

Firefighter Health & Wellness Conference 2019

First Responder Sleep Recovery Cheat Sheet!

Educational Articles:

Sleep & Cancer: <https://www.leatherheadmafia.com/sleep-and-cancer/>

Sleep & Heart: (To be published in FireEngineering.com in November 2019)

Sleep & Suicide: <https://www.leatherheadmafia.com/ill-sleep-when-im-dead-3-reasons-sleep-loss-triggers-suicide-in-firefighters/>

Sleep & Low Testosterone: <https://www.leatherheadmafia.com/why-low-t-is-plaguing-the-fire-service/>

Sleep & Spouses: <https://www.leatherheadmafia.com/dear-firefighter-spouse-get-yourself-in-check/>

Sleep & Firehouses Tones: <https://www.leatherheadmafia.com/sound-off-why-firehouses-should-use-no-tones/>

General Overview on Sleep & Health: <https://www.fireengineering.com/articles/2018/11/addicted-to-awake.html>

Yoga Nidra Sleep Recovery Practices & Other Resources

Sleep Recovery Practice: Yoga Nidra for Relaxation & Falling Asleep by Jacqueline Toomey

- <https://soundcloud.com/user-571148708/relaxant-30> (note: a correction needs to be made to the audio instructions. I say “palms of the hands face downward.” The instructions should be “palms of the hands face upwards.” Please excuse this mistake, always keep palms of the hands upwards or slightly inwards toward the body for optimal anatomical alignment in the resting supine position.)
- <https://soundcloud.com/user-571148708/deep-relaxation> (note: this practice includes binaural background beats, 528Hz for deep relaxation)

Full Yoga Practice: Slow Stretches to Prepare for Sleep

- <https://youtu.be/UokIiPZUhPM>

2 Minute Yoga Breathing to Balance the Brain and Calm Nervous System:

- <https://youtu.be/pYc0ZIXTQq8> (note: While I instruct only a few breaths as a demonstration, you should try this technique for 10-15 rounds of breath for best effect.)

Sleep Hygiene Product Coupon Codes:



Promo Code: FRSR
15% off your entire order

<http://www.paragonfn.com>



Promo Code: FRSRP15
15% off your entire order

<http://www.harthyourhome.com>



Promo Code: Sleeprecovery20
20% off your entire order

<http://www.pureessencelabs.com>



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<http://ouraring.com/partners/firstrespondersleeprecovery>



FIREHOUSE SLEEP TIPS

1. Sleep Recovery Practice

Stretch your hips and legs for a few minutes before lying down. Dim lights, set alarm for next day, and listen to the SRP. <https://soundcloud.com/user-571148708/relaxant-30>

The more you practice, the easier your brain will enter restorative sleep. Before beginning, be prepared to transition into sleep. This practice effortlessly allows the mind to enter the most restorative, healing brainwaves for recovery and can be used during an afternoon nap or right before you sleep at night.

2. Sleep Designation

Dedicate your sleep space for SRPs + sleep only. This association will train the brain to prepare for deep rest. Be strict with yourself and only watch tv / read/ check social media and do other activities in other spaces like the dayroom or living area. Consider your sleep space sacred and keep it clean and with minimal decorations that feel mellow and invite a sense of calm and warmth to you.

3. Make Wake and Sleep Times Consistent

Even though your schedule may differ from week to week, make an effort to have consistent wake and sleep times. This will strengthen your circadian rhythm and help regulate your hormones, promoting a strong sense of energy in the day and restful sleep at night.

4. Magnesium

The mineral magnesium is highly effective for sleep support. This anti-stress mineral releases tension and supports overall biological sleep processes. Be sure if you ingest it, it is a high quality supplement. We recommend Ionic Magnesium by Pure Essence Labs www.pureessencelabs.com , you can enter SleepRecovery20 for a 20% discount at checkout. Rub magnesium ointments on shoulders, chest or sore muscles. Or soak in a magnesium flake salt bath before sleep as transdermal absorption is equally effective.

5. Get a Caffeine Curfew

Limit caffeine to mornings. Try to stop drinking no later than 6 hours before sleep. Caffeine has been shown to negatively impact sleep. Drink tart cherry juice at night and walnuts for more melatonin.

6. Increase Melatonin Production: Limit Blue Light Exposure at Night

Specific cells in your eyes that are susceptible to blue light also regulate your sense of day, night, and the seasons. Blue light travels via the retinal ganglionic neurons to the hypothalamus (SCN) which shuts down the production of melatonin, a sleep hormone.

Limiting your blue light exposure will keep your circadian related hormones regulated. This prevents being “wired” and “tired” at the wrong hours.

- Sleep Safe Lightbulbs: Order shift work lightbulb and nite nite lights at www.HarthYourHome.com use code: FRSRP15 .
- Best Blueblocking Sleep App for your Phone (highly recommend!)

Night mode on IOS, and twilight for Android, are decent at lowering blue light but the best software to remove blue spectrum screen light is Iris. You can download the app here for a one-time fee: <https://iristech.co/sleeprecovery>

7. When You Can't Sleep ...

If you are wakeful through night (not by choice) go into other space and:

- Practice slow breathing exercises, example: inhale count 1, 2, 3, 4 hold breath for 2 counts, exhale 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Do for 5 minutes and keep focused on the exhale lengthening. Here's an example: <https://youtu.be/pYc0ZIxTQq8>
- Try a relaxing form of yoga known as yin yoga. Yin yoga allows fascial release, which is deeply relaxing to the nervous system and encourages the body to prepare for sleep. Here's a practice to try: <https://youtu.be/UokliPZUhPM>
- If you ruminate on thoughts of the day's events or tomorrows to do's keep a note pad nearby and jot down all “to do's” that enter the mind scribble it on pad. This practice effectively clears the mind. Your subconscious can relax not having to remember your tasks as you have stored them safely somewhere else.
- Being awake when you know you should be asleep can be a mental frustration. Even though it may seem to be a challenge at first doing a gratitude exercise can shift the body and mind into the right state for sleep. Write down three things you are grateful for in your relationships, 3 things you are grateful for in your career, 3 things you are grateful for in your health, 3 things you are grateful for in life. World reknown endocrinologist, and neurologist Dr. Deepak Chopra studied gratitude journals on heart patients and found significant improvement in bio markers of stress in the heart. If journaling isn't your thing, you can simply do the practice by placing a hand on your heart, breathing, and creating a feeling of gratitude for your loved ones, friends, and anything you can feel grateful for. Stay with this feeling as long as you can create it and take long, slow, steady breaths.

8. Teas for Better Sleep

Certain teas may be helpful in promoting relaxation. Kava tea may be effective as an anti-anxiety and has a calming effect on the body and mind (it is an analgesic so don't be surprised if your tongue and mouth feels slightly numb). Night time teas that have Valerian Root, Passionflower and Chamomile are also supportive.

9. Blue Blocker Glasses

If you need to do work at night on screens or can't avoid fluorescents, these glasses are widely available online and efficiently remove blue light while allowing you to see. They also function as safety eyewear on calls.

10. Health Promoting Nutrition

Many doctors recommend an anti-inflammatory diet such as foods found in the Mediterranean diet, and that include high Omega-3 fatty acids. Make more meals with fish, root vegetables, and salads. Digestion suffers from sleepless nights. Solve the constipation and get regular by taking probiotics, and digestive enzymes. Although there is very little research on adaptogenic herbs in the West, many cultures around the world have relied on adaptogenic herbs for centuries to help achieve health and wellness. We have experienced positive results with Ashwaganda, Astragalus, Bacopa and Reishi herbs. You can find great multivitamins, probiotics, Men and Women's health supplements and adaptogenic herbal supplements such as Adrenal Stability, Calm Essence and Brain Essence (these are our top ranking favorites and are blends of the aforementioned adaptogens) at www.PureEssenceLabs.com. Enter SleepRecovery20 at checkout for a 20% discount. Paragon Recovery has a great adaptogenic post work out supplement called Flame Off that we also really like. You can order it at www.paragonfn.com and use the discount code FRSR for 15% off at checkout.

11. Exercise in Morning, Restore in Evening

Exercising outdoors in the morning with exposure to natural light strengthens your ultradian and circadian rhythms. Have a daily restoration practice in the evening, whether it is yoga, yoga nidra (or other forms of meditation, prayer or your own unique form of relaxation), or doing chill out activities like reading, board games, and nighttime walks is helpful to do on a regular basis. The more you practice relaxation, the better your body and mind will become at regulating stress hormones, allowing your body to be in homeostasis, and good health.

12. Laugh More + Enjoy Yourself at Work and at Home

Humor has a positive effect on your parasympathetic nervous system, a fundamental key for good sleep, sense of wellness and overall health

A Letter from Jacqueline and Sean

Dear Awesome Firefighter:

Thank you for taking control of your sleep health and wellness! By doing this you enable yourself to perform at your best on the job, and enjoy your personal life when off shift. Achieving better sleep is a means to improve your heart health, strengthen your immune function, boost your metabolism, elevate your mood, and strengthen your memory and cognitive function. We hope to inspire you to take one step at a time to master your sleep hygiene. Our goal is to promote healthy lifestyles for first responders so you can have a career with longevity and truly enjoy retirement in the years beyond!

Contact us with any questions or comments about your sleep health. We are always an available resource and will speak with you in full confidentiality.

Best Wishes,

Jacqueline & Sean Toomey



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