



Tips from Training

The Importance of Sleep



Firefighters perform optimally on the fire ground when they have proper sleep.



[See WNYF article:
The Importance of Sleep](#)

Have you ever thought about the importance of a good night's sleep, or how a good night's sleep can give you an advantage on the fireground? If you're like most firefighters, the answer is probably no. There are already many challenges firefighters must overcome to be mentally and physically ready to perform at a high level at a moment's notice; sleep should not be one of them. With a greater awareness of the importance of sleep—as well as the negative consequences of a lack of sleep—firefighters can be better prepared for their next emergency response.

- A lack of sleep negatively affects nearly every function of the body, including heart health, brain health, mental health and overall mental well-being. A lack of sleep can result in a diminished immune system, leading to a shorter life and an increased risk of cancer.
- Sleep is a modifiable risk factor, “modifiable” meaning that measures can be taken to alter and improve patterns or habits detrimental to one’s health.
- Research has shown that regularly sleeping less than six hours a night can double your risk of cancer.
- Adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night.
- Shift work puts enormous stress on the body and has been recognized as a probable carcinogen.
- Twenty-four hours of no sleep is the equivalent of a .10 blood alcohol content.
- Regular exercise can increase the quality of sleep; however, try to avoid exercising within a few hours of going to sleep.
- Caffeine has a half-life of five to seven hours, meaning that is how much time it takes the liver to flush out 50 percent of the caffeine intake. This means a cup of coffee consumed at 7 p.m. will still have half the effect at midnight and would be in your system, affecting your ability to sleep or rest, until 5 a.m.
- Firefighters who get a full night’s sleep before reporting to work are less likely to feel the negative effects of a busy night tour and will be better prepared to recover from a sleep deficit and maintain long-term health.

Submit a potential Training Tip via email to: TrainingTips@fdny.nyc.gov