

In the demanding role of an election official, ensuring a good night's sleep is essential for maintaining focus, decision-making, and overall well-being. Establishing healthy sleep habits can significantly impact your performance and resilience during election seasons.

## BENEFITS

- Improve cognitive function and decision-making
- Increase energy levels and alertness
- Enhance emotional well-being

## QUICK EXERCISE/ACTIVITY

### Bedtime Ritual

- 1 Establish a consistent bedtime routine 30 to 60 minutes before bedtime to signal to your body that it's time to wind down.
- 2 Dim the lights and engage in calming activities, such as reading a book or practicing gentle stretches.
- 3 Avoid screen time at least 30 minutes before bedtime to reduce exposure to blue light.

Activities that can be incorporated into a bedtime routine:

- Enjoy a light snack or bedtime tea (chamomile or lavender tea are good for bedtime)
- Take a warm bath
- Listen to music
- Stretch, breathe, and relax
- Practice meditation
- Read a good book
- Write down a to-do list or journal
- Prepare your bedroom (make the room as cool, dark, and quiet as possible)

### Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

- 1 Lie comfortably in bed.
- 2 Starting with your toes, tense each muscle group for a few seconds, then release the tension.
- 3 Move gradually through each muscle group, working your way up to your head.
- 4 Focus on your breath and enjoy the deep sense of relaxation.

Use this resource from the [Dartmouth College Student Wellness Center](#) for more tips on PMR.

## Alternatives to Counting Sleep

- 1 Take long, slow deep breaths in for four seconds and out for four seconds. You can even repeat a word or phrase, such as “I am comfortable” or “relax”. Repeat as needed.
- 2 Imagine you are grocery shopping and pick out items according to the alphabet.
- 3 Imagine you are on a walk in one of your favorite places. Bring in your senses and imagine what you see, hear, feel, smell, and taste.
- 4 Consider downloading a meditation or white noise app, such as Headspace or Calm.

## Additional Sleep Tips

- Ensure your sleep environment is comfortable, cool, and dark. Utilize black out curtains, cover up any lights from electronics, use a fan or noise maker, and put your phone on silent.
- Limit caffeine, sugar, and heavy meals in the hours leading up to bedtime.
- Ensure that your bed is for sleep - don't do work, check emails, watch TV, etc. in your bed. Your body needs to know that your bed is for sleeping and not for activities.
- Set yourself up for success the next morning by preparing your clothes/lunches/work bags the night before and place them in an easy to reach spot.



## Tips for Incorporation

- Set a consistent sleep schedule, going to bed and waking up at the same time each day.
- Create a relaxing pre-sleep routine to signal to your body that it's time to unwind.

## CONCLUSION

Prioritizing healthy sleep habits is a cornerstone of maintaining optimal performance and well-being. By incorporating these quick exercises and tips into your routine, you'll enhance the quality of your sleep and be better equipped to face the challenges of election management with clarity and resilience.