



LIFELINK

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Fatigue: “The Big Grey Elephant in the Room”

As Sailors, sleep can seem like a luxury or low priority relative to mission demands, and surviving off of little to no sleep is often worn like a badge of honor. However, the amount of sleep the body needs doesn't vary by individual—seven to eight hours of uninterrupted sleep per night is ideal for all Sailors, according to [Naval Postgraduate School's Crew Endurance website](#).

The 2011 DoD Health Behaviors Survey of Active Duty Personnel found that less than 50 percent of active duty service members get at least seven hours of sleep per night, increasing risk for a myriad of psychological health issues such as depression, anxiety and suicide risk.

A good night's sleep is so vital that even slight deprivation can negatively affect performance, memory, mood and judgment, as well as one's perception of and response to stress. When you're sleepy, you may feel irritable, lack motivation, or lose patience more quickly, impacting everything from decision-making and impulsivity, to family relationships and operational readiness.

Crew Endurance, developed by Naval Postgraduate School with collaboration from Navy's **Operational Stress Control Program**, offers practical tips, research and operational tools for promoting adequate rest. To build your endurance:

- **Aim for seven to eight hours of uninterrupted sleep per night, preferably at the same time each day.** While uninterrupted sleep is ideal, compensating for any sleep deficit with a nap has proven benefits. A twenty-minute nap can help mitigate the effects of extended periods without rest on the mind and body, giving you a power boost. Avoid trying to plow through your day without adequate rest. Going 22 hours without sleep has the same effect on performance as being legally drunk!
- **Avoid large meals and vigorous exercise close to bedtime.** Consuming a nutritious and balanced diet is essential for fueling the mind and body, however, eating large meals before bedtime can lead to sleep disturbances. Aim to make your last meal of the day your smallest, and avoid alcohol in the last few hours before bedtime. Similarly, while exercising regularly can lead to stable energy throughout the day, avoid exercising within two to three

hours before going to bed. For fitness and nutrition tips, check out [Navy Physical Readiness](#).

- **Use caffeine strategically.** Coffee and other caffeinated beverages are best suited for the first part of your shift to promote alertness. However, caffeine, including soft drinks, should be avoided before bedtime. Instead, hydrate with nature's best: water.

Other tips for promoting optimal rest include blocking light and limiting noise in your sleep environment by using eye masks and ear plugs. It's also preferable to use bright light in the workspace to aid the body's natural circadian rhythm.

There are several ways to promote healthy sleep and work patterns at the command level as well, such as the Circadian-Based Watch Schedule, which has been tried by more than a dozen ships around the fleet. A circadian-based watchbill is any schedule which is built around a 24-hour day, with stable sleep periods each day vice those built upon 15, 18 or 20 hour days. In combination with adjusting meal hours, allowing adequate time for physical training and holding most meetings mid-day, Circadian-Based Watch Schedules can promote crew alertness, optimize readiness and enhance command climate.

To learn more about sleep, test your fatigue level or find out how your command can implement a Circadian-based Watch Schedule, visit Crew Endurance at my.nps.edu/web/crewendurance/index.



What do Sailors think about Circadian-Based Watch Schedules? See for yourself by clicking the image above.



Lifelink Spotlight

Sailor Steps in to Help Suicidal Man

Lt. Jordan Walma, Fleet Readiness Center Southwest Level II Legal Officer and 400 Division Officer, was



commuting to work on his motorcycle on the Coronado Bridge when he noticed traffic nearly at a halt. He thought the delay was due to an accident, until he noticed a pedestrian frantically weaving between the bridge's lanes and edge. He immediately sprang into action.

Walma neared the man while on his motorcycle. "I could tell he was distraught...he was crying as he was walking, and I thought 'I can't let this guy go. I need to try something,'" Walma recounted in a recent **CHIPS magazine article**. He asked if the man needed a ride, conveying that someone recognized that he was in need of help and cared enough to step in. The man said nothing, but looked at Walma with tears in his eyes.

Walma called 911 from his motorcycle helmet and began trailing the man, talking to him and letting him know that he wasn't alone. Cars drove around them until two other Sailors arrived on the scene, stopping their vehicle and bringing traffic to a halt. The Sailor in the passenger seat got out to help, giving Walma enough time to get off of his bike, put his arm around the man and try to get him closer to safety. He continued to tell the man that things would be alright.

As police neared, the man attempted to head toward the edge of the bridge, but Walma prevented him from moving until they were on the scene and could safely take over. Eventually, authorities convinced the man to get in their vehicle so that he could be transported to safety and receive help.

Though countless drivers looked on and passed by, 1 Small ACT saved a life. Bravo Zulu, Lt. Jordan Walma and the two petty officers who stepped in to help a stranger in his time of need.

Hear Lt. Walma recount the story on KOGO AM, San Diego's News & Information Station, [here](#).

What will your Small ACT be? Learn more about the simple ways to make a difference and save a life on www.suicide.navy.mil. You can also submit your ideas by taking a Small ACT Selfie and uploading it to our Facebook Gallery. More information [here](#).

Plan of the Week Notes

Below are sample Plan of the Week notes aligning with topics covered by the Every Sailor, Every Day campaign during the month of July:

1. Taking time to relax can help you navigate stress, optimize good health and boost performance on the job. Check out Navy & Marine Corps Public Health Center's updated Relax Relax toolkit, providing practical resources to help you "withstand, recover, grow and adapt" to build resilience from the inside out: <http://go.usa.gov/x3AZz>
2. Have you seen the Every Sailor, Every Day video? This short film underscores the life-saving impacts that ongoing dialogue, peer engagement and active leadership can have on Sailors when navigating adversity. Every Sailor, Every Day starts with YOU. Watch the full-length video here: <http://go.usa.gov/x3AU3>
3. Smiling can improve your mood and temporarily help reduce the negative effects of stress (even if you fake it!). The small act of smiling activates areas of the brain associated with reward and pleasure. If you need a laugh, check out this cartoon along with some tips to navigate stress during PCS season: <https://navstress.wordpress.com/2010/08/13/navigate-stress-during-a-pcs/>
4. Enjoying the 101 Critical Days of Summer responsibly means having a plan for physical *and* emotional safety. Personalize your Stress Navigation Plan so that you know who and where your resources are *before* you need them. Plans can be downloaded from the Navy Suicide Prevention website here: <http://go.usa.gov/x3AuV>.
5. Navy chaplains provide confidential support regardless of religious beliefs and cannot be compelled by commanders, medical professionals or others to disclose what a service member or family member shares in confidence. To locate the nearest chaplain or request chaplain support, call 1-855-NAVY-311, email or text Navy311@navy.mil, or visit www.navy311.navy.mil.

2016 Navy Suicide Prevention Month

The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention states that "suicide prevention is not just a mental health issue—it is a health issue that must be addressed by different groups working together." Those groups span societal and community levels, drilling down to the individual. In 2015, the *Every Sailor, Every Day* campaign launched **1 Small ACT** as a core message to promote simple ways to make a difference in others' lives, leveraging relationships as peer or community members. This year's Suicide Prevention Month will expand application of this message, promoting self-care practices and coping skills at the individual level, as well as societal supports that can enable prevention (such as means safety and mental health resources). An updated 1 Small ACT Toolkit and additional resources will be available by July 31 on www.suicide.navy.mil.

News and Resources

SECNAV's New Admin Separation Policy: 5 Things You Need to Know
[All Hands](#)

Food and Mood: Eat Healthy, Mitigate Stress
[NavyNavStress](#)

New DoD Mobile App Helps Defuse Nightmares for Better Sleep
[DCoE](#)

Keep What You've Earned Play to Live Pledge
[Max.gov](#)

Prioritizing Your Health
[Real Warriors](#)

Alternative Watch Schedule: 3/9 Rotation Info Sheet
[Operational Stress Control](#)

Five Ways You can Serve Others
[Guard Your Health](#)

Adaptive Sports Inspire Physical, Emotional Recovery at the 2016 DoD Warrior Games
[Health.mil](#)

Relax Relax Toolkit - Updated
[NMCPHC](#)

5 Things to Know about PCS Delays
[All Hands](#)

Hydrate to Be Healthy
[NMCPHC](#)

Commanding Officer's Suicide Prevention Program Handbook
[Issuu](#)

Current and Upcoming Events

101 Days of Summer

Independence Day
July 4

SPC Training Webinars

July 12, 1800 CST
July 27, 1000 CST
August 10, 0800 CST
August 25, 1400 CST

Small ACTs can Build Financial Security

Money plays a role in just about every aspect of our lives – physical, emotional, mental and even spiritual. Whether you are in financial recovery or focused on wealth-building, taking small and simple daily financial actions can significantly shape future outcomes. This starts with a recognition and understanding of three financial planning fundamentals: saving, debt management and long-term planning.



Saving – every little bit helps. Perhaps the biggest stressor on budgets is the onset of unexpected financial emergencies. Auto wrecks and maintenance, home repairs, and family emergencies are a familiar few. By limiting daily spending, you can work toward consistently allocating a dollar amount from each paycheck or income source to a savings account dedicated for emergency needs, helping to mitigate financial shocks.

- Consider implementing a daily money management philosophy or routine. Some steps may include limiting vending, snack and dining out purchases, credit and debit card swipes.
- Determine in advance how to pay for goods and services. If you're an "out of sight, out of mind" person, relying on your debit card can be a slippery slope. Create a weekly budget for everyday expenditures that relies solely on cash. The physical reminder of how much you have left will help you avoid overspending through over-swiping.

Digging out of debt diligently. Dealing with existing debts and avoiding new ones require planning. For some it could be simple as staying out of stores. Start by determining your long-term goals (paying off revolving debt, paying off an auto or home loan, etc.) and identify a feasible plan to get you there. What are your spending-triggers and where can you shift funds? Some things to consider:

- Can you move some (or all) of your entertainment budget to debt payments? It is important to remember that debts can be effortlessly accumulated, but it takes dedication to pay them off. Forgoing a few nights out each month can accelerate your progress. Netflix and chill, anyone?
- Start tracking your spending. It may sound like an ominous task, but it's a simple and easy step toward accurately assessing your budget and learning how to *comfortably* stay within your means. There are several money-management resources for helping to create a level of alertness about financial activities, accessible through mobile app stores and on the web. Seek those that include larger goals like savings, debt and retirement.

Look forward to the future. The future will happen, ready or not. The steps you take starting today, in favor of positive financial behaviors are invaluable. To secure your financial future:

- Contribute to an employer-sponsored retirement plan (if available). No matter how small, these contributions will add up and make a big difference long-term. They can be pre-tax and are often matched by your employer to increase your return on investment. Speak with a professional about your retirement lifestyle needs, planning contributions and diversifying your portfolio.
- Set goals and continue to work toward them. Savings and debt goals are both a part of retirement planning. Consider developing a short term and long term plan to build your assets, reduce spending and build wealth to get the most out of life after your career.

While you may not be able to predict every circumstance, small acts today can increase your chances of financial security tomorrow, helping you mitigate money stress—and the other stressors that accompany financial strain!

Content contributed by Navy Suicide Prevention Branch partner, Stacy Livingstone-Hoyte, AFC.