

SLEEP AND SHIFT WORK

Sleep is fundamental to human performance, recovery, and resilience.

In military shift work, where service members face irregular schedules, reduced sleep duration, and disrupted circadian rhythms. The ability to be able to optimize sleep becomes essential for sustaining cognitive function, physical endurance, and mission effectiveness.

Without sufficient sleep (7-9 hours), key aspects of readiness—such as decision-making, reaction time, stress tolerance, and overall health—are significantly compromised.

Any Type of Shift

- Stay hydrated and eat nutritious food.
- Use caffeine wisely, consume it before or during the first half of the shift.
- Keep to a consistent wake and bedtime schedule
- Avoid using electronic devices for one (1) hour before you go to sleep.

Days to Nights

- Few days prior, gradually delay bedtime by two (2) hours each day, when wake up two (2) hours later.
- If possible, nap before your shift (no more than 30 minutes).
- Exercise right before your night shift, to boost alertness.

Nights to Days

- After last night shift, set alarm for four (4) hours and get up. Avoid sleeping longer.

OR

- Stay up as long as you can, to at least 9 p.m. day after your last night shift (be cautious with driving).

SLEEP IS FOR THE STRONG