



Denver Department of Safety First Responder Sleep Recovery Training December, 2022



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

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TOP 15 PROGRAM RECOMMENDED SLEEP TIPS:

1. Sleep Recovery Practice

The Sleep Recovery Practice (SRP) is designed to induce the body and mind into a restful state. It is comprised of three steps which can be practiced sequentially as a whole practice or used as stand-alone practices throughout the day.



Step 1. Somatic Experience

Somatic means “relating to the body” and the body is the gateway to working with the nervous system. For example, the mind cannot relax if the body is in a state of muscular tension. Any activity that relates to the body that induces parasympathetic activity is ideal. Here are some examples:

- Deep tissue massage
- Foam rolling
- Deep long stretches (see page 13 for our preferred stretch sequence) that release the fascia (yin yoga or restorative yoga are excellent. We also love the YoQi channel on YouTube; here is a full length yin practice on that channel. It is important to adapt the postures to work for your body’s needs. Making adjustments to do the pose is encouraged. Gather lots of supportive props so you aren’t straining and so you can sustain the duration of each pose, the more support you have the more you’re able to relax into the practice, and the more the fascia (connective tissue) will release to support deep and total relaxation: <https://youtu.be/k400GCKsx2I>

Step 2. Breath Expansion

The breath is a direct tool to engage parasympathetic activity (the rest and digest branch of the autonomic nervous system) Here is a mini meditation with the humming breath technique, which is highly effective for clearing the mind for rest:

<https://insighttimer.com/jacqueline/guided-meditations/nervous-system-reset>

Step 3. Yoga Nidra for First Responders AKA “Non-Sleep Deep Rest” (NSDR)

Stanford neuroscientist Dr. Andrew Huberman coined the term Non-Sleep Deep Rest as a modern description of a practice known as Yoga Nidra. Yoga Nidra

means “yoga sleep” or “sleep of the yogi” . It is an ancient guided meditation that incorporates mind, body and breath awareness techniques. It is typically a 30-45 minute long practice. Research shows that yoga nidra lowers cortisol levels, increases endogenous dopamine production (by up to 65%), increases neuroplasticity and supports mental health and a sense of well-being. It has been applied in the US Military, in hospitals, for at risk youth, in addiction recovery and for people experiencing homelessness. The founder of First Responder Sleep Recovery, Jacqueline Toomey has been studying Yoga Nidra since 2005 and has combined different trauma informed healing techniques to tailor the practices for first responders to be trauma-informed and effective; this approach is uniquely different and applicable for first responders who experience fight or flight and trauma as a part of their career. Try this first responder fan favorite for sleep, but can be used in lieu of a nap or any time of day.

<https://insighttimer.com/jacqueline/guided-meditations/sleep-recovery-practice-relax>

Try this yoga nidra that for mind / body healing:

<https://insighttimer.com/jacqueline/guided-meditations/healing-trauma-workshop-yoga-nidra-for-ptsd>

It is recommended to listen to guided recordings of Yoga Nidra rather than trying to guide yourself. It is easier and more effective to experience the restoration induced by the practice. The more you practice, the easier your brain will enter restorative sleep and receive the healing benefits of the practice. 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 and after running calls.

2. Designate a Sleep Sanctuary

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 a sanctuary : keep it clean with minimal decorations that feel mellow and invite a sense of calm and ease. Like Pavlov’s law, your subconscious mind will associate your sleep sanctuary a place to unwind!

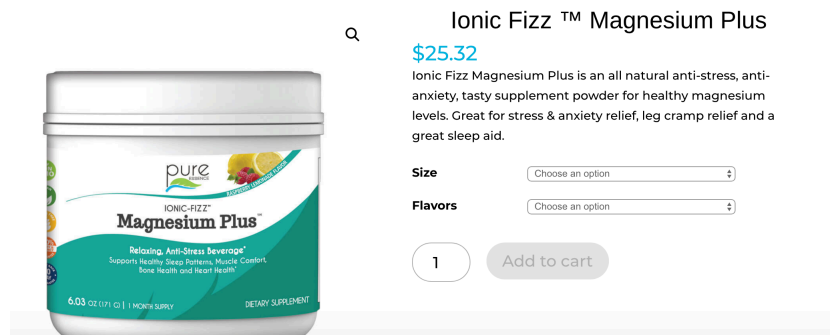
3. Make Wake and Sleep Times Consistent

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 **SleepRecovery25** *(this recently changed from 20 -> 25 for a better discount; please note we do not profit from this offer it's an exclusive first responder discount!). 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. Ensure a Caffeine Curfew

Limit caffeine to mornings. Caffeine has been shown to negatively impact sleep. Adaptogen-enhanced coffee from www.foursigmatic.com may be a better alternative thanks to their health promoting ingredients that include Reishi, Chaga, and Cordyceps: all shown to have a variety of health benefits. The coffee with Lion's Mane (a mushroom) gives your brain an extra focus boost, don't worry – no mushroom flavor! Get a



discount at check out by using the promo code **SLEEPRECOVERY**. Might we say the **Coffee with Lion's Mane & Chaga** is our favorite high quality brew! Did you know Chaga has betulin and betulinic acid? Researchers found these compounds have anti-cancerous properties. Read the study here: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6142110/>

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 in the evening 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 night lights at www.HarthYourHome.com use code: **FRSRP15** .
- Best Blueblocking App for your computer and devices with screens (highly recommend!) The best software to remove blue spectrum screen light is Iris. The download works better on certain devices, as Apple has strict limitations of software allowed on their app store. You can download the app here for a one-time fee: <https://iristech.co/sleeprecovery> .

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



I have tried just about every piece of blue light blocking and eye health software that exists and nothing even comes close to Iris.

BEN GREENFIELD

Founder BenGreenfieldFitness.Com. New York Times Bestselling Author. One Of The Top 100 Most Influential People In Health And Fitness



retailers online.

7. Meditation Playlist for When You Can't Sleep ...

If you are wakeful through night (not by choice) here are "Jacqueline's Sleep Picks" a variety of practices you can engage with, from a slow stretch Yin Yoga practice to Yoga Nidra meditations for better sleep:

<https://insighttimer.com/meditation-playlists/DKlv2jVEXSMw116Ta5QQ>

8. Brain Dump Exercise ... 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.

9. Gratitude Practice ... 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 prominent doctor 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.

10. Teas for Better Sleep

Certain teas may be helpful in promoting relaxation. Night time teas that have Valerian Root, Passionflower, and Chamomile are supportive but Kava tea may be the winner! This is a South Pacific ceremonial cold tea. It is 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 feel slightly numb). Note: Kava tea should only be cold brewed and most effective when bought by a Kava bar. Tea bags from store brands don't have the same effect.

11. Health Promoting Nutrition & Supplements



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.

Significant research shows eating within a 10-hour window improves cardiac health, immunity, digestion and sleep. Stop eating 3 - 4 hours before sleep. If you must have a night time snack choose lean proteins and healthy fats. Try game jerky (elk, bison, deer), peanut butter on celery, guacamole or a small piece of turkey.

Digestion and the gut microbiome (which is responsible for producing a majority of our serotonin, the “good feeling” neurotransmitter) suffers from sleepless nights. Solve the



constipation and get regular by taking probiotics, and digestive enzymes. There is growing 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 / medicinal mushrooms. You can find these immune & mood boosting ingredients in a fan favorite brand: www.foursigmatic.com & you get a special discount when you type **sleeprecovery** at checkout. It's the best coffee we've ever had and we love it for the low acid profile and the focus boosting ingredients, it's a no-nonsense way to wake up! We also like the peanut butter protein powder.

12. 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, promoting overall good health.

13. Measure Your Sleep and Health

We have found that the wearables like the Fitbit, Apple Watch or Oura Ring, are great ways to use tech to support a healthy lifestyle. Wearables measure your HRV, daily rest and recovery, how much time you have slept in REM and Delta sleep, and will tell you when you should stretch your legs, the best days for hard workouts, and support your health goals. They may be helpful, but if it feels distracting or overwhelming, ditch the device! The ultimate true measure of health is your own internal gauge of how you feel: knowing yourself, understanding your body and studying what makes you feel your best from within is the true measure of well-being!



14. 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, relationships, sense of wellness and overall health. We could all use some comedic relief so laugh and feel good about life!

15. Reconnect with your purpose

Reconnect with your purpose in life and if you have a faith practice or passion in life, lean into it. Remembering that you have a purpose, you make a difference and that you are a special gift to the world is a practice that helps us stay centered and at ease.

Educational Articles on Sleep:

The following article links can be accessed for reading at:

www.firstrespondersleeprecovery.com/media

Article Previews:

*Please contact us for the law enforcement articles and we'll send a pdf.

“Sleepless Heart of the Fire Service” Fire Engineering:

The heart of the fire service is what makes its members so great. In a sad bit of irony, cardiovascular events continue to threaten the livelihood of our nation’s heroes. But why?

*Thankfully it’s being talked about more and more. From stunning Ted talks by Dr. Matthew Walker to books such as *Sleep Revolution*, we as a culture are waking up to the need for more sleep. The cost of sleep deprivation is a direct hit on our cardiovascular health. Of a total of 627 firefighter line-of-duty deaths (LODDs) reviewed in a 2018 study, 276 were cardiac related, or 44 percent. Only 16 percent of these cardiac cases displayed postmortem evidence of intracoronary thrombus, meaning most of these cardiac fatalities were not the direct result of myocardial infarction (MI).*

Sudden cardiac death has maintained its position as the leading cause of LODDs despite national attempts to correct a longstanding pattern of diminished heart health in the fire service. Fire departments across the country have made efforts to improve nutrition, decrease smoking as a culture, and refocus physical training with an emphasis on cardiology. What are we still missing?

(...click link below to read more)

<https://www.fireengineering.com/2019/11/20/481214/the-sleepless-heart-of-the-fire-service/#gref>

“Addicted to Awake” Fire Engineering:

There seems to be a grave, silent admittance to the onset of these terminal health conditions, treated as some sort of side note after a long career as a pumperman, a truckie, or a technician. However, it does not have to be. There are effective, proven, and easy practices we can incorporate to dramatically change the trajectory of our careers and save lives. Who doesn’t want to sleep better, feel better, and have more energy?

Following are three ways to better our sleep habits. Make no mistake, sleep is not to be equated with poor work ethic. If you are in that mindset, you are part of the greater cultural problem: we are addicted to awake. Rest does not challenge work ethic, it optimizes it. [...]

(...click link below to read more)

<https://www.fireengineering.com/health-safety/addicted-to-awake/#gref>

SOMATIC STRETCHES (CONTINUED) TO RELEASE NERVOUS & MUSCULAR TENSION:



Fight or flight, aka the body's stress response causes certain muscles to contract. One of these muscles is the psoas (hip flexors). It originates at the low thoracic spine, and wraps around the front of the body somewhat as a pelvic girdle. With stress the psoas is constricts, and pulls with tension on the mid to low back causing pinching, shooting or dull aches and pain.

To relieve back pain, and calm the nervous system, try doing these hamstring and hip flexor stretches for 45 seconds, and build up to 2-3 minutes each for maximum benefit. Focus on breathing: imagine the breath travels into the areas of tension and focus on releasing the tension on the exhale. These are excellent stretches as a part of your Sleep Recovery Practice.



Low Lunge with Blocks

Keep front leg at a right angle, drop back knee to ground. You can place a blanket under the knee if you have any discomfort. Stretch both sides for same length of time.



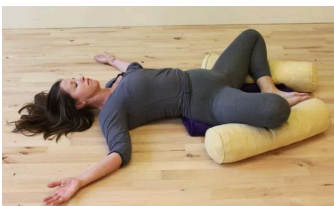
Wide Leg Forward Fold

Hinge at hips, lengthen spine long, let head hang heavy. Slight bend in the knees, weight in the balls of the toes. Engage the quads to experience greater hamstring release. Breathe deep and slow.



Supine Twist

Hug right knee to chest, and hold for a few moments. On an exhale, guide knee across chest. Twist deeper on each exhale. Try to keep both shoulders evenly on floor. Do right leg first, and then repeat on left leg.



Reclining Bound Angle

Place pillows or roll towels under thigh and wedge so there is no tension to the hip flexors. Focus on the belly as you breathe and relax. Place a hand on the navel to help direct breath there.



Corpse Pose

Roll a towel under neck to support the natural curve in the cervical spine. Place pillows under knees for low back relief. Breathe and focus on the exhale. Relax and conclude your practice in this position and listen to a Sleep Recovery Practice.

[Grocery List for Stress & Sleep Supportive Foods:](#)

FOODS THAT SUPPORT YOUR SLEEP HORMONE

These foods help your body naturally produce melatonin, the primary sleep hormone.

- o TART CHERRY JUICE OR MORELLO CHERRIES
- o WALNUTS
- o GINGER ROOT
- o ASPARAGUS
- o RICE
- o PINEAPPLE
- o TOMATO
- o BANANA

FOODS TO EAT WHEN YOU ARE STRESSED (MAGNESIUM RICH)

Replenish magnesium, the mineral responsible for over 300 actions in your body.

- o DARK LEAFY GREENS
- o NUTS & SEEDS
- o BEANS
- o WHOLE GRAINS
- o MACKEREL, SALMON, HALIBUT, TUNA
- o GREEK YOGURT
- o AVOCADOS

FOODS THAT BOOST YOUR MOOD (SEROTONIN SUPPORT)

To increase your serotonin levels, eat foods high in tryptophan.

- o GAME MEAT LIKE ELK, TURKEY
- o GREEK YOGURT, EGGS
- o TUNA, HALIBUT, SHRIMP, CRAB
- o AVOCADOS, KIWI
- o CHICKPEAS, ALMONDS, SUNFLOWER SEEDS, BUCKWHEAT, SPIRULINA & PEANUTS AND OAT

A LETTER FROM JACQUELINE & SEAN:

Dear Awesome Leaders and First Responders:

Greetings! It was a pleasure to meet you. Congratulations on taking steps towards optimal sleep health and wellness! In this ever-changing world, we hope this class has equipped you and inspired you to harness the power of sleep. By doing this you enable yourself to perform at your best on the job, and be present in your personal. 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. Sleep quality also influences your relationships and how you interact with the world. 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 all can have a career with longevity and truly enjoy retirement in the years beyond!

We invite you to consider this training for your members, it would be the highest honor to partner together to support their health and well-being. On a personal level, please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments about your own sleep health. The easiest way to reach us is DM us on Instagram or FB! You can like our pages here, FB: www.facebook.com/firstrespondersleeprecovery and on Instagram: www.instagram.com/firstrespondersleeprecovery . We look to this new year of 2023 to be a great year, and we wish the same for you!

Warmly,

Jacqueline Toomey



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www.facebook.com/firstrespondersleeprecovery
www.instagram.com/firstrespondersleeprecovery



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15% off your entire order

<http://www.harthyourhome.com>



Promo Code:
Sleeprecovery25 for
25% off your entire order

<http://www.pureessencelabs.com>



Promo Code: **SleepRecovery**
for 10% off your entire order

<https://us.foursigmatic.co>