



NMCPHC QUICK HITS

Go to Bed, Doctor's Orders

You go to the gym to get stronger physically, visit health care providers and eat a balanced diet to strengthen your body against injuries and illnesses, and spend time relaxing or with friends to improve your mental health. However, we often forget the most important thing – getting enough sleep. In 2017, 39% of active duty Sailors and 41% of active duty Marines who responded to the Navy's health risk assessment reported not getting enough sleep suggesting that sleep is a widespread and long standing issue. With adequate, quality sleep, about seven to eight hours each day, you are able to think more clearly, solve problems, manage change and assess risk better than if you didn't sleep well. Not only that, but it only takes one day without sleep for even young, healthy service members to lose 25% of their [ability to think clearly](#).

Schedules Aren't Just for Work

Life happens and it can be hard to balance work and personal life, especially with deployments and standing watch disrupting each of these, but having a [regular sleep schedule](#) is good for all aspects of your health! To keep a consistent sleep schedule, try:

- Making changes to your sleep cycle in 15 minute increments, so your body can adjust more easily.
- Eating dinner around the same time each day to prevent going to bed too full or hungry.
- Going to sleep and waking up at the same time each day to help set your body's internal clock to a consistent schedule. This will make falling asleep and waking up quicker and easier.
- Getting up the first time your alarm goes off. This will prevent you from feeling groggy due to the poor sleep you got after hitting snooze five times (because we've all done it).
- Using sunlight to trigger your brain's natural internal clock to wake up by opening the curtains in the morning or sipping your morning coffee near a window. Just the opposite is true at night; dim the lights before bedtime and avoid electronics at least an hour before going to sleep.

What Affects Your Sleep Schedule?



[Alcohol](#) – Although alcohol may help you fall asleep faster, it prevents you from quality sleep and may leave you feeling tired and groggy when you wake. Avoid alcohol two to three hours before going to sleep.



[Electronics](#) – Cell phones, computers, video games and televisions emit blue light that affects and disturbs your sleep/wake cycle. Consider limiting screen time at least an hour before bed.



[Male/Female](#) – Naturally, a man's internal clock is longer than a woman's. In other words, the body's natural cycle makes it more likely for you to be a night owl if you're male and an early riser if you're female.



[Travel](#) – Traveling is a big part of being in the military and the change in routine can make you feel like you'll never get into a consistent sleep routine because of it. Taking steps such as eating right and exercising can help ensure you get adequate rest when traveling.

Additional Resources

- Need to put worry to bed? Click [here](#) for a better way to organize your thoughts at night.
- Check out our [sleep resources](#) for additional information to help improve your sleep.

