GMSD Sleep Improvement Toolkit

Combined Edition • 30-Day Program + Teacher-Realistic Playbook

Research-informed • Practical • Holistic • Evidence-backed

Built for

GMSD employees

What's inside (best of both toolkits)

Quick wins (10-minute start) + a 7-day foundation plan

A full 30-day step-by-step program (daily pages) + weekly reviews

Challenge tracks for screens/light, stress, movement, nutrition, and bedroom reset

Sleep science snapshot + red flags + when to seek extra support

Sleep Type Quiz + personalization paths

Bedroom environment upgrades + bedding/gear guide (pillows, sheets, mattresses, extras)

Trackers: sleep logs, habit trackers, a 7-day sleep experiment lab, and a 2-week bingo game

Curated apps, audio, and guided resources (with links) + journaling prompts

References & suggested reading

How to use this toolkit

Start with the Quick Start pages, then choose your primary goal (fall asleep faster, stay asleep, sleep longer, feel more rested).

Follow the 30-day ladder and daily pages. If you miss a day, continue—no restarting required.

Optional: choose a 7-day Challenge Track to focus on your biggest sleep disruptor (screens, stress, movement, nutrition, or environment).

Use the trackers to spot patterns. Keep what works; adjust what doesn't.

Teacher reality: if you can only change one thing, protect your wake time.

Version date: January 04, 2026

Note: This resource is for education and wellness support—not medical advice. If you have ongoing insomnia (3+ nights/week for 3+ months), loud snoring with choking/gasping, daytime sleepiness that affects safety, or mental health concerns, talk with a licensed clinician.

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Quick Start

Your 10-minute sleep upgrade (do this tonight—no perfection required).

Do this tonight	Done
Pick a consistent wake time for weekdays (and keep weekends within ~1 hour).	■
Create a 10-minute wind-down: dim lights + one calming activity (read, stretch, shower, breathing).	■
Move caffeine earlier: aim for no caffeine within 8 hours of bedtime (start with 6).	■
Make your room cool, dark, and quiet: adjust thermostat, use a fan/white noise, block light.	■
Set an if-then: If my mind races, then I'll do a 2-minute "brain dump" and return to breathing.	■

Choose your focus (pick ONE for the next 2 weeks)

Screen Sunset — reduce evening light + scrolling (best for night owls).

Stress-Off Routine — calm your nervous system before bed (best for anxious brains).

Move for Sleep — consistent activity + daylight (best for energy + mood).

Bedroom Reset — environment + bedding upgrades (best for hot/cold sleepers).

Your definition of success

More sleep isn't the only win. Track any of these: fall asleep faster • fewer wake-ups • feel more rested • better mood/energy.

Teacher reality: If you can only change one thing this week, protect your wake time.

Quick Start

7 days to better sleep (start here). These seven steps create the base that makes everything else work.

Step	What to do
Day 1 — Anchor your wake time	Pick a wake time you can hit most days. Aim for consistency over perfection (±30–60 min).
Day 2 — Morning light	Get outdoor light soon after waking (even 5–10 minutes). Light is the strongest cue for your body clock.
Day 3 — Caffeine boundary	Choose a caffeine cutoff time (many people do mid-day). Track if afternoon caffeine affects sleep onset.
Day 4 — Screen step-down	Create a 30-minute “screen step-down” before bed: dim lights, lower brightness, avoid stressful content.
Day 5 — Wind-down routine	Pick a 10-minute routine: shower, stretch, breathwork, reading, journaling. Keep it boring on purpose.
Day 6 — Bedroom tweak	Change ONE environment factor: cooler temp, blackout, white noise, pillow support, or declutter surface area.
Day 7 — Review + keep what worked	Circle the top 2 changes that helped. Those become your “non-negotiables” for the 30-day plan.

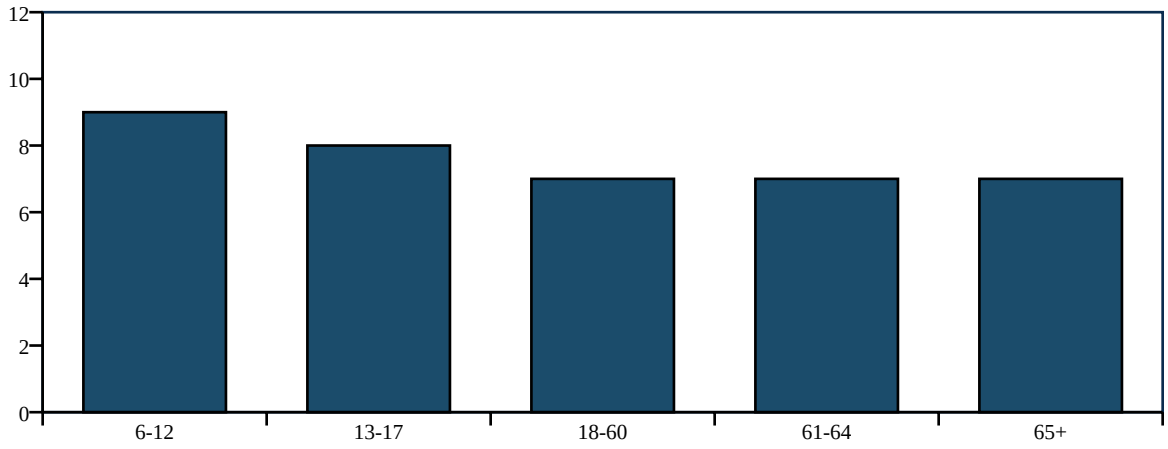
Your ‘2+1’ rule

Each week: keep 2 habits consistent, and experiment with 1 new habit.

Sleep Science Snapshot

Sleep is active recovery: your brain consolidates memory, your body regulates hormones, and your nervous system resets. The goal is not “perfect sleep” — it’s a consistent rhythm and a supportive environment.

Recommended sleep (hours per 24h) • quick reference (minimum)



Source: CDC recommended sleep by age (see References)

Key benchmark

Most adults need 7+ hours regularly for optimal health and performance. If you’re consistently under that, your body may build sleep pressure (sleep debt).

Most powerful lever

Wake time anchors your circadian rhythm more reliably than bedtime. If you can’t fall asleep, focus on a consistent wake time and a calming pre-bed routine.

Best first-line tool

For chronic insomnia, CBT-I is guideline-recommended as first-line treatment. This guide borrows CBT-I-friendly skills (consistency, stimulus control, relaxation).

When to get extra support

Consider talking with a clinician if any apply: insomnia 3+ nights/week for 3+ months • loud snoring/choking/gasping or pauses in breathing • falling asleep while driving/at work • restless legs • frequent nightmares/trauma symptoms • mood changes tied to sleep.

Sleep Basics & Red Flags

Sleep in one sentence: Good sleep = enough hours + solid continuity + a schedule your body can predict.

Stage	What it's for	What supports it
Deep sleep	Physical recovery; immune and tissue repair	Regular schedule, exercise, cooler room, limiting late alcohol
REM sleep	Emotion regulation; memory integration	Sufficient sleep time, consistent wake time, stress management

Red Flags: When to get extra support

Loud snoring, choking/gasping during sleep, or witnessed breathing pauses

Severe daytime sleepiness (dozing while driving, at meetings, or in class supervision)

Insomnia most nights for more than 3 months

Restless legs sensations or frequent limb movements that disrupt sleep

High blood pressure, morning headaches, or mood changes tied to poor sleep

If this is you: talk to a provider about evaluation and treatment options. CBT-I is an evidence-based approach for insomnia.

Personalization: Sleep Type Quiz

Use this to tailor timing, light exposure, and expectations.

#	Question	Options
1	If you had zero obligations, you would naturally fall asleep around:	Before 10pm / 10–11pm / 11pm–12am / After 12am
2	You feel most alert and productive:	Morning / Late morning / Afternoon / Evening
3	Waking up early feels:	Easy / OK / Hard / Nearly impossible
4	On weekends you tend to:	Keep same schedule / Sleep in 1–2 hours / Sleep in 3+ hours / Flip day-night

Your plan, simplified

Morning-leaner: protect bedtime; avoid late caffeine/intensity.

Evening-leaner: morning light + consistent wake time; shift earlier slowly.

Flexible: consistency + stress/screen habits are your biggest levers.

30-Day Sleep Ladder

This ladder builds foundations first, then optimizes. The daily pages tell you exactly what to do.

Week	Focus
Week 1 (Days 1–7): Foundations	Consistent wake time • AM light • Caffeine boundary • 10-minute wind-down
Week 2 (Days 8–14): Screens & Environment	Screen step-down • Bedroom dark/cool/quiet • Pillow support • Noise plan
Week 3 (Days 15–21): Stress & Nervous System	Breathing/PMR • Worry plan • End-of-day closure • Mindful decompression
Week 4 (Days 22–30): Lock it in	Sleep experiment • Nutrition timing • Movement timing • Relapse plan

Your daily minimum (for hard days)

Keep wake time consistent + do a 5-minute wind-down.

Core Skills

These levers show up again and again. Choose small tweaks and let them compound.

Screen step-down

30 minutes before bed: dim lights + reduce phone brightness + avoid stressful content.

Nervous system reset

Use one: physiological sigh, box breathing, PMR, or a 3-minute brain dump.

Movement

Aim for daily walking + 2–3 strength sessions/week. Use gentle mobility at night if it helps.

Nutrition timing

Choose a caffeine cutoff. Avoid heavy late meals if reflux or wake-ups happen.

Environment

Cool • dark • quiet • comfortable support. Adjust pillow/mattress/sheets for your sleep position and temperature needs.

Screen Time & Light

Your brain’s “day/night” switch

Light — especially short-wavelength (blue) light — can delay your internal clock and suppress melatonin. But it’s not just the light: doomscrolling, work email, and stimulating content keep your brain in “go mode.”

Try this: Screen Sunset (30–60 minutes)

Set a nightly “screen sunset” alarm. When it goes off: dim lights + switch to low-stimulation activities.

Enable night mode / blue-light filter and reduce brightness after sunset.

Move chargers out of reach. If possible, keep the phone out of the bedroom.

If you must use a screen: pick one calm task (music, audiobook, guided breathing) and stop scrolling.

Low-tech light hacks

Use warm lamps (not overhead). Dim as bedtime approaches.

Try an eye mask if you can’t control light (travel, streetlights).

Get morning daylight: 5–15 minutes outside soon after waking helps set your clock.

Use a “worry window” earlier so bedtime isn’t your first quiet moment.

Evidence note: evening exposure to light-emitting devices can delay circadian timing and reduce sleepiness; blue light suppresses melatonin more strongly than other wavelengths.

Challenge Track: Screen Sunset

Duration: 7 days • Focus: Reduce evening light + stimulation

Why this matters

Evening screens can delay your sleep drive by combining bright, blue-rich light with stimulating content.

Even partial changes (dimmer screens, fewer scroll loops, earlier cutoff) often improve sleep onset and next-day alertness.

Daily actions (check off)	Done
Set a nightly screen sunset alarm (start with 30 minutes before bed).	■
After sunset: no work email/social feeds. Choose one calm activity instead.	■
Use night mode + low brightness after sunset (every night).	■
Get 5–10 minutes of morning daylight (outside if possible).	■

Coach’s tips

If you slip: restart at the next alarm. Consistency beats perfection.

Try an audiobook/podcast with the screen OFF.

Put your phone on a “parking spot” (kitchen counter) before bed.

Swap scrolling for a 5-minute stretch + 1-minute breathing.

Reflection prompts

What time did I begin my screen sunset most days?

What was the easiest swap for scrolling?

How did my sleep latency (time to fall asleep) change?

What’s one boundary I want to keep next week?

Mini-reset (2 minutes)

Inhale 4, hold 2, exhale 6 (x6 rounds).

Then write one sentence: “Tonight I’m protecting my sleep by ____.”

Stress Management

Calm the nervous system

Stress doesn't just "live in your head" — it changes physiology (heart rate, muscle tension, breathing) that can make sleep harder. The win is teaching your body the signal: "We're safe. We're done for today."

Fast tools (2–10 minutes)

Physiological sigh: inhale through nose, top up inhale, long exhale (x5).

4–2–6 breathing: inhale 4, hold 2, exhale 6 (x6 rounds).

Progressive muscle relaxation: tense/release from feet to face.

Write a brain dump: 2 minutes of everything on your mind — then one next step.

Build a repeatable wind-down

Make a "closing routine" after dinner: tidy 5 min, set clothes, prep lunch, then stop logistics.

Warm shower/bath 1–2 hours before bed can help some people fall asleep faster.

Choose one calming cue: tea, playlist, book, stretching — same cue nightly.

If anxiety spikes: get out of bed and reset in dim light (don't wrestle with the pillow).

Evidence note: mindfulness-based approaches and relaxation techniques show benefits for sleep quality in research; CBT-I is guideline-recommended first-line for chronic insomnia.

Challenge Track: Stress-Off Routine

Duration: 7 days • Focus: Reduce cognitive + physical arousal

Why this matters

Your body learns patterns. A short, repeatable routine helps shift you from “teacher mode” into recovery mode.

The goal is not to force sleep — it’s to reduce arousal so sleep can happen.

Daily actions (check off)	Done
Do a 2-minute brain dump (every night).	■
Practice 4–2–6 breathing or physiological sighs for 3–5 minutes.	■
Create a “closing routine” (prep tomorrow, then stop work tasks).	■
If awake >20 minutes: leave bed, do a calm activity, return when sleepy.	■

Coach’s tips

Pair the routine with a cue (same playlist, same tea, same lamp).

Lower light levels in the last hour before bed.

Try a short gratitude note: 1 win, 1 moment of humor, 1 thing for tomorrow.

If your mind argues: label it (“planning,” “worrying”) and return to breathing.

Reflection prompts

What time did I start my wind-down most nights?

Which tool calmed me the fastest?

What thoughts show up repeatedly at night?

What’s one boundary I can set tomorrow to protect evening recovery?

Mini-reset (2 minutes)

Inhale 4, hold 2, exhale 6 (x6 rounds).

Then write one sentence: “Tonight I’m protecting my sleep by ____.”

Physical Activity

Move to sleep better

Regular movement improves sleep quality for many people. It can reduce stress, increase sleep drive, and reinforce your circadian rhythm — especially with daylight exposure.

What works best (teacher-realistic)

Aim for consistency over intensity: 20–30 minutes most days beats one heroic workout.

Stack habits: walk while calling a friend, stretch while watching one show, park farther away.

Try “movement snacks”: 2–5 minutes, 2–4 times/day (stairs, brisk walk, mobility).

If evenings are your only time, choose moderate movement and finish 1–2 hours before bed if possible.

Sleep-supporting routines

Morning: 5–15 minutes outside + a short walk.

After school: 10-minute decompression walk (no phone if you can).

Evening: gentle yoga/mobility + breathwork.

Strength 2x/week: simple circuits (squats, rows, push-ups, carries).

Evidence note: exercise interventions have been shown in research to improve subjective sleep quality; timing and intensity can matter for individuals.

Challenge Track: Move for Sleep

Duration: 7 days • Focus: Daily movement + daylight

Why this matters

Movement builds sleep pressure and improves stress regulation.

Pairing movement with daylight is a strong circadian signal. Short sessions count.

Daily actions (check off)	Done
Get 5–15 minutes of morning daylight (outside if possible).	■
Accumulate 20 minutes of movement (walk, bike, strength, chores).	■
Do a 3-minute stretch or mobility reset in the evening.	■
Stop vigorous exercise 1–2 hours before bed (if it keeps you wired).	■

Coach’s tips

If time is tight: 3 x 7-minute walks works.

Use a timer: 10 minutes feels doable when you’re tired.

Make it social: walking buddy, family walk, phone call walk.

Celebrate streaks, not perfection.

Reflection prompts

What time of day did movement feel easiest?

Did I notice changes in sleepiness at bedtime?

What obstacles showed up — and what workaround can I try?

What movement habit do I want to keep long-term?

Mini-reset (2 minutes)

Inhale 4, hold 2, exhale 6 (x6 rounds).

Then write one sentence: “Tonight I’m protecting my sleep by ____.”

Diet & Nutrition

Fuel for better sleep

Food choices — and timing — can either support sleep drive or keep your body working overtime. Your goal: stable energy in the day and lighter digestion at night.

Big levers (start here)

Caffeine timing: many people do better cutting caffeine 6–8 hours before bed.

Alcohol: may feel sedating at first, but can disrupt REM and lead to fragmented sleep later.

Avoid heavy meals 2–3 hours before bed if reflux/discomfort is an issue.

Hydrate earlier; taper fluids near bedtime to reduce bathroom wake-ups.

Sleep-friendly choices

Dinner: balanced plate (protein + fiber + complex carbs).

If hungry later: small snack (yogurt, banana, oatmeal, nuts) rather than a heavy meal.

Limit very spicy or high-fat late meals if they trigger reflux.

Consider a consistent “kitchen close” time to stop grazing.

Evidence note: systematic reviews show caffeine can negatively affect sleep quantity/quality; alcohol can alter sleep architecture, increasing later-night awakenings.

Challenge Track: Eat for Sleep

Duration: 7 days • Focus: Caffeine, timing, night-friendly choices

Why this matters

Sleep is easier when your body isn't fighting stimulants or digestion at bedtime.

This track is about strategic timing — not restrictive dieting.

Daily actions (check off)	Done
Choose a caffeine cutoff time (start with 6 hours before bed; move earlier if needed).	■
Finish your last full meal 2–3 hours before bed (most nights).	■
Hydrate earlier in the day; taper after dinner.	■
If you snack: pick a small, simple option (protein + carb).	■

Coach's tips

If you love coffee: keep it — just move it earlier.

Try half-caf or smaller servings after lunch.

If alcohol is part of your routine: compare sleep quality on alcohol-free nights.

Notice patterns: reflux, heartburn, sugar cravings, late-night grazing.

Reflection prompts

What was my caffeine cutoff most days?

Did I wake up less in the night?

Which evening foods helped vs hurt?

What's one nutrition habit I want to keep?

Mini-reset (2 minutes)

Inhale 4, hold 2, exhale 6 (x6 rounds).

Then write one sentence: “Tonight I’m protecting my sleep by ____.”

Schedules & Consistency

Build your sleep rhythm

Your circadian rhythm loves regularity. A stable wake time + morning light are powerful anchors. Bedtime can float within a range based on sleepiness.

Rhythm rules that work

Keep a consistent wake time (aim for ±60 minutes on weekends).

Get bright light in the morning; dim light at night.

Keep naps short (10–20 minutes) and earlier if you nap.

Use the bed for sleep (and intimacy) — not grading, email, or scrolling.

If you're lying awake…

Try "stimulus control" (a CBT-I skill): If awake ~20 minutes, get out of bed and reset in dim light.

Return to bed when sleepy.

Repeat as needed — it trains the bed=sleep association.

Worksheet: Your 7-Day Sleep Schedule Builder

Goal wake time	_____	Bedtime range (estimate)	_____
Weekend adjustment (max ±60 min)	_____	Wind-down start time	_____
Morning light plan	_____	Nap rule (if applicable)	_____

Tip: If bedtime feels inconsistent, keep wake time steady and let bedtime drift earlier/later based on sleepiness for a week. The rhythm usually stabilizes.

Sleep Environment

Cool, dark, quiet, comfortable

Your bedroom is a performance space. The fastest “ROI” upgrades usually come from temperature, light, and noise control.

Cool

Most people sleep best when the room is cooler than daytime. Try fan/airflow, breathable bedding, lighter blanket, or a cooler thermostat.

Dark

Light signals “day.” Reduce it at night. Try blackout curtains, a sleep mask, and covering LED lights. If you need a night light: warm, low light near the floor.

Quiet

Noise can fragment sleep even if you don’t fully wake. Try white noise/fan, earplugs, or closing gaps/doors.

Micro-upgrades checklist

Lower temperature or improve airflow (fan).

Remove/cover bright LEDs (chargers, TV standby lights).

Add a white noise option (fan, app, sound machine).

Set up a “nightstand kit”: water, tissues, book, pen (fewer reasons to get up).

Keep the bedroom for sleep — do the hard thinking elsewhere.

Evidence note: thermoregulation strongly influences sleep onset and continuity; simple tools like eye masks/earplugs can reduce light/noise disruptions.

Bedding & Gear

Pillows, sheets, mattresses, and sleep extras

Gear won't replace habits — but comfort matters. Use this section to make smart, practical upgrades (especially if pain, heat, or allergies disrupt your sleep).

Pillows: choose for alignment + comfort

Goal: keep your neck neutral (not angled up/down).

Side sleepers: usually need a higher loft (fills shoulder gap).

Back sleepers: medium loft + gentle neck support.

Stomach sleepers: very low loft or no pillow (neck strain risk).

Sheets & blankets: manage heat + feel

Hot sleepers: breathable fabrics (cotton percale, linen) and lighter blankets.

Cold sleepers: layer blankets rather than one heavy comforter.

Allergies: wash bedding regularly; consider allergen covers.

Mattresses: support matters (especially for back pain)

A well-known randomized trial found medium-firm mattresses improved pain and disability more than very firm mattresses in chronic non-specific low-back pain.

Practical approach: aim for a "supported but not rigid" feel; use a topper to adjust firmness before replacing the whole mattress; check pillow + mattress together (alignment depends on both).

Extras that often help

Eye mask • Earplugs/white noise • Fan/airflow • Humidifier (dry air) • Weighted blanket (some find it calming) • Simple clock you can't obsess over

Rule: try one change for 7 nights before buying more gear.

Evidence note: mattress firmness and pillow support have been studied for pain/comfort; preferences vary by body type and sleep position.

Apps, Audio, and Guided Resources

Use tools that reduce friction. Pick one app or audio source for 2 weeks — then reassess.

Category	Tool	Where to find / notes
CBT-I / insomnia skills	**CBT-i Coach (VA)** Sleep diary + CBT-I skills. Designed to support CBT-I; includes education, tools, and tracking.	URL: https://mobile.va.gov /app/cbt-i-coach
CBT-I / insomnia skills	**Insomnia Coach (VA)** Self-guided insomnia support. Education + sleep tools; good starting point for routines.	URL: https://www.ptsd.va.gov /appvid/mobile/insomnia_coach.asp
Mindfulness / meditation	**UCLA Mindful** Free guided meditations; high-quality guided practices; great for beginners.	URL: https://www.uclahealth.org /uclamindful/free-guided-meditations
Mindfulness / meditation	**Calm** Sleep stories + relaxation; popular paid app with sleep content; check for educator discounts/promos.	URL: https://www.calm.com
Mindfulness / meditation	**Insight Timer** Huge free library; many free tracks; pick curated sleep playlists.	URL: https://insighttimer.com
Mindfulness / meditation	**Smiling Mind** Nonprofit app with structured programs.	URL: https://www.smilingmind.com.au /smiling-mind-app
Digital CBT-I programs	**Sleepio** Structured CBT-based sleep program; availability varies.	URL: https://www.sleepio.com
CBT-I / insomnia skills	**Sleepio** / **Somryst** / **CBT-i Coach**	App stores; search: “CBT-I” (Somryst may require Rx in some areas).
Meditation	**Headspace** / **Calm** / **Insight Timer**	App stores; search: “guided sleep meditation”.
Breathing & relaxation	**Breathwrk** / **Balance** / “4-7-8 breathing” recordings	App stores; search: “breathing for sleep”.
White noise / soundscapes	**White Noise** / **Noisli** / **Rain Rain**	App stores; search: “white noise”.
Screen management	**iOS Screen Time** / **Android Digital Wellbeing** / **f.lux** (computer)	Device settings; search: “blue light filter”.

Make it stick: 3 rules for using apps

Use the app to reduce thinking (one tap → guided routine).

Keep sessions short (3–10 minutes) to protect consistency.

Stop changing tools every few days — commit for 2 weeks.

Tip: In a future version, you can add QR codes to your favorite playlists and tools.

Evidence note: mindfulness meditation may improve sleep quality; digital CBT-I programs deliver evidence-based CBT-I components over several weeks.

Trackers

Track just enough to learn your patterns. Print and keep on your nightstand.

Day	Bedtime	Wake	Caffeine after cutoff?	Screens in last 30 min?	Stress (0–10)	Sleep quality (1–5)
Mon	____	____	■ yes ■ no	■ yes ■ no	____	____
Tue	____	____	■ yes ■ no	■ yes ■ no	____	____
Wed	____	____	■ yes ■ no	■ yes ■ no	____	____
Thu	____	____	■ yes ■ no	■ yes ■ no	____	____
Fri	____	____	■ yes ■ no	■ yes ■ no	____	____
Sat	____	____	■ yes ■ no	■ yes ■ no	____	____
Sun	____	____	■ yes ■ no	■ yes ■ no	____	____

How to use

Fill this out for 7 days.

Circle patterns: late caffeine, screens late, stress spikes, weekend wake shifts.

Pick ONE lever to adjust next week.

Sleep Log: Week 1

Use this log to notice patterns and adjust one habit at a time.

Date	Bedtime	Wake time	Night wakings (count)	Notes (stress, caffeine, screens, naps, exercise)
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____

Habit Tracker

Habit	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
Wake time within 60 min	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Morning light	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Screen sunset	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Wind-down routine	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Movement	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Caffeine cutoff	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Bedroom cool/dark/quiet	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Sleep Log: Week 2

Use this log to notice patterns and adjust one habit at a time.

Date	Bedtime	Wake time	Night wakings (count)	Notes (stress, caffeine, screens, naps, exercise)
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	_____

Habit Tracker

Habit	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
Wake time within 60 min	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Morning light	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Screen sunset	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Wind-down routine	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Movement	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Caffeine cutoff	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Bedroom cool/dark/quiet	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Badges & Challenges

Use badges to gamify consistency without perfection. Earn any badge during a 7-day span.

Badge	How to earn it
Consistency Champ	Wake time within 60–90 minutes on 5 of 7 days
Sunlight Starter	Outdoor light soon after waking on 4 days
Screen Step-Down Star	30-minute screen step-down on 4 nights
Wind-Down Wizard	10-minute wind-down on 5 nights
Caffeine Captain	Met your caffeine cutoff on 5 days
Bedroom Builder	Completed 5 bedroom audit checkboxes + maintained 3 of them for a week

Team challenge (optional)

Earn points for completed behaviors (no personal sleep data).

Example scoring: 1 point per habit checkbox, 3 points per badge earned, 5 points for a full week streak.

Keep it supportive—never shame people for sleep struggles.

Sleep Improvement Bingo

2-week game • Goal: get 5 in a row (any direction). Rewards are encouraged.

■ No caffeine after lunch	■ Phone out of bedroom	■ 10 min walk	■ Warm shower	■ Stretch 5 min
■ Lights dim at 9pm	■ Read 10 pages	■ White noise on	■ Prep tomorrow early	■ No work email
■ Consistent wake time	■ Gratitude note	■ Breathing 5 min	■ Morning sunlight	■ No snooze button
■ Herbal tea	■ Cool room	■ Eye mask	■ No late heavy meal	■ Limit alcohol
■ Screen sunset 45 min	■ PMR session	■ Clean sheets	■ Bedroom tidy 5 min	■ Early bedtime

Optional reward ideas

Coffee treat • new book • longer bath • new pillowcase • early bedtime “luxury night.”

30-Day Sleep Upgrade: Out-of-This-World Challenge

A four-week, low-drama program: each week has a theme and daily micro-missions. You can do it solo or as a staff mini-challenge.

How to run it

Pick a consistent wake time for the month.

Choose one nightly wind-down routine (10 minutes).

Do the daily micro-mission (often 2–10 minutes).

Track with the Sleep Log + Habit Tracker (or just mark checkboxes).

Celebrate streaks — then restart when life happens.

Team version (optional)

Create small teams (2–6 people).

Share weekly wins and “one thing that helped.”

Keep it supportive — no pressure to share private sleep details.

Week 1 Plan

Theme: Anchor wake time + build a 10-minute wind-down

Day	Micro-mission	Done
Day 1	Set wake time + put it on your calendar (including weekend target).	■
Day 2	Create your wind-down cue (tea, playlist, lamp) and use it tonight.	■
Day 3	Do a 2-minute brain dump before bed.	■
Day 4	Dim lights after dinner; reduce overhead lighting.	■
Day 5	Prep tomorrow’s essentials 30 minutes earlier than usual.	■
Day 6	Try 4–2–6 breathing (6 rounds).	■
Day 7	Review: What got in the way? Adjust one thing.	■

Reflection (1 minute)

What worked this week? What’s one tweak for next week?

Week 2 Plan

Theme: Screen sunset + morning daylight

Day	Micro-mission	Done
Day 1	Set a screen sunset alarm (start 30 minutes).	■
Day 2	Turn on night mode + lower brightness after sunset.	■
Day 3	Put your phone on a “parking spot” before bed.	■
Day 4	Get 10 minutes of morning daylight.	■
Day 5	Swap scrolling for a book or audio (screen off).	■
Day 6	Cover/disable bright LEDs in your bedroom.	■
Day 7	Review: Raise screen sunset to 45–60 minutes if ready.	■

Reflection (1 minute)

What worked this week? What’s one tweak for next week?

Week 3 Plan

Theme: Relaxation tools + boundaries

Day	Micro-mission	Done
Day 1	Create a 5-minute closing routine after dinner (logistics → done).	■
Day 2	Physiological sigh x5 + write one sentence: “Today is complete.”	■
Day 3	Progressive muscle relaxation (feet → face).	■
Day 4	Schedule a 10-minute “worry window” earlier in the evening.	■
Day 5	Swap late-night problem-solving for a calm activity (stretch, shower).	■
Day 6	If awake >20 minutes, get out of bed and reset in dim light.	■
Day 7	Review: Which tool helped most? Keep it.	■

Reflection (1 minute)

What worked this week? What’s one tweak for next week?

Week 4 Plan

Theme: Bedroom reset + comfort upgrades

Day	Micro-mission	Done
Day 1	Adjust temperature/airflow (fan, thermostat, breathable bedding).	■
Day 2	Make the room darker (mask/curtains; cover LEDs).	■
Day 3	Make it quieter (white noise/earplugs; close gaps).	■
Day 4	Wash sheets or change bedding (fresh start).	■
Day 5	Optimize pillow for your sleep position (alignment check).	■
Day 6	Try one comfort upgrade (topper, sleepwear, humidity) if needed.	■
Day 7	Review: What 3 habits will you keep next month?	■

Reflection (1 minute)

What worked this week? What's one tweak for next week?

Daily Pages: Days 1–30

Use these pages as a simple daily playbook. Check the boxes. Write one sentence. Repeat tomorrow.

If you miss a day

Do not restart. Continue with the next day.

Your baseline stays the same: wake anchor + 10-minute wind-down.

Day 1: Wake Anchor

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Set wake time + alarm	☐
Place phone away from bed	☐
Write bedtime target (optional)	☐
Wake anchor met	☐
10-minute wind-down	☐

1-minute reflection

What helped my sleep most today?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 2: Morning Light

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Step outside within 60 minutes of waking	☐
Open blinds immediately	☐
Short walk if possible	☐
Wake anchor met	☐
10-minute wind-down	☐

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 3: Caffeine Boundary

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Choose cutoff time	■
Swap afternoon drink (tea/decaf/water)	■
Track tonight’s sleep onset	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What time did I feel sleepy? What was I doing?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 4: Screen Step-Down

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Lower brightness after dinner	■
No work email in bed	■
Pick a calming activity	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 5: Wind-Down Routine

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Choose a 10-minute wind-down	■
Prep tomorrow (clothes/lunch)	■
Try 2 minutes of breathing	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What got in the way — and what’s one workaround for tomorrow?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 6: Bedroom Tweak

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Adjust room temp	■
Make room darker	■
Try white noise/fan if helpful	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 7: Review & Keep 2

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Circle top 2 habits that helped	■
Pick Week 2 focus	■
Plan one barrier workaround	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What helped my sleep most today?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 8: Screens & Environment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Screen step-down (30 min)	■
Dim lights after dinner	■
Upgrade bedroom (1 small change)	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What helped my sleep most today?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 9: Screens & Environment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Screen step-down (30 min)	■
Dim lights after dinner	■
Upgrade bedroom (1 small change)	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What helped my sleep most today?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 10: Screens & Environment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Screen step-down (30 min)	■
Dim lights after dinner	■
Upgrade bedroom (1 small change)	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What got in the way — and what’s one workaround for tomorrow?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 11: Screens & Environment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Screen step-down (30 min)	■
Dim lights after dinner	■
Upgrade bedroom (1 small change)	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What helped my sleep most today?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 12: Screens & Environment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Screen step-down (30 min)	■
Dim lights after dinner	■
Upgrade bedroom (1 small change)	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 13: Screens & Environment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Screen step-down (30 min)	■
Dim lights after dinner	■
Upgrade bedroom (1 small change)	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What got in the way — and what’s one workaround for tomorrow?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 14: Screens & Environment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Screen step-down (30 min)	■
Dim lights after dinner	■
Upgrade bedroom (1 small change)	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What helped my sleep most today?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 15: Stress & Downshift

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Do a nervous-system tool (2–5 min)	■
Brain dump or closure ritual	■
Protect wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 16: Stress & Downshift

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Do a nervous-system tool (2–5 min)	■
Brain dump or closure ritual	■
Protect wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What got in the way — and what’s one workaround for tomorrow?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 17: Stress & Downshift

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Do a nervous-system tool (2–5 min)	■
Brain dump or closure ritual	■
Protect wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 18: Stress & Downshift

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Do a nervous-system tool (2–5 min)	■
Brain dump or closure ritual	■
Protect wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What time did I feel sleepy? What was I doing?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 19: Stress & Downshift

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Do a nervous-system tool (2–5 min)	■
Brain dump or closure ritual	■
Protect wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 20: Stress & Downshift

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Do a nervous-system tool (2–5 min)	■
Brain dump or closure ritual	■
Protect wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What helped my sleep most today?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 21: Stress & Downshift

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Do a nervous-system tool (2–5 min)	■
Brain dump or closure ritual	■
Protect wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What got in the way — and what’s one workaround for tomorrow?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 22: Lock-In & Experiment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Run your sleep experiment	■
Keep wake anchor	■
Keep step-down + wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 23: Lock-In & Experiment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Run your sleep experiment	■
Keep wake anchor	■
Keep step-down + wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What helped my sleep most today?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 24: Lock-In & Experiment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Run your sleep experiment	■
Keep wake anchor	■
Keep step-down + wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What got in the way — and what’s one workaround for tomorrow?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 25: Lock-In & Experiment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Run your sleep experiment	☐
Keep wake anchor	☐
Keep step-down + wind-down	☐
Wake anchor met	☐
10-minute wind-down	☐

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 26: Lock-In & Experiment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Run your sleep experiment	■
Keep wake anchor	■
Keep step-down + wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 27: Lock-In & Experiment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Run your sleep experiment	■
Keep wake anchor	■
Keep step-down + wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 28: Lock-In & Experiment

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Run your sleep experiment	■
Keep wake anchor	■
Keep step-down + wind-down	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

What got in the way — and what’s one workaround for tomorrow?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 29: Build Your Playbook

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Write your top 3 habits	■
List top 2 sleep disruptors	■
Choose your ongoing routine	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Day 30: Relapse Plan

Today’s checklist

Action	Done
Write your relapse plan	■
Choose ‘minimum viable’ routine	■
Schedule a 2-week check-in with yourself	■
Wake anchor met	■
10-minute wind-down	■

1-minute reflection

How did I feel in the first hour after waking?

Notes: _____

_____

Weekly Reviews

Use these pages to summarize what you learned and choose your next focus.

Week 1 Review (Days 1–7)

Wins

What improved? Energy, mood, focus, patience, workouts?

_____

_____

Patterns

What consistently hurt sleep (screens, stress, caffeine, schedule, environment)?

_____

_____

Next week plan (2+1)

Keep these 2: _____

Experiment with this 1: _____

Week 2 Review (Days 8–14)

Wins

What improved? Energy, mood, focus, patience, workouts?

_____

_____

Patterns

What consistently hurt sleep (screens, stress, caffeine, schedule, environment)?

_____

_____

Next week plan (2+1)

Keep these 2: _____

Experiment with this 1: _____

Week 3 Review (Days 15–21)

Wins

What improved? Energy, mood, focus, patience, workouts?

_____

_____

Patterns

What consistently hurt sleep (screens, stress, caffeine, schedule, environment)?

_____

_____

Next week plan (2+1)

Keep these 2: _____

Experiment with this 1: _____

Week 4 Review (Days 22–30)

Wins

What improved? Energy, mood, focus, patience, workouts?

_____

_____

Patterns

What consistently hurt sleep (screens, stress, caffeine, schedule, environment)?

_____

_____

Next week plan (2+1)

Keep these 2: _____

Experiment with this 1: _____

Journal Prompts

Journaling isn't homework — it's a way to get your brain out of "loop mode." Pick 1 prompt, write for 3–5 minutes, and stop.

5-minute prompts

- What time did I feel my first wave of sleepiness tonight? What was I doing?
- What does 'good sleep' help me do tomorrow (energy, patience, focus, mood)?
- What's one boundary that would protect my evenings this week?
- What is the smallest wind-down routine I can realistically do on my hardest days?
- What habit is stealing my sleep the most right now (screens, stress, caffeine, schedule)?

More prompts (pick one)

- If my sleep could talk, what would it ask me to change first?
- What time do I usually start "closing the day" — and what gets in the way?
- What are my top three sleep disruptors right now (stress, screens, schedule, pain, temperature, caffeine)?
- What is one boundary I can set after school to protect evening recovery?
- When I wake up at night, what thought shows up first? (Name it without judging.)
- What's one small win I noticed this week (energy, mood, patience, focus)?
- What does a 'good night' look like for me (not perfect — just better)?
- What's one thing I can do tomorrow morning to support tonight's sleep?

Write space

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

References & Suggested Reading

Primary sources used to build this toolkit. If a link changes, search the title.

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• VA — CBT-i Coach app. https://mobile.va.gov/app/cbt-i-coach

• VA — Insomnia Coach app. https://www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile/insomnia_coach.asp

• UCLA Mindful — Free guided meditations. https://www.uclahealth.org/uclamindful/free-guided-meditations

• American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) — sleep education resources (search: AASM sleep education).

• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) — sleep and health (search: CDC sleep).

• National Institutes of Health (NIH) — sleep topics and insomnia information (search: NIH insomnia).

• VA/DoD CBT-i Coach materials and clinician guidance (behavioral sleep strategies) (search: VA CBT-I).

Your Next Step

Pick ONE action to start tonight:

Tonight's one step	Done
Set a consistent wake time	■
Start a 10-minute wind-down	■
Move caffeine earlier	■
Create a screen sunset	■
Cool/darken/quiet your bedroom	■

Then run one 7-day challenge

Small changes compound. Choose the track that matches your biggest sleep disruptor and commit for 7 days.

If you want the simplest plan: protect wake time + do a 10-minute wind-down.

Created for GMSD employees by the Department of Coordinated School Health.