

PREVENTION IN ACTION

KICKING OFF THE NEW YEAR WITH HEALTHY HABITS

EMBRACE A BALANCED LIFESTYLE



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Mind-body wellness means finding balance by looking after both your mental and physical health.

Incorporating daily [mind-body practices](#) may help lower stress, maintain strength, and improve your overall well-being.

Practices like yoga, muscle relaxation, and meditation are great for helping your mind and body. Yoga, for example, can increase chemicals in the brain that help with stress and make

you feel calmer. The Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP) encourages these practices to help service members be physically and mentally ready.

CHAMP's Human Performance Resource Center (HPRC) offers easy exercises, like [deep breathing](#) and [muscle relaxation](#), to reduce stress. These exercises can help you feel less anxious, focus better, and handle challenges more easily.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) also suggests doing activities like tai chi and guided relaxation to improve mood and reduce stress.

Families can do these activities together to build strong bonds.

Family yoga, with kid-friendly poses like "downward dog" or "cat-cow" makes it fun and helps children join in.

Taking deep breaths together as a family is another great way to relax and create a calm

moment during a busy day.

Outdoor activities like nature walks or scavenger hunts are also great ways to stay active.

They make exercise fun and help kids enjoy being outside.

Adding mind-body practices to your daily life helps you stay strong and connected.

Making time for these simple activities can lead to a healthier, happier life and help you overcome any challenge.

Take Steps to Get the Entire Family Active in 2025

To kick-start the New Year, shake off 2024 by getting out and getting active. Here are a few recreational activities to ensure the whole family can focus on total fitness and start the new year with fun!

Accessible Playgrounds

Playgrounds offer easy, free entertainment for all children, so visit one of the Marine

Corps' accessible playgrounds. These playgrounds have been built throughout the Marine Corps and promote social and physical fitness for people of all abilities.

Inclusion Fitness Trainers

Inclusion fitness trainers are available in Semper Fit fitness centers across the Marine Corps. These trainers determine how best to

make physical activity a part of a holistic support plan focused on total fitness for people with various disabilities.

Adaptive Equipment Checkout

Some installations offer adaptive equipment for use, such as canoes, kayaks, and various wheelchairs, as well as adaptive

DISCOVER THE MARINE FOR LIFE NETWORK FOR YOUR NEXT CHAPTER

Connect with military-friendly resources and opportunities as you embark on your transition to civilian life.

Whether you're just beginning this journey or have already made the move, the Marine for Life Network (M4LN) is here to help you grow your professional connections and provide the support and guidance you need to thrive beyond the military.

Strengthen your professional relationships and expand your network. Networking is essential in today's job market, and the M4LN enhances your ability to connect through both virtual and in-person channels.

By fostering social connectedness, you can build a robust support system that benefits your personal and professional growth.

Virtual Networking. Join the M4LN's expanding community of Marines, veterans, and military personnel on LinkedIn. This premier professional networking

site offers valuable career tools, helps you stay connected with peers, and aids in developing your professional brand.

To get started, set up your profile and join a Marine for Life (M4L) regional network group to maximize your connections.

Face-to-Face Networking. With more than 70 M4L reps serving as hometown links, you have direct access to a bridge between military and civilian communities nationwide. These reps will introduce you to military-friendly job opportunities, career resources, and networking events. They will assist you in building relationships and exploring employment, education, and community services in your current location or where you plan to relocate.

Support for Military Spouses. The M4LN also is dedicated to empowering military spouses to expand their networks and find resources that enhance both their personal and professional



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lives. By leveraging the power of the network, military spouses can access a wider array of employers, academic institutions, and entrepreneurship resources.

Take the first step toward a fulfilling civilian career and a

strong support network today!

Visit the [Marine for Life Network web page](#) to learn more and request assistance from your Marine for Life representative.

Stay connected with the M4LN on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [X](#).

ACTIVE

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swim lessons. Adaptive equipment offers opportunities and access for all.

Special Olympics Young Athletes

Is your child ready to take his or her fitness to the next level? Contact your local [Exceptional Family Member Program \(EFMP\)](#) office to learn more about the Special Olympics Young Athletes Program (SOYAP). SOYAP is an inclusive sport and play program designed for all children ages 2 to 7. SOYAP focuses on fun activities that are important to mental, social, and

physical growth and fitness.

Sensory Friendly Movies/Story Time

Looking for something a little more laid back? Contact your local EFMP office for a schedule of sensory friendly movie showings or sensory story time at your base library.

Interested to learn more about inclusive activities at your installation? Contact your local EFMP office or [Semper Fit](#) and get up, out, and active!

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The United States Marine Corps' Marine & Family Programs Division publishes Prevention in Action each quarter.

The contents of this newsletter are for informational purposes only and not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

Visit <https://www.usmc-mccs.org/news/prevention>



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To suggest topics or questions, email hqmcprevention@usmc.mil.

To access hot links, right-click on link, copy link, and paste it into a browser window.

PUT A BUDGET CHECKUP ON YOUR CALENDAR

Start the new year with a financial checkup, to ensure you're on track with your goals and prepared for any unexpected changes.

A checkup provides a holistic view of your financial situation, helping you make informed decisions for the future. Do it once or twice a year, and a personal financial manager or command financial specialist (CFS) can assist.

Being proactive allows you to maintain financial wellness and make adjustments as life circumstances or financial goals change.

Key elements of a checkup are listed below.

Budget Analysis

- Review your income versus expenses.
- Identify discretionary spending and prioritize essential expenses.
- Update your budget regularly to reflect changes in financial circumstances, such as salary increases or new expenses.

Retirement Plan Updates

- Adjust contributions based on cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and salary changes.
- Ensure your retirement savings are on track for your target retirement age.



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- Consider revisiting investment allocations to align with current financial goals.

Allowance for Kids

- Create a dedicated category in your budget for children's expenses, such as allowances, extracurricular activities, or educational costs.
- Plan for future costs like college savings or special family trips.
- Involve kids in budgeting to build their financial literacy.

Budgeting Tools

- Use digital tools or apps to track spending and savings.
- Automate savings and bill payments to simplify your financial management.
- Set up alerts and reminders for important financial milestones or deadlines.

Contact your local [Personal Financial Management Program](#) at your installation or your unit CFS for more information.

Renew Your Relationship to Start New Year on a Healthy, Harmonious Note

To have a healthy, long-term romantic relationship, you might need to take a new approach to some old patterns.

For many people, that means adjusting old expectations and becoming more accountable. Jump-start the new year with these tips to renew your relationship and keep it strong for your next trip around the sun.

Regulate

While it's normal to have ups and downs, the key to harmony is learning to regulate your own feelings first. It can be hard to remain calm when you feel upset or hurt. But if you only look to your partner to make you feel better, your efforts could backfire.

For example, if you feel insecure and ask your partner to repeatedly

reassure you or change her or his behavior, it might come off as "clingy" or even overwhelming. Your partner might feel pressured and could withdraw from you rather than come closer. If your partner's presence feels like a bonus instead of a need, you're on the right track.

Engage

When you see your partner upset, slow down and engage in a way that empowers both of you. Engage with empathy and boundaries. You might say, "I know you feel anxious about me going out with the guys. I feel a bit guilty, and I think I need to deal with that. But do you think you can cope with your own feelings too? It's really important for me to keep these friendships."

The best way to stay engaged in your relationship is open communication: If you need some space, ask for it. If a conversation starts to escalate, take a break and pick it up later rather than giving each other the silent treatment.

Nurture

Healthy relationships are more than just surviving conflict and finding compromise. It's important to take time to nurture both emotional and physical intimacy as a couple. Little things and small acknowledgments that show you care are as important as bigger displays or gestures.

Endure

To grow individually and together as partners, it's important to cope with how you feel rather than look for quick fixes. It can be tough to

work through the big stuff, so take your time and stick with it.

Work

It's easy to lose yourself in relationships. You might feel subtle (or not-so-subtle) pressure to be more like your partner and enjoy the same activities or even share the same goals.

But if you give in to those pressures, you can lose track of your own sense of self. While it's good to adapt some over time, you also want to keep a clear sense of your own identity.

Set personal goals and learn new things that also can "renew" your connection with your partner. Keep in mind solid relationships consist of two people with solid identities who can work together.

—[Consortium for Health and Military Performance](#)

Exercise Benefits Your Overall Health

An increasing amount of evidence shows the benefits of physical activity on mental health.

Physical activity releases mood boosting hormones, such as endorphins, serotonin, and dopamine, in the brain. The discipline of working out, coupled with the act of pushing through a tough workout reinforces a person's ability to handle uncomfortable feelings and emotions, rather than avoiding them, strengthening resilience.

Self-confidence begins to improve as milestones in workout routines are achieved. This self-confidence is associated with improved body image, overall determination, and perseverance, according to a recent study in the Annual Review of Medicine.

Other benefits of engaging in regular exercise are improved sleep, an increased ability to emotionally self-regulate, improved cognitive function, reduced symptoms of depression, and an overall improved quality of life. Exercise has also been shown to decrease stress; helping to fight mental and physical illnesses.

In addition to mental fitness, exercise has been shown to have physical, spiritual, and social benefits to a person's overall health and wellness.

Exercise can improve a person's cardiovascular health and overall physical health. By joining an exercise group at a local gym or exercise studio, a person may form connections that help them feel like they belong to something larger than themselves.

Exercise can also be a time for reflecting and connecting with higher purpose. These both connect exercise to enhancing spiritual fitness.

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TOTAL FITNESS BENEFITS OF YEAR-ROUND TRAINING

YEAR-ROUND TRAINING OFFERS NUMEROUS BENEFITS FOR ATHLETES, INCLUDING:

- Enhances physical performance in all our domains of fitness. Physical fitness makes the body, mind, and spirit more resilient while enhancing athletic and tactical ability.
- Enhanced physical and mental well-being because regular exercise not only benefits physical fitness but also improves mental health and overall well-being.

PHYSICAL DOMAIN

- **Strength Training:** Building muscle and increasing strength will enhance your performance, decrease injury potential, and make job related/ tactical responsibilities easier.
- **Cardiovascular Training:** Enhancing aerobic, anaerobic, and Alactic capacity will improve your capacity to train harder, longer and stay in the fight. It also enhances recovery, sleep, mood, and cognitive ability.
- **Mobility and Flexibility:** Increasing control and range of motion will allow you to be strong and stable in positions where most will get injured. Increases can also lead to lowering the feeling of chronic pain.
- **Tactical Specific Training:** Maintaining the capacity to swim, ruck, fight/ combatives will ensure Marines are prepared to fight and dominate at all times. Maintenance of these characteristic will also decrease injury risk when performing these in unit training/ pt.

PHYSICAL DOMAIN STRATEGIES

- **Optimizing year-round training** requires strategic planning and implementation.
- **Periodization:** Break up training into blocks (3-4 weeks) of specific training enhancing specific qualities (strength, conditioning, power, speed, etc)
- **Cross-Training:** Engage in training all types of training to ensure you have no weak points (running, sprinting, jumping, sports, powerlifting, tactical training, etc)
- **Rest and Recovery:** Build in recovery weeks (every 4th or 5th week of a training block) - this ensures optimal recovery to continually enhance performance.
- **Nutrition and hydration:** Maintain a healthy diet and proper hydration to support training and recovery.



Engaging with a group or a workout partner may create a sense of belonging and opportunities to meet new people, improving social fitness.

Marine Corps Community Services provides

many resources to assist Marines and their families with holistic wellness. Visit the [Community Counseling Program](#) at your installation or connect with your local [Semper Fit](#) team to learn more.

PREVENTION RESOURCES

DoD resources and tools: Check out the Department of Defense's www.prevention.mil. It includes information about resources, tools, research, and policy.

Marine Corps Interactive Suicide Prevention and Mental Fitness Resource: This online

resource provides suicide prevention and skill-building information for all Marines and their families.

This is a resource users can come back to as often as they need it. Go to www.usmc-mccs.org/mfitness.

MCCS website: Visit the Marine

Corps Community Services website (www.usmc-mccs.org) to find information about programs and resources and read articles that offer skill-building information.

Prevention in Action— Stakeholders Training: Visit www.marinenet.usmc.mil and

search Prevention in Action. This self-guided online training is designed for service members and civilians who engage in prevention activities. In this course, participants learn more about how and why to champion prevention activities.