SLEEP, PT. 2:
What If You Still Can’t Sleep?

Video Link

Transcript
Hi there. Thanks for viewing. Let’s get right to it. We all know that a good night’s sleep is important for mental and physical health. You can’t help others if you’re a mess yourself. Check out my last video, “Sleep for Resilience,” for good things you can do about this problem.

But what if you still can’t sleep? Here’s what other emergency responders have found helpful. One of these may work for you.

• Practice this breathing exercise.
  Empty your lungs. Breath in quietly for four seconds. Hold your breath for four seconds. Exhale slowly through your mouth, with your lips held loosely together, for four seconds.
  Repeat up to four times.
• Or, try this one.
  Relax your body by slowly and gently tightening and loosening your muscles from top to bottom.
  Repeat until your entire body is relaxed and free of tension.

Maybe it’s time to try those mindfulness or meditation exercises everyone talks about. You can find them online. Use one for a few minutes when you can’t sleep.

I often redirect worrisome thoughts about work or home to pleasant thoughts, memories, or hopes for the future. Sometimes I picture my favorite vacation or hiking spot. Some responders pray for others in the middle of the night or count their blessings. Focus on something peaceful, like repeating a phrase or counting backwards. A mental ritual clears the mind.

Some people keep a reminder pad nearby, writing down things they want to remember later. That would keep me awake, but it might work for you. Finally, I say quietly hug the person next to you, if you’re not alone. He or she deserves gratitude for being patient with your inability to sleep soundly.

Let’s face it – if you’re constantly getting 6 or less hours of sleep, it’s time to talk with someone about it. A counselor or medical doctor can help you decide what else to do. Let’s solve this problem.

Contact my friends at the Headington Institute for more information or assistance. They’re here to help.