As a nurse working during the COVID-19 pandemic, you are:

❤ working hard to give patients the best care available
❤ adjusting to the extraordinary changes brought on by the pandemic
❤ worried about your health and that of family and friends
❤ managing with limited or inadequate resources
❤ determined to give everything you can to combat COVID-19

This guide provides recommendations for sleep and fatigue management during high-intensity periods of work as a result of COVID-19.

PRIORITIZE SLEEP

ASK YOURSELF:
“How can I commit to getting more sleep? Am I prioritizing sleep?”

to stay well and provide the best possible care to your patients.

❍ Maintain a regular sleep schedule to the extent possible on duty and off-duty days.
❍ Aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period whenever you can.
❍ Create a comfortable, cool and dark sleeping environment.

WIND DOWN

ASK YOURSELF:
“How can I prepare myself to sleep?”

before you head to bed.

❍ Turn off technology and avoid absent-minded scrolling by not charging devices in the bedroom.
❍ Unwind by reading, doing gentle stretches, meditating, or practicing progressive relaxation. Try the Headspace® App.

MANAGE YOUR WORRIES

ASK YOURSELF:
“How can I address my worries and reframe unhelpful thoughts?”

to improve your sleep.

Concern or anxiety about the coronavirus outbreak is perfectly normal.

❍ Talk with someone you trust about your worries. Try Nurses Together or the Happy App.
❍ Control the amount of news and social media you watch.
❍ Make a to-do list or journal about your concerns to put your mind at rest. Try Narrative Expressive Writing.
KEEP TRACK of your sleep to help you monitor your energy.
- Use a wearable fitness tracker to monitor sleep and wake activity.
- Use a phone app to track your sleep.
- Keep a sleep diary.

ASK YOURSELF: “How much sleep have I been getting?”

MANAGE LIGHT to help you get better sleep and be more alert when you are awake.
- Block light with eye masks and dark window shades to promote sleep.
- Use light to prompt wakefulness: Open a window, turn on the lights, or use a light box.
- Set your phone’s blue-light settings to match your work/sleep schedule.

ASK YOURSELF: “Am I using light to manage my sleep and optimize my alertness?”

GIVE YOUR MIND A BREAK during waking hours to restore your energy.
- Build in mental breaks: walk outside, look at nature, or engage in a fun activity.
- Find brief moments during the day to practice mindfulness and deep breathing.
- Eat healthy foods and don’t skip meals if you can avoid it.

ASK YOURSELF: “Am I finding time to take care of myself and give myself a break?”

MONITOR CAFFEINE Know when and how much caffeine to use to help you maintain your energy.
- Limit caffeine intake to 400mg per day—about two medium (16oz) cups of coffee.
- Try to avoid caffeine 6 hours prior to sleeping.
- To reduce your caffeine use, decrease gradually. For coffee drinkers, mix caffeine & decaf.
- Remember: Caffeine use is not a substitute for sleep.

ASK YOURSELF: “How much caffeine am I using? Am I using it wisely?”

TAKE NAPS when you can, if you can’t get a full night’s sleep.
- Take a 20-minute power nap to restore your energy.
- Take a longer nap to catch up on sleep.

ASK YOURSELF: “When and where can I catch a quick nap?”

INVEST IN SLEEP You can incur a sleep debt for a little while, but your body will need to catch up.
- Sleep longer than you normally would on days off to try to catch up as much as possible.
- Bank sleep ahead of time to prepare yourself for long periods without sleep.

ASK YOURSELF: “Am I in sleep debt? Am I investing in sleep?”

Resources shared from Research Transition Office, Center for Enabling Capabilities and Behavioral Biology Branch, Center for Military Psychiatry and Neuroscience, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research