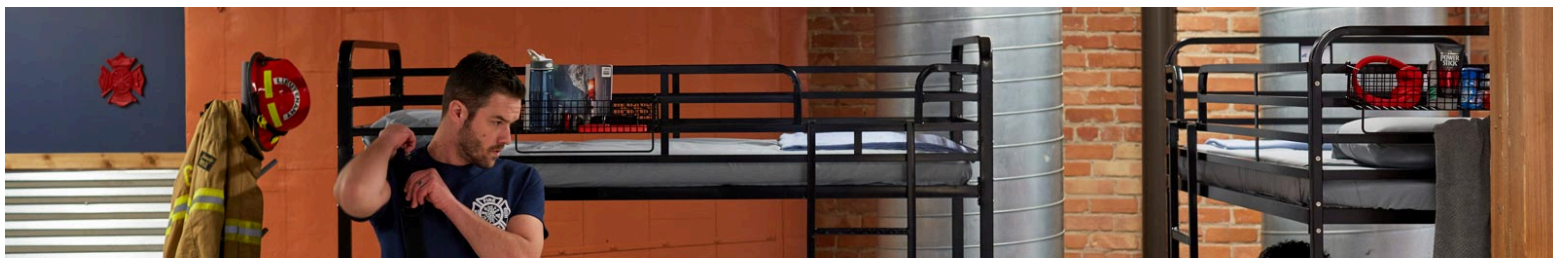


## INVESTING IN REST



### Why Mattress Type Matters

**At the station, quality sleep is often cut short by calls or noise, which makes the time you do get in bed even more critical.**

A proper mattress can directly influence spinal alignment, muscle recovery, and how rested and pain-free you feel during and after a shift. But what kind of mattress is best? The goal of this month's newsletter is to share how mattress type matters to allow proper rest and reduction of low back pain, share how to hack your mattress setup, and provide you with the information you need to better your sleep environment at the station.

### Prioritizing Physical Recovery

There's a lot of different variations in mattress type out there, so it can be hard to know which works best for you. **To reduce low back pain, muscle soreness, and promote recovery, mattresses should offer:**

- **Spinal Support with Pressure Relief**
  - Mattresses should keep your spine in neutral alignment. This means your shoulders, hips, and knees stay level without excessive sinking or sagging. Pressure points in the shoulders and hips should feel cushioned, not compressed.
- **Medium-Firm**
  - Research, including guidance from orthopedic and sleep experts, shows that medium-firm mattresses are best for back pain relief. They provide enough firmness to support the spine but enough softness to relieve pressure.
    - Examples of mattress types that are best and medium firm are memory foam, hybrid, and latex foam mattresses.
- **Durability**
  - Mattresses used by multiple crews need to hold their shape, resist sagging, and maintain consistent support shift after shift. Opting for a memory foam or hybrid mattress can help with mattress longevity and allow them to bounce back quickly and resist body impressions.

### Mattress Hacks

When replacing the type of mattress at the station isn't possible, there are some ways that you can adapt your station bunk to drastically improve comfort. Investing in your sleep environment at the station can help to keep you pain-free and promote better rest and recovery.

- **Mattress Toppers**
  - **Memory Foam**
    - Best for: pressure relief and back support.
    - Helps with tossing and turning.
  - **Gel-Infused Memory Foam**
    - Best for: hot sleepers or stations without good climate control.
    - Combines memory foam for support and cooling gel to prevent heat buildup.
  - **Latex**
    - Best for: breathability and allergy resistance.
    - Firmer than memory foam, stays cooler, and is hypoallergenic.

**Interested in trying to find a mattress topper? When searching online or on Amazon, use the tips below to choose the best topper for you!**

- **Thickness: 2-3 inches is ideal for comfort and portability.**
- **Cooling features (gel infused).**
- **Check to see if the topper is CertiPUR-US certified foam to avoid chemical off-gassing.**
- **Make sure to buy a mattress cover to protect the foam from the station mattress and keep it clean!**



### Dr. Kelsey Loftus

**Certified Athletic Trainer  
MCFR Health & Injury Prevention**

**Did you know that you have someone working within MCFRS to provide you with quality injury care, injury prevention, and functional assessments to lengthen your time on the floor and keep you out of FROMS?**

### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Starting this year, all station visit requests will be submitted through the link attached to the QR code below. Any station in any battalion can sign up for a station visit with the choice of activities, now including:

- In-station injury clinic
- Sleep health and hacking round table discussion
- Trigger point release work
- Group instruction on prevention of common injuries (low back pain, shoulder immobility, or any area of your choosing!)
- And more!

Have an individual question about an ache or pain? Make an appointment through the link at the bottom of this page!\*

**\*ALL APPOINTMENTS ARE SAFE AND CONFIDENTIAL AND CANNOT EFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO STAY ON THE FLOOR WORKING!**



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Concentra

**CLICK HERE TO MAKE AN INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENT!**

# Station Sleep Lineup Drill

**Long shifts and middle-of-the-night calls require proper rest and recovery.** What steps can you take to turn your bunk into a true recovery zone?

## STATION SLEEP HACKS

### UPGRADE YOUR SLEEP SURFACE

Invest in a memory foam or gel-infused mattress topper (aim for 2-3 inches thick). Reach for firm, supportive pillows such as memory foam or adjustable pillows.

### BLOCK OUT DISRUPTIONS

Wear an eye mask and ear plugs to block excess light and noises. You can try sleeping with 1 headphone in playing colored noise such as white or brown noise. Make sure the bunkroom has blackout curtains and other blinking lights covered so the room is totally dark. Curious about colored noise? Check out the handout linked through the QR code to try out different types of colored noise. Simply click or scan.



### KEEP IT COLD

Aim to keep the bunkroom between 62-67 degrees F. Use a fan or cooling blankets and avoid heavy bedding if the bunkroom isn't able to get as cold. Go for moisture-wicking sheets that are cool and breathable.

### SWITCH TO RED LIGHT

Did you know you can change the screen on your phone to be red? Red light does not disrupt sleep and does not block the production of melatonin (the sleepy hormone). If you find yourself scrolling social media, watching videos, or texting in bed- simply switch your screen to red to reduce eye strain and help make falling asleep a little easier! Check out the video linked through the QR code for steps on how to set up having your phone screen turn red whenever you need it. Simply click or scan.



### SHUT OFF THE "FIGHT OR FLIGHT"

Stress can be a factor on top of disrupted sleep that can put you into a vicious cycle of poor sleep habits. Treating your stress can help to reduce stress and make falling asleep and staying asleep easier. You have an "off switch" you can access anytime in your brain through breathing exercises or Vagus nerve stimulation. Click on or scan the QR codes below for various Vagus nerve stimulation exercises to try. If you yawn or sign during one or all of them: congrats! You've stimulated your Vagus nerve and should now feel nice and relaxed.

#### Nerve Hack 1

Tongue & Eye Coordination



#### Nerve Hack 2

Yes Breath



#### Nerve Hack 3

Hands Behind Your Head



## BUNKROOM CHECKLIST

Room is between 62-68 degrees F

Bright, white lights are off or covered

Cover glowing lights from chargers, clocks, or panels

Noise machine on (if used)

Radios turned down

## "TACTICAL READINESS DRILL"

### THE POWER OF THE SAFETY NAP

#### Keep it short

**Aim for 20 minutes** to boost alertness. Any longer puts you at risk for waking up in deep sleep- leading you to feel disoriented and groggy.

#### Set a timer

Prevent oversleeping and post-nap grogginess by setting an alarm. **90-minute naps allow for a full sleep cycle, but only if you have time!**

#### Time it right

**The best time to nap is between 1300-1500.** Avoid napping too close to your normal bedtime.

#### Try a Nappuchino!

**Drink a small (8 ounce) cup of coffee right before a nap.** Caffeine is able to absorb better and will kick in just as you're waking up- giving you an extra boost of energy.

#### Don't feel guilty- feel ready

**Napping isn't slacking- it's tactical recovery.** Just 20 minutes of rest can restore decision-making, reaction time, and focus on the next call.