



Sleeping and getting enough quality sleep is an important part of burnout prevention, recovery and keeping emotionally well. Sleep is just as important as eating a balanced diet, being active, getting regular exercise and drinking plenty of water. However, it is easy to fall into bad habits. Here are some tips that may help you get your sleep routine back on track.



Most of us need approx. 7-8 hours sleep per night although we need less as we get older.

Aim for at least 8 hours a night and to retire to bed before 10pm to make sure you're working with the earth's natural circadian rhythms. Walking, especially in the mornings can also assist with circadian rhythms.

Deep sleep and REM sleep is vital as it's a time when our body repairs, restores, recovers and maintains itself so is extremely important for burnout prevention and recovery. There are a few stages of sleep, from waking, to light sleep to deep sleep and REM. In deep sleep we dream and our brains are very active.

Although sleeping aids or medication may help at times of crisis it is not recommended for more than 3 weeks because of risk of addiction.



- Keep Bedroom temperature between 16-18 degrees Celsius
- Refrain from caffeine 6 hours before sleep
- Ensure your bed/mattress is comfy & supports you properly
- Use natural bedding materials to help maintain temperature/s
- Use Blackout blinds to block out unwanted light in your bedroom
- Have a relaxing bedtime routine
- Try listening to sleep / relaxation recordings in bed
- Have calming, not bright, décor
- Go to bed at regular time each night & get up same time in morning (when not shift work)
- If working shifts, No matter what time to bed, try to sleep for the same amount of time
- Stay in bed and rest even if awake



When we are suffering burnout and struggling emotionally, we can often experience sleep problems. Also many emergency responders work shift work. Our body's internal clock is designed for us to be active in the day and asleep at night and the damaging effects on our health from shift work are well known. The combination of shift work and burnout is a double whammy and strategies are needed to help with relaxation and to handle changing sleep patterns or to get the most out of broken sleep.

Daytime sleep is less efficient than night-time sleep as you're constantly battling against disturbance factors – such as light, noise etc – and challenging your body's natural circadian clock.

It is important you wind down properly before sleep, no matter what time you go to bed. When working a late or night shift, you could try a short nap around two hours before work, which will boost energy levels.

No matter what time you go to bed, you should always try to sleep for the same amount of time.

Before bed, refrain from blue screen activities, playing games, working or watching engrossing television. Try yoga and meditation, alongside a warm bath or shower.

Use natural light (a sunshine alarm clock can help) and a portable light box, as well as earplugs. These tools help to regulate the body clock.

If you feel sleepy during the day, you should use naps, but for no longer than 20-40 minutes.

If driving home from work in daylight, but sleeping when you get home, wear sunglasses; this will prevent the natural light from repressing melatonin production.

There are sleep aids such as the Dodow, melatonin supplements, headspace meditation App and other sleep recordings, meditations and hypnotherapy that some people find really useful.



- Use light to keep you awake during night shifts.
- Have breakfast within ½ hour to 1 hour of getting up.
- Make sure lights are kept low, 1 hour before bed, with the curtains shut if it's daytime. This helps natural melatonin levels.
- Get up start bedtime routine again or do something unexciting, like reading, if you lie awake more than 30 mins.
- Keep notepad by bed to write things down
- Have warm bath and/or drink b4
- Use bed only for sleeping not eating or watching telly
- Use "4-7-8 technique", where you breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 7, then breathe out with a 'whoosh' for 8
- Try meditation & breath work
- Don't go to bed hungry