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## The Best Advice for Veterans Whose Sleep Is Suffering

Sleeplessness and mental health-related issues go [hand-in-hand](#), and unfortunately, many vets struggle with both. Issues like anxiety, depression, and [PTSD](#) can contribute to insomnia, which can worsen the condition. This can lead to a downward spiral, as reduced sleep quality or length leads to exacerbated mental health conditions, which, in turn, reduces sleep quality.

If nights tend to give you more grief than slumber, it's critical to address the situation. Read on as we explore ways to get things where they should be, brought to you by [The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 92](#).

### **Does Your Bedroom Have Room for Improvement?**

You might be surprised to learn how well your sleep can be linked with your bedroom. As CubeSensors explains, one of the biggest bedroom sleep [inhibitors](#) is insufficient darkness. If light is sneaking into your bedroom, take measures to keep it from bothering you. Install some

blackout [curtains](#) or wear a sleep mask. Noise can also be disruptive. If sounds are what's keeping you up, add a [white noise machine](#) to create soothing sounds through the night.

Clutter can also cause you to lose sleep. Not only does clutter [increase anxiety](#) and stress, but it can also trap bad energy in your bedroom, which will ultimately work against you at the end of a very long day. So, take steps to keep your bedroom organized and clutter-free.

Another potential source of trouble is your mattress. Contrary to popular belief, mattresses don't have a long lifespan, and if you can feel the springs or foundation through yours, or if you wake up sore in the mornings, it's likely time for a replacement.

Another mattress problem can be size, especially if you wake up when your partner rolls over. If you're hanging off the bed, bumping into each other, and so forth, consider a size upgrade.

There are many mattresses on the market, and shopping for a new one can be particularly overwhelming. So, think through what your priorities are; for instance, queen-size mattresses are the most popular choice among American consumers and allow couples extra room to spread out. Before making a purchase, examine popular brands and what they have to offer.

### **Chew on This Food for Thought**

Chances are, you're well aware that what you eat has a direct effect on your weight and health, but it also can contribute negatively or positively to your sleep. AARP explains there are some foods that you should [avoid](#) — like grapefruit, celery, and pizza — close to bedtime. Caffeinated beverages are another nighttime no-no, as well as alcoholic beverages.

On the other hand, some foods can help you drift off and stay asleep; lettuce, almonds, and kiwifruit are good choices. If you're looking for something to replace the traditional nightcap, try something along the lines of chamomile tea or warm milk.

### **Bad Habits to Swap with Good Ones**

What you consume before bed is just one part of how your [waking habits](#) can affect your sleep. If you use electronics before bed, be forewarned that the blue light they emit can make you feel more alert. Opt for setting them aside before you turn in — and that goes for your TV, too!

Instead of surfing, shopping, or scanning social media, put your evening time and energy into something that will help you unwind. Some light reading material or journaling can help settle your mind and get you into a positive mode for sleep.

Similarly, too much physical activity can have you too wound up to sleep well. [Exercising](#) can be a boon to both sleep and mental health, but if you're doing it close to bedtime and having trouble sleeping, try sliding it into another time slot in your day.

Whatever you do, don't let poor sleep come between you and your mental wellness. If you're struggling to get quality slumber, take action. Try these self-help tips, and if you're still not getting sleep, don't hesitate to reach out for help.