



Caffeine Reset Guide

A worksheet for looking at caffeine timing, stacking, crashes, and how it may be affecting sleep or stress.



Caffeine Can Help - Until It Doesn't

Caffeine is one of the most common tools in law enforcement. It sharpens alertness, cuts through fatigue, and keeps you functional during long shifts or overnight rotations. Used right, it works. Used wrong, it works against you.

Too much caffeine - or caffeine too late in the day - can quietly increase tension, trigger crashes mid-shift, fuel irritability, and wreck sleep quality even when you're exhausted. Over time, that pattern compounds. You end up using more caffeine to compensate for the sleep problems caffeine helped create.

Short-Term Benefit

Improved alertness, faster reaction, reduced perception of fatigue during demanding hours.

When It Backfires

Crashes, irritability, anxiety spikes, and disrupted sleep - especially with late or stacked doses.


The Cycle

Poor sleep leads to heavier caffeine use, which leads to worse sleep. The cycle is real and it builds fast.

Track the Stack

Most officers don't realize how much caffeine they're actually taking in across a full shift. Coffee, energy drinks, pre-workout, soda - it stacks up fast. Use this section to get an honest look at what you're actually consuming.

Source	Typical Amount	Approx. Caffeine
Coffee	_____	~95mg per 8oz
Energy Drinks	_____	~80-300mg per can
Pre-Workout	_____	~150-300mg per serving
Soda	_____	~35-55mg per 12oz
Other Caffeine	_____	_____
Total Estimate	_____	_____

 Most adults process about 400mg of caffeine per day without significant side effects. Many officers unknowingly exceed that during a single shift.

Timing Check

When you take caffeine matters as much as how much you take. Caffeine has a half-life of roughly 5-6 hours - meaning half of what you consume is still active in your system hours later. Use these prompts to audit your timing.

When is my first caffeine of the shift?

Write it down: _____

When is my last caffeine of the shift?

Write it down: _____

Is caffeine too close to when I sleep?

If your last dose is within 6 hours of sleep, it's likely disrupting sleep quality. Yes / No: _____

Am I using caffeine to push through exhaustion?

Masking deep fatigue with caffeine delays recovery. Be honest: Yes / No: _____



Notice the Crash

Caffeine crashes aren't weakness - they're data. They tell you where your timing or intake is off. Recognizing the pattern is the first step to adjusting it. Check the ones that apply to you.

Wired, Then Drained

Do you feel a strong surge followed by a hard energy drop - usually 3–5 hours after your last dose? That's the classic crash pattern. Mark it: Yes / No / Sometimes

More Irritable Later in the Shift

Caffeine withdrawal can mimic stress responses - short fuse, low tolerance, edginess. Mark it: Yes / No / Sometimes

Anxious or Restless Without a Clear Reason

High caffeine intake raises cortisol and can amplify baseline stress. Mark it: Yes / No / Sometimes

Trouble Falling Asleep Even When Exhausted

If you're tired but wired at bedtime, late caffeine is likely the culprit. Mark it: Yes / No / Sometimes

Reset Plan

You don't need a dramatic overhaul. Small, specific adjustments to timing and stacking make a real difference over the course of a week. Fill in this plan and keep it where you'll see it during shift.

My Commitments

01

My caffeine cutoff time:

I will stop caffeine by: _____

02

One drink I can replace with water:

I'll swap out: _____

03

One shift where I'll reduce stacking:

Target shift: _____

04

What I'll use instead for energy:

Alternative: _____

Energy Alternatives Worth Trying

- Cold water with electrolytes - faster hydration than coffee
- A 10-minute walk during a break - resets alertness without stimulants
- Strategic napping (10–20 min) before overnight shifts
- Protein-heavy snacks to stabilize blood sugar and reduce crash risk
- Controlled breathing for 2 minutes - activates focus without stimulants

✔ Even shifting your caffeine cutoff 30 minutes earlier can meaningfully improve sleep quality within 3–5 days.

"Caffeine is a tool. The goal is to use it without letting it run the shift."