

Sleep on It! To Improve Your Self-Care



Sleep & the CAF

- Physical and mental military life demands can impact sleep patterns and the ability of members to get quality and restful sleep.
- Sleep problems among CAF members can affect operational performance, mental health, physical health, interpersonal relationships and can increase the risk of accidents and injuries.



Importance of Sleep

- Getting 7-9 hours of sleep may decrease stress levels and enhance the ability to cope with daily stressors.
- Sleep serves as a break from stress, providing both mental and physical refreshments.
- Sleep is also important for high performance.



Factors Affecting Sleep

- **Age:** Aging can lead to decreased deep sleep (slow-wave sleep) and an increased likelihood of waking during the night.
- **Health Conditions:** Mental and physical health issues may contribute to sleep disturbances.
- **Stress:** High stress levels can cause difficulty falling asleep and waking up during the night.
- **Irregular Sleep Schedules:** Inconsistent bedtime routines or shift work can disrupt the body's sleep-wake cycle.
- **Sex Differences:** While men sleep less than women, women often report poorer sleep quality due to hormonal changes.



Better Sleep

- **Regular Sleep Routine:** Establish a regular go-to-bed and wake-up sleep schedule. Engage in relaxing activities before going to bed.
- **Strategic Napping:** Strategic napping can help recharge your energy levels without disrupting the regular sleep cycle.
- **Sleep Environment:** A comfortable and peaceful sleep environment promotes sleep initiation and maintenance. Create comfort by adjusting room temperature, lighting, and noise levels.
- Limit caffeine, alcohol, and drug intake. Be aware of your food and beverage choices, especially around bedtime.
- Only use the bed for sleeping and sexual activity (i.e. don't hang out in bed).



Tips to Improve Sleep Among CAF Members

- **Sleep Literacy:** Engage in health promotion programs and remain aware of CAF Policy Direction related to sleep and fatigue, which can assist with sleep hygiene practices and strategies.
- **Tactical Napping:** Take brief rest periods in safe and comfortable environments.
- **Mental Health Services:** Utilizing mental health services and resources can provide treatment for sleep disturbances.
- **Engaging in Stress Management:** Employing mindfulness and relaxation exercises can enhance sleep quality.
- **Fostering Social Support Networks:** Social support can reduce feelings of isolation and stress, leading to improved sleep quality.
- **Seek Professional Support:** Seeking professional support is important in addressing specific sleep challenges.