

PREVENTION IN ACTION

SELF-CARE

COPING WITH COVID-19

While practicing physical distancing, it's important to maintain social connections.

- **Stay connected to others.** Whether through phone calls, virtual meetups, texts, or sending and posting messages via social media—talk about your feelings with friends and loved ones if you find it helpful. Share words of support, listen without judging, and, if needed, connect with resources and help.
- **Kids also need to feel connected.** Schedule virtual playdates for them, and make sure they talk to loved ones via phone or video app.
- **Stay connected with yourself.** Make it a priority to eat healthy foods, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. Relax your body often by doing things that work for you—deep breathing, stretching, meditating, or engaging in activities you enjoy. Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do something fun after a hard task.
- **Stay informed.** Stay up to date while limiting your media exposure. Avoid consuming news reports 24/7 since this tends to increase anxiety and worry.
- **Get help.** Support resources include Chaplains, the Community Counseling Program, embedded mental health professionals, supervisors, peers or family members, Military OneSource, Veterans Crisis Line/Military Crisis Line, and the DSTRESS Line.

USMC INTEGRATES PREVENTION EFFORTS

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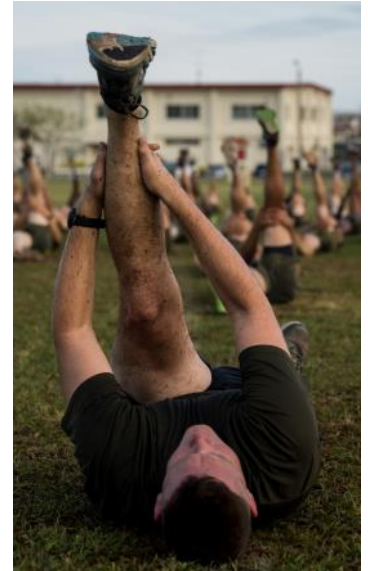
The Marine Corps responds and intervenes quickly and effectively once aware of problematic behaviors among Marines, Sailors, and dependents. However, we need to improve prevention efforts across the Marine Corps.

Historically, we have attacked these behaviors individually and with a narrow focus, while mainly using awareness campaigns and training to reach Marines, Sailors, and Families.

We are shifting to a more holistic approach to prevention efforts across the Marine & Family Programs portfolio. Rather than focusing on the prevention of individual behaviors, we are incorporating skill building to increase resiliency and show what right looks like.

We are communicating what to do, instead of just what not to do.

Each month, this Prevention in



Many Marines use yoga to manage stress.

Action newsletter will discuss a different theme with actionable and operational recommendations for Marines, Sailors, Families, Civilian Marines, and Veterans.

If you have content ideas, questions or want to highlight an initiative, contact Prevention Manager Christine Heit at christine.heit@usmc.mil.

BOX BREATHING CAN HELP YOU RELAX WHEN YOU'RE FEELING STRESSED

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

Samurai, the ancient warriors of Japan, were well known for mental discipline that helped them stay calm

1. Inhale through your nose; expand your stomach.



2. Hold your breath.

4. Hold your breath.

3. Slowly exhale through your nose.

and focused during battle.

Just as with other military training, the more you practice, the easier it will be to

recall these techniques when needed.

You should practice them often to better safeguard against stress.

1. Inhale through your nose deeply, expanding your stomach for a count of four—one, two, three, four. Breathe into your belly, not your chest, because you want to activate a part of your nervous system that turns off that flight, fight, or freeze response.
2. Hold your breath for a count of four—one, two, three, four.
3. Slowly exhale through the nose—one, two, three, four.
4. Hold your breath for a count of four—one, two, three, four.

This exercise can be found in the Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) Team Training Job Aid. See a Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC) representative for more information on OSCAR team training and related resources.

PREPARE FOR LIFE POST-QUARANTINE

As we begin to emerge from months of quarantine, our lives won't snap back to normal overnight. We will need to remain vigilant until health officials give us the all clear, and that might not happen for many more months.

You will need to decide how to proceed, and we all will be learning together how to navigate unfamiliar territory. Here are some things to consider as you venture out:

1. Keep hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) and disinfectant wipes on hand, and develop a habit of using them. Keep a stash in your bag and at work. Don't store in hot vehicle.

Wipe down surfaces and items you use frequently at home, in your car, and at work—including door handles, light switches, remotes, phones, keyboards, and mice.

Apply hand sanitizer or wash your hands after touching door handles, elevator buttons,



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vending machines, screens, and other objects.

2. Decline to shake hands or give high fives. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and leader of the White House's

fight against COVID-19, wants us to drop these social customs. "I don't think we should ever shake hands ever again," Fauci said recently. "We've got to break that custom."

3. Minimize your use of cash to reduce germ exposure. Most restaurants allow you to order and pay online and pick up curbside or in a drive-thru.

4. Follow guidelines about when and where to wear a mask. Ensure you wear and remove your mask correctly. CDC advises children under 2 should not wear a mask due to suffocation hazard and because they will touch their faces more.

5. Teach your children about coughing and sneezing into their elbows, washing hands properly for at least 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available, cleaning their personal spaces regularly, and letting you know if they have been around anyone who may be sick.

The United States Marine Corps Prevention System publishes the Prevention in Action newsletter to share information and resources. To suggest topics or submit questions, email Prevention Manager Christine Heit at christine.heit@usmc.mil. July's topic is networks, and August's topic is problem-solving.

IN BRIEF

Promote Warrior Maintenance
Check your local MCCS website to find out when the next Warrior Maintenance course for Marines and Families will be offered. Recommend it to people you think it might benefit. The eight-session course is designed to help people reduce their stress levels by teaching healthy coping strategies.

Maintain Spiritual Fitness
In a new video, RADM Gregory Todd, Chaplain of the Marine Corps, explains why spiritual fitness is vital to overall health and how it can be exercised by connecting with faith or others. Check it out by visiting www.dvidshub.net/video/753228/spiritual-fitness.

INSURGENCY ATTACKS YOUR OVERALL HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE

It can change your behaviors, secretly making you crave another doughnut or cigarette.

It can deflate performance—physically, cognitively, and sexually.

What is this insurgency waging a stealth war on performance and a healthy lifestyle?

Sleep deprivation.

Consistent sleep deprivation is a major problem, and the consequences of consistently not getting enough sleep can be wide ranging and significant.

The Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP) notes that these consequences range from increased stress and decreased physical performance to damaged relationships and poor eating habits.

For many Marines the question isn't "What happens if I don't get enough sleep?" but rather, "How can I sleep better?"

The first step in the war on sleep deprivation is to evaluate the severity of your sleep concerns.

If you're having severe sleep issues, call for backup—see your primary care professional.

If you don't have severe sleep concerns, but could improve the quality of your sleep, check out the article linked below from CHAMP.

Remember, as Sun Tzu states in his famed work, The Art of War: "If you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles."



Contact your local Semper Fit Human Performance experts for more information.

www.hprc-online.org/mental-fitness/sleep-stress/why-you-should-prioritize-sleep-better-military-performance

Help kids cope with stress

Kids get stressed, too, and parents can help them manage. Let them choose a coping strategy from the list, or brainstorm your own ideas.

A

Ask for help.

Add numbers.

Ask to call a friend.

B

Bounce a ball.

Breathe deeply and slowly.

Blow bubbles.

C

Count to 10 or 100 or 1,000.

Color a picture.

Catch a ball.

D

Dance around.

Dress up in costumes.

Discuss feelings.

E

Eat a healthy snack.

Exercise.

Erect a tall tower of blocks.

F

Find a recipe to make later.

Finger-paint to express what you're feeling.

Free write feelings.

G

Go outside.

Go to a different room in the house for a change of scenery.

Grow a garden or plant.

H

Have a party (at home).

Hug it out.

Hop like a bunny.

I

Imagine a place you'd rather be.

Play I-Spy with family.

J

Jog in place /do jumping jacks.

Jot down good behaviors.

Journal your feelings.

K

Kick a soccer ball in the yard.

Keep list of fun things to do in the future.

L

Listen to music.

Listen to an audio book.

Learn something new.

M

Make silly faces.

Make a fort or Lego structure.

Make a craft.

N

Take a nap.

Take a nature walk.

Create a note jar or box of positive messages.

O

Make an obstacle course.

Plan a family Olympics contest.

Organize something (toys, books, clothes, etc.).

P

Play a board game or put together a puzzle.

Challenge others to do planks, pull-ups, and push-ups.

Plant some seeds.



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Q

Quack like a duck.

Quiet down for 10 minutes.

Quiz others on trivia.

R

Read a book.

Run around the block.

Ride a bike.

S

Sing/stream favorite songs.

Soak in tub.

Send a letter to someone.

T

Take a shower.

Take the dog for a walk.

Travel online to a state or country you've never visited.

U

Unlock a riddle.

Voyage under the sea virtually.

Undertake a project.

V

Voice your concerns.

Set up a video meeting with friends or family.

Visualize fun things you want to do in the future.

W

Watch a movie.

Write some poetry.

Walk in the woods.

X

Play a xylophone.

X-plore a new walking trail.

Y

Yell into a pillow.

Do some yoga.

Yodel at the top of your lungs.

Z

Zigzag around the house.

Do a Zumba workout.

Visit a zoo online.



YOURSELF

JUNE IS MEN'S HEALTH MONTH

Schedule the health screenings you need.

Checkup	Frequency	Age		
		18-39	40-49	50+
Physical Exam —Review overall health status, receive thorough exam, and discuss health topics.	Every 3 years	✓		
	Every 2 years		✓	
	Every year			✓
Blood pressure —Check because high blood pressure has no symptoms, but it can damage organs permanently.	Every year	✓	✓	✓
Blood tests and urinalysis —Screen for various conditions (e.g., cholesterol, diabetes, kidney or thyroid dysfunction).	Every 3 years	✓		
	Every 2 years		✓	
	Every year			✓
Electrocardiogram (EKG) —Screen for heart abnormalities.	Baseline at age 30	✓		
	Every 2 years		✓	
Tetanus booster	Every 10 years	✓	✓	✓
	Every year	✓	✓	✓
PSA blood test —Check prostate specific antigen levels; higher levels can mean infection, enlargement, or cancer	Every year		*	✓
Hemoccult —Screen the stool for microscopic amounts of blood that can be first indication of polyps or colon cancer.	Every year		✓	✓
Colorectal screening —Undergo a colonoscopy to detect colon cancer and polyps, which can become cancerous.	Every 3-4 years		First one at age 45	
Chest X-ray —Consider if you are a smoker and over 45.	Discuss with doctor.		✓	✓
Bone health —Consider a bone mineral density test.	Discuss with doctor.			Age 60
Self exams —Check testicles and breasts for lumps, skin for changing moles or freckles, and mouth for lesions.	Every month	✓	✓	✓
Testosterone screening —Screen for low testosterone, which can cause low sex drive or erectile dysfunction and contribute to fatigue and depression.	Discuss with doctor.		✓	✓
Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) —Get screened for syphilis, chlamydia, HIV, and other STDs if you consider yourself to be at risk.	Discuss with doctor.	✓	✓	✓
Dental checkup —See a dentist before you have an issue that will be painful to treat; get screened for oral cancer.	Once or twice a year	✓	✓	✓
Eye exam —Get an eye exam even if you have no trouble seeing to detect eye diseases early.	Discuss with doctor.		Baseline exam at age 40	✓

Build skills to help reach your health goals

Take advantage of Semper Fit's Human Performance Program's 7 core elements.

Nutrition: Fuel to fight. Take part in healthy cooking classes, dietary supplement analysis, and meal planning. Get guidance for a healthy diet.

Sleep: Keep your brain and body fresh. Learn about the science of sleep and develop healthy habits to improve performance.

Cognitive performance: Exercise your brain. Learn skills to boost mental processes including attention, memory, problem solving, and overall brain function.

Tobacco: The Operation Tobacco-Free Marine Program offers individual counseling and group classes.

Injury Prevention: Keep your body in fighting shape. Learn to prevent common injuries with workshops, health fairs, safety briefs, and running shoe clinics.

Chronic disease prevention: Check blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, body composition, resting metabolic rate, VO2 max, and bone density.

Sexual health and responsibility: Learn about family planning, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, prenatal/postpartum fitness, and positive sexual behaviors.

Check with your local Semper Fit for program availability.

Source: Men's Health Network, American Dental Association, and American Academy of Ophthalmology.
 *Some medical associations recommend that men talk to their doctors about a baseline PSA blood test at age 40. Men at high risk, including African Americans, should consider an annual prostate exam beginning at age 40.
 Note: Share this list with the men in your life—spouses, partners, male relatives, and friends—to raise awareness.