

Cut along the dotted lines. Place this handout on your refrigerator, nightstand, or somewhere in your home as a reminder of what to focus on each week.

Additional information and resources can be found in your sleep better packet and at [gatorcare.org/shift](http://gatorcare.org/shift).

## Week 1: Create a Bedtime Routine

Engage in relaxing activities to tell your body that it's time for bed.

- Set a bedtime. Then start practicing your bedtime routine an **hour** before you want to go to bed.
- Do something relaxing. What makes you feel relaxed?
  - Reading? Choose something that won't get your heart pumping like a thriller. Avoid reading in bed. Only go to bed when you are ready to sleep.
  - Knitting or crafting? Be sure to do so in low light.
  - Listening to music? Make sure it's soothing.
  - A hot shower or bath? This helps your body temperature drop, which signals your body to start feeling sleepy.
  - Loosen up. Perform gentle exercises to help your body unwind. See the Bedtime Yoga handout for ideas.
  - Other great ideas include meditating, coloring and journaling.
- Turn off the television and put away any handheld electronic devices an **hour** before bed.
- Dim all lights an **hour** before your bedtime. If you sleep during the day, be sure to create a dark environment with blinds and black out curtains.
- Lower the AC. The ideal sleeping temperature is 65° - 73° F.
- Only go to bed when you feel tired enough to sleep.
- Keep your sleep schedule consistent, even on days off.

## Week 2: Remodel Your Environment

Make your bedroom and home sleep-friendly.

- Create a dark atmosphere. Light exposure increases alertness making it harder to fall asleep.
  - Add blackout curtains, blinds or use a sleep mask.
  - If you work nights, wear dark sunglasses when you get off shift. Limit your exposure to light.
- Eliminate noise when you are sleeping. If you sleep during the day or have noisy neighbors or lawn maintenance, try earplugs.
  - Communicate with your family or roommate about your sleep schedule.
- Consider removing electronics from your bedroom.
  - This includes TVs, computers and clocks, which can be particularly stressful when you're trying to fall asleep or fall back asleep.
- Lower the AC. The ideal sleeping temperature is 65° - 73° F.
- Assess your bed. Is it comfortable? Do you have appropriate sheets and blankets? Do you wake up in the night sweating or freezing? Change your bedding accordingly. You spend a significant amount of time here so don't scrimp.
- Only use your bedroom as a place to sleep and only get in bed when you are tired.
- Use aromatherapy like candles, essential oils or a pillow mist. Try lavender, chamomile or eucalyptus.

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## Week 3: Tweak Your “Wake Time” Habits

**Think about your daily routine and habits. Evaluate how those may be affecting your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep.**

- Increase your light exposure during your waking hours. Light makes your body more awake and your mind more alert. Keep this in mind if you work nights and sleep during the day. In this instance, use sunglasses to limit light exposure on your way home.
- Limit caffeine consumption six hours before sleep and alcohol consumption three to four hours before sleep.
- Eat like Goldilocks before bed, not too little, but not too much. Avoid items high in sugar and anything with caffeine (like chocolate).
- If you are having trouble **falling asleep**...don't stress.
  - Worrying about falling asleep can elicit the stress response, which can keep you awake.
  - If you don't fall asleep within 15 to 30 minutes, get out of bed. Engage in a calming activity until you are tired again.
- If you are waking up in the middle of your sleep cycle and having trouble **falling back asleep**...don't stress.
  - Engage in a calming activity. Dump your thoughts or worries that may be keeping you up on a sheet of paper to revisit in the morning.
  - Avoid clocks, television and electronic devices. Do not check the time!

## Week 4: Incorporate Physical Activity

**Exercising regularly keeps you energized during your shift and can improve the quality of your sleep.**

- Aim for 150 minutes of physical activity a week and at least two strength training workouts.
- Perform gentle exercises when you wake to get the blood flowing and your body warmed up for your shift.
- Stay active throughout your shift.
  - **Take your breaks!** Go for a walk or “deskercise” on your unit. Find resources on our website.
- Physical activity reduces arousal and anxiety, which are two main causes of disrupted sleep.
- Take your exercise outside.
  - Remember, sunlight triggers an increase in alertness.
  - Go for a gratitude walk. Take in the beauty of your surroundings and give thanks for all the wonderful things in your life.
- Walk! Make it routine. Walk before a meal, after a meal, with your kids, with a friend or with your dog. Just go!
- Perform gentle exercises (like those from the Bedtime Yoga handout) before bed to relax your muscles and get your body primed for sleep. Make this part of your sleep routine.

# sleep better

Use this sheet to track your sleep. Use the last column to reflect on which activities from that week were most helpful.

Find additional resources in your sleep better packet and on [gatorcare.org/shift](http://gatorcare.org/shift).



| <b>Week 1: Create a bedtime routine</b> | <b>Rate your sleep quality</b> | <b>Did you have trouble falling asleep?</b> | <b>Did you wake up and have trouble falling back asleep?</b> | <b>What did you learn this week? Which activities helped you the most?</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday                                  | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Tuesday                                 | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Wednesday                               | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Thursday                                | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Friday                                  | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Saturday                                | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Sunday                                  | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| <b>Week 2: Remodel your environment</b> | <b>Rate your sleep quality</b> | <b>Did you have trouble falling asleep?</b> | <b>Did you wake up and have trouble falling back asleep?</b> |                                                                            |
| Monday                                  | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Tuesday                                 | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Wednesday                               | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Thursday                                | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Friday                                  | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
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| <b>Week 4: Incorporate physical activity</b> | <b>Rate your sleep quality</b> | <b>Did you have trouble falling asleep?</b> | <b>Did you wake up and have trouble falling back asleep?</b> |                                                                            |
| Monday                                       | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Tuesday                                      | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
| Wednesday                                    | 1 2 3 4 5                      | Yes / No                                    | Yes / No                                                     |                                                                            |
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