optimum performance mostly depends on the individual, experts suggest that adults function best when they get seven to nine hours of sleep each night. You should figure out how much sleep you need to feel well-rested. Ensuring that fatigue isn't a problem during the day is one way of determining how much sleep is needed.

## 1.2 SLEEP PROBLEMS

It's normal to "lose sleep" over stressful life events. In this section you will learn about different sleep problems and coping techniques.

### 1.1.1 Basic Sleep Facts

Sleep helps people cope with stress, solve problems, and recover from illness or injury. Lack of sleep can lead to drowsiness, irritability, lack of concentration, and memory and physical problems.

### 1.1.2 The Stages Of Sleep

Sleep is a complex activity and occurs in five stages. In the first stage, the body and brain enter a relaxed state of wakefulness. People slowly enter a deeper and more restful sleep in the second, third, and fourth stages. It is during the fifth stage, the "Rapid eye Movement" or REM stage, that dreaming occurs. While people often awaken temporarily as they shift from one sleep stage to the next, most fall right back to sleep.

### 1.1.3 Sleep Rhythms

Our bodies naturally want to be awake during the day and to sleep at night—this natural tendency is referred to as the ***circadian rhythm***. Your circadian rhythm is hard to change, and explains why adjusting to a late-night work or duty schedule can be difficult.

Body temperature also follows a natural cycle, changing throughout the day and night. Your temperature is higher when you're alert and active, and is lower as you become less active and tired.

### 1.2.1 Common Sleeping Problems

From time-to-time, most people encounter occasions during which they are not getting enough sleep. Sleep problems can be caused by stress, pain, drugs, alcohol, diet, lack of exercise, or an irregular sleep schedule. People who are not sleeping well are more likely to be depressed, irritable, or anxious.

### 1.2.1 Common Sleeping Problems (cont.)

Poor sleep can also lead to problems with attention, concentration, and memory. Chronic sleep problems can hurt relationships, job performance, and increases the risk of accidents.

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#### WARNING SIGNS: SLEEP PROBLEMS

- Having a hard time falling asleep or staying asleep.
- Having a hard time staying awake during the day.
- Feeling tired even after sleeping a lot.

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You may have a hard time **falling asleep** if you feel:

- **“On-edge”** or on-alert. Deployed service members must often stay awake to protect their units. You may find it difficult to switch back to a normal sleep pattern after being “on-alert.”
- Discomfort from **medical conditions**, like chronic pain after an injury.
- Unable to “shut off” **your thoughts**. Your mind may keep replaying something bad that happened. Maybe you can’t stop worrying about some situation. Or maybe you concentrate too hard on falling asleep.

These things can make it hard to **stay asleep**.

- Drugs or alcohol
- Bad dreams, nightmares, or sleep terrors
- Thrashing around in bed or actively moving arms or legs during nightmares.
- Getting up to check if the house is safe after a noise wakes you up



And these things increase a person’s risk for **sleep problems**:

- Personal loss (such as divorce or death of a loved one)
- Grief
- Stress (such as marriage, kids, money, work, or school)
- Health problems (illness or pain)
- Anxiety or depression
- Caffeine (coffee, tea, soda, chocolate)
- Smoking, chewing, or dipping tobacco
- Drugs or alcohol
- Poor sleep environment (too hot or too cold)
- Changes in sleep schedule (night hours, shift work, jet lag)
- Eating too much before bed
- Eating salty or spicy foods
- Loud and frequent snoring
- Sleep disorders (like restless legs syndrome or sleep apnea)
- Spouse or partner with sleep problems

#### COMMON SLEEP DISORDERS

- Insomnia
- Nightmares
- Sleep Terrors
- Sleep Apnea
- Restless Legs Syndrome
- Narcolepsy

## 1.2.2 Insomnia

Insomnia means you have trouble falling—or staying—awake. Someone with insomnia usually has one or more of the following symptoms:

- A hard time falling asleep (taking more than 15 minutes to fall asleep).
- Once asleep, difficulty staying asleep.
- Waking up several times through the night.
- Waking up early then having difficulty getting back to sleep.
- Feeling tired or not well rested.
- Difficulty focusing on tasks.
- Feeling anxious, depressed, or irritable
- Performing poorly at work due to fatigue

**Short term insomnia** may go away after a few weeks, especially if you reduce your daily stress. However, **chronic insomnia** can last months or years.

## 1.2.3 Insomnia and Shift Work

Deployed service members often work long shifts or rotate working days and nights. Unfortunately, shift work can cause insomnia. People who work shift hours often get poor sleep or have problems falling and staying asleep.

To reduce the effects of shift work:

- Follow a routine sleep schedule when you're not working.
- Limit the amount of light in your bedroom.
- Wear sunglasses when leaving work.
- Relax after work.
- Practice the healthy **Sleep Habits** suggested in this chapter.

## 1.2.4 Insomnia, Anxiety, and Depression

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. Anxiety can help you stay alert and cautious when preparing for a mission or test. Typically, anxiety goes away when your stress goes away. Anxiety that *doesn't* go away can lead to sleep problems.



Depression can also lead to sleep problems. People with depression often sleep lightly, getting more REM sleep than usual. Even changes in body temperature are different in people with depression. To cope with anxiety and depression:

- Talk to a **health care** or **behavioral health** professional
- Practice **relaxation techniques**, such as deep breathing and muscle relaxation
- Use **visualization** to relax and prepare for sleep. Visualization means imagining yourself in a favorite, peaceful place
- Practice the **thought reframing** technique discussed in this chapter.

Treating anxiety and depression often helps with sleep problems. In turn, sleeping better helps improve mood problems.

## Short term insomnia

lasts fewer than 3 nights a week, lasting less than a month.

## Chronic insomnia

lasts 3 or more nights a week, lasting more than a month.

## 1.2.5 Nightmares and Sleep Terrors

Nightmares and sleep terrors are not the same thing. Occasional nightmares and/or sleep terrors are normal. Usually, nightmares tend to be about stressful or traumatic events. Service members often find they have more nightmares after a stressful or traumatic deployment. Traumatic means a life-threatening or terrifying event that produces intense fear, helplessness, or horror. These types of reactions are often associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

### NIGHTMARES

- Usually happen during REM sleep.
- Bring up feelings of terror, distress, or
- Are so vivid and detailed that people often remember them after waking.
- Can wake the person from sleep.

### SLEEP TERRORS

- Happen in deep sleep (not REM), usually in the first half of the night.
- May last 10-20 minutes before returning to
- Usually happen during periods of high tension, stress, or conflict.
- Don't often wake the person from sleep.

During a nightmare, the traumatic event is “relived.” The same fear, rage, or helplessness that was felt during the actual event may be re-experienced.

Most people don't remember sleep terrors when they wake up. Any sleep terror memories are single images – not a story like in a nightmare. Sleep terrors can be so frightening or terrifying that you may scream, shake, sweat, feel your heart race, feel confused, or have trouble calming down. When the sleep terror ends, you calm down and return to normal sleep.

During nightmares and sleep terrors you may violently thrash your arms and legs, this might wake you. You may even act out the violent parts of a nightmare—kicking, punching, or even choking a bed partner. Some people worry that their nightmares or sleep terrors mean they're “going crazy,” but this is not true.

To cope with nightmares and sleep terrors, some people use alcohol or drugs, or even avoid sleeping.

Unfortunately, these coping methods not only worsen the problem, they often lead to new problems.

## 1.2.6 Coping with Nightmares

Nightmares and sleep terrors are symptoms of stress. If you're stressed or having nightmares/ sleep terrors, you should seek help from trusted family and friends. Talking about your situation may also decrease the occurrences of your nightmares or sleep terrors.



## 1.2.6 Coping with Nightmares (cont.)

Don't expect your nightmares to always make sense, they are usually a mixture of all kinds of images and feelings. Sometimes they can be traced to specific events and sometimes they may seem like they have no obvious relationship to anything that's happened to you.

Here are a few other ways to deal with nightmares and sleep terrors:

- If you're confused after waking from a nightmare or sleep terror, turn on a light and observe your room. Begin naming the things you see around you, "That's my desk. This is my bed. I am in my room."
- Sometimes it helps to get out of bed and go to another room to calm down.
- Try to be patient and calm. It may take a while to remember where you are.
- When a nightmare or sleep terror wakes you, tell yourself, "It was only a nightmare (or sleep terror). It wasn't real, the event is not happening again. I'm ok."
- If possible, write down what happened in your nightmares. This can make the dream less scary and help you calm down faster.
- Some people with nightmares act them out while sleeping. To keep yourself safe, you may want to rearrange your bedroom.
- If you sleep with a partner, move the pillows, sleep in a different position, or sleep elsewhere to avoid hurting your partner while acting out a dream.

If you are having nightmares, ask your health care professional to refer you to a specialist.

**Finding healthy ways to handle stress during the day may reduce your nightmares or sleep terrors.**

## 1.2.7 Other Sleep Disorders

Besides insomnia, the most common sleep disorders are:

- Sleep Apnea
- Restless Legs Syndrome
- Narcolepsy





## SLEEP APNEA

Is a condition where a person stops breathing for several seconds to minutes. The throat briefly closes, blocking air from the lungs. People

with sleep apnea may wake up often during the night to breathe. These interruptions in sleep can leave a person exhausted and irritable the next day. In severe cases, sleep apnea can be deadly.

### You may have sleep apnea, if you:

- Snore loudly
- Are overweight
- Have high blood pressure
- Have small airways in your nose, throat, or mouth
- Have a family history of sleep apnea

### If you have any of these risk factors:

- Stay away from alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, since these may keep your throat from staying open and clear.
- Lose weight. Even losing a few pounds can make a difference.
- Sleep on your side rather than on your back. This will help to keep the throat open.

## RESTLESS LEGS SYNDROME

People with Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) have crawling, tingling, or burning sensations in their legs or arms.

RLS sensations make it difficult to fall asleep or stay asleep. People with RLS may also suffer from Periodic Limb Movement disorder — which causes a jerking movement of the legs and arms. These movements happen roughly every 20-40 seconds, waking the person.

If you think you have RLS, consult with a health care provider. You can also make some lifestyle changes, such as:

- Staying away from alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, and certain medications (check with your doctor)
- Practicing good sleep habits. (Make the bedroom comfortable and go to bed and wake up at a consistent time.)
- Exercising regularly.
- Massaging your legs and/or arms before bed.
- Using heat or ice packs on your legs and arms.

## NARCOLEPSY

Narcolepsy is a medical disorder. Individuals with narcolepsy have trouble staying awake or fall asleep suddenly and without warning.

The condition can occur while driving, working, eating, and even during dangerous activities. While driving, working, eating, and even during dangerous activities. While some people have specific triggers that bring on the condition, the triggers can be difficult to identify.

### You may be at risk if you have:

- A sibling or parent with narcolepsy
- Certain thyroid disorders
- Diabetes
- An autoimmune disorder (a disease that makes the body attack itself)

### There is no cure for narcolepsy but these lifestyle changes can help you control it:

- Get a good night's rest.
- Take medications as prescribed. A doctor can prescribe medication to help with narcolepsy.
- Take naps when you feel sleepy.
- Practice good sleep habits, like the ones taught in this program.

If you or someone you know may have: **SLEEP APNEA, RLS, or NARCOLEPSY**, talk to a health care professional.

## 1.3 THOUGHTS AND SLEEP

In this section you will learn how negative thoughts about sleeping can interfere with your sleep. You will also be introduced to steps for reframing your negative thoughts about sleep.

### 1.3.1 Negative Thoughts About Sleep



**Example:** As Gavin gets ready for bed, he thinks to himself, "I didn't sleep at all last night. I don't know how I'll get through tomorrow if I don't get some sleep tonight." Gavin's negative thoughts make it harder for him to fall asleep, because he's focused on his lack of sleep.

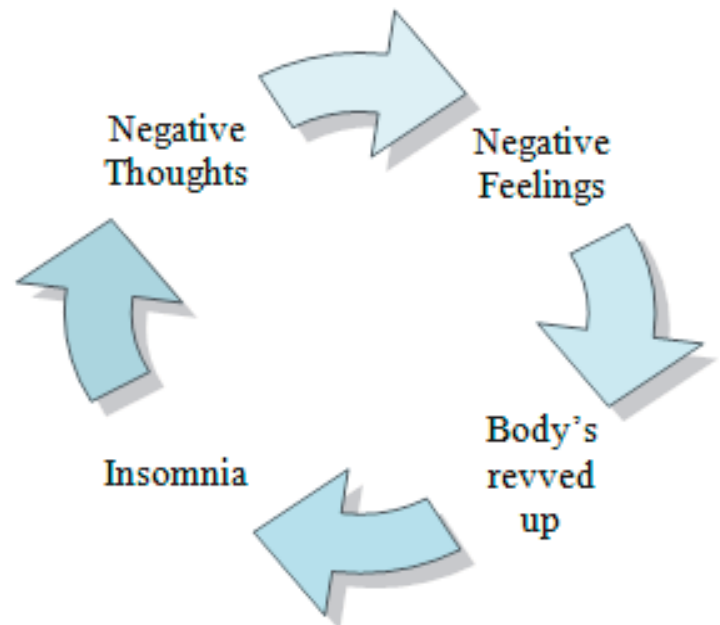
Negative thoughts at bedtime can set off a negative cycle that leads to insomnia. Your body reacts to negative thoughts and frustration. Your heart may race, your muscles may tense, and your head may start to ache. Your discomfort makes you worry, which makes you restless. Falling asleep is now even harder and may feel impossible.

**Three** things to remember about negative thoughts:

1. They're unpredictable. They sneak up on you without warning.
2. They often distort or twist facts, making things seem worse than they really are.
3. They can be *unlearned*. You can improve sleep by learning healthier ways to think.

Negative thoughts often center on *three* ideas:

- **I am the cause of \_\_\_\_\_ (bad event).**  
For example, "I caused all the bad things in my life."
- **One bad thing means everything is bad.**  
For example, "My girlfriend broke up with me, so all women hate me."
- **Things will always be bad.**  
For example, "I failed my training, so my future is hopeless."





### 1.3.2 Changing Negative Thoughts About Sleep

Thought reframing gives you greater control by identifying negative sleep thoughts and replacing them with accurate and positive sleep thoughts. There are three steps to thought reframing:

**1. Learn about sleep** for more accurate and positive thoughts about sleep.

**2. Keep a log.** List the negative thoughts you have about sleep when you lay down, when you wake up during the night, or after you get up in the morning. Review your list in the morning to see which thoughts are negative and inaccurate. For example, if you wrote, "I never get good sleep," this is probably not true.

**3. Replace negative thoughts with more accurate and positive thoughts.** List out some accurate thoughts about sleep. For example, tell yourself, "I will have a restful night of sleep" or "I'm working

#### REMEMBER:

**THERE ARE 2 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR SLEEP:**

**CHANGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS AND PRACTICE GOOD SLEEP HABITS.**

### 1.4 SLEEP HABITS

There are both harmful and healthy sleep habits. This section will review these habits and address common questions people have about sleep problems.

#### 1.4.1 Harmful Sleep Habits

When something throws you off your sleep cycle, it's natural to want to "catch up" on sleep as soon as possible. But some short-term methods of catching up on sleep cause long-term problems.

Watch out for these harmful sleep habits:

- Napping for more than thirty minutes or taking several naps during the day.
- Sleeping late into the morning.
- Going to bed early the next night.
- Staying in bed when you're not tired or can't sleep.
- Worrying about not sleeping.
- Focusing on upsetting things while lying in bed.
- Working, eating, reading, or watching TV in bed.
- Doing stressful things like working, studying, or paying bills before bed.
- Surfing the web, reading e-mail, or playing video games before bed.
- Using caffeine or nicotine to stay awake or feel more alert during the day.
- Drinking alcohol or drugs before sleeping.
- Avoiding daytime exercise because of fatigue.



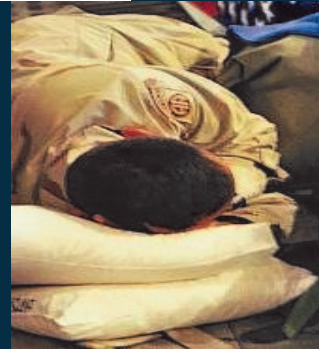
## 1.4.2 Healthy Sleep Habits

At night, you should prepare your body and mind for sleep. Doing these things at least one hour before bedtime, will help you relax and avoid harmful sleep habits.

- Listen to soft music or light reading.
- Take a warm bath or shower.
- Avoid things that are physically or mentally demanding, like working, studying, playing video games, or watching violent movies or TV shows.
- Keep your bedroom peaceful and comfortable.
- Dim the lights and keep it quiet. Darkness and quiet tell the body it's time to sleep.
- Keep a comfortable bedroom temperature—not too cold, not too hot.
- Follow the same relaxing sleep ritual every night. Your body will learn within a few weeks that your relaxation ritual means it's time for sleep.

## 1.5 COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT SLEEP PROBLEMS

The following section answers frequently asked questions related to various sleep problems. You can find some quick answers to your questions. You will also find some useful tips about what will help or hurt your chances of getting a good night's rest.



### 1.5.1 Common Questions About Sleep Problems

#### 1. If I can't fall asleep, shouldn't I just stay in bed until I do?

It's *not* good to stay in bed if you can't fall or stay asleep. Lying awake in bed teaches the body that the bed is a place to *stay awake*, rather than a place to sleep. If you can't sleep, don't stay in bed longer than 15 minutes. Go to another room and do something quiet and relaxing. Return to bed when you feel drowsy.

#### 2. Shouldn't I try to catch up when I've lost sleep?

Unfortunately it's impossible to "catch up" on lost sleep. Sleeping in late or going to bed early may cause your body to learn a new, harmful sleep pattern. Don't allow yourself to stay in bed for more than an hour longer than you would get with a normal night's sleep. If you want to overcome sleep problems, set a sleep schedule and stick to it.

#### What about nicotine?

Because nicotine is a stimulant, it can actually interfere with sleep. Don't smoke, chew or dip tobacco near bedtime.

## 1.5 Common Questions About Sleep Problems (cont.)

### 4. **Won't alcohol help me to sleep?**

It's best to *avoid* alcohol at night. While alcohol can make falling asleep easier, this effect only lasts a few hours. As the alcohol starts to wear off, it will actually be harder to stay asleep or sleep restfully.

### 5. **Is there anything I should be doing when I wake in the mornings?**

Morning is the time for both the body and the mind to wake up. In the morning, light filtering into the bedroom should be increased. Bright light tells your brain it's time to wake up!

### 6. **Should I get up at the same time every day?**

Yes. You should go to bed and get up at the same time every day. Research shows that it's best to wake up at the same time everyday, even on weekends.

Here are some daytime suggestions to make it easier to fall and stay asleep at night:

**Exercise:** Research links regular exercise to healthy sleep patterns because exercise affects your body temperature. When you exercise, your body temperature goes up, then drops a few hours later. The drop in temperature can help you fall asleep and stay asleep longer. Try to exercise three to six hours before bed to give your body time to cool down.

**Limit Naps:** Limit your naps to 30 minutes or less. If you've taken a long nap earlier in the day, you may find it harder to fall asleep at bedtime. Short naps (10 to 30 minutes) can improve your mood and alertness. Napping in the early afternoon, especially after a night of bad sleep, can be a good option. Set an alarm to keep your nap to 30 minutes or less.



Don't eat or drink caffeine in the afternoon or evening. Caffeine in coffee, tea, soda and chocolate may last for hours in your body, interfering with sleep. Avoid caffeine after lunch.