HOLISTIC HEALTH AND FITNESS

Cognitive Performance and Recovery

Guide and Workbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil

Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil

Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Cognitive Performance and Recovery Guide and Workbook, your comprehensive resource designed to enhance your cognitive abilities and overall mental fitness. This guide is structured to provide you with the tools, techniques, and knowledge necessary to optimize your cognitive performance, whether you are on duty or in daily life. Below is a step-by-step overview on how to effectively utilize this guide to achieve your cognitive goals.

Step 1: Begin with Assessments

The first section of the guidebook focuses on assessments. These are crucial in establishing your baseline cognitive abilities, allowing you to understand where you currently stand. The assessments cover various cognitive domains, such as concentration, self-confidence, and motivation. By completing these assessments, you will gain valuable insights into your strengths and areas that may need improvement.

Step 2: Understand Mental Readiness

Before diving into the rest of the guide, it's essential to understand the concept of mental readiness. Mental readiness is the capacity to adapt successfully in the presence of risk and adversity. It can be viewed as a set of personality traits, an assortment of skills, or ways of behaving and thinking, or a combination of both traits and behaviors. Whether you see mental readiness as something you possess, something you do, or something you believe, it will help you better navigate uncertain situations and become more aware of your mental processes. Under extreme duress, mental readiness enables you to create a sense of total control and confidence. In chaotic and uncertain environments, the potential for flawed judgment increases. Mental readiness helps reduce miscalculation and errors of judgment. Soldiers who are mentally ready can manage severe stress and grow mentally tougher and resilient in the process.

Step 3: Follow the Flow or Customize Your Path

This guidebook is designed to be flexible, catering to both structured and individualized approaches. If you prefer a guided journey, you can follow the flow of the guidebook, which is periodized to coincide with your two years on the trail. This periodized approach gradually introduces and builds upon cognitive skills over time, ensuring steady progress and development. Alternatively, based on your assessment scores, you can choose to start with sections or topics that align with your specific needs. For example, if your assessment reveals a need to improve attention and concentration, you can dive straight into those relevant sections and work at your own pace.

Step 4: Engage with the Workbook

As you progress through the guide, there will be tools for practical application. It includes exercises, activities, and reflective prompts that reinforce the cognitive skills you are developing. Makre sure to engage fully with the workbook, as it is designed to help you internalize and apply what you learn. One of the key principles of this guidebook is self-paced learning. You have the freedom to move through the material as quickly or slowly as you need. This ensures that you

can thoroughly grasp each concept before moving on, leading to more effective and lasting cognitive improvements.

Step 5: Seek Support When Needed

While the guide and workbook are designed for individual use, you are not alone in this journey. If you have questions, need clarification, or want to delve deeper into a specific area, reach out to your Cognitive Performance & Recovery team of SMEs. They are available to provide assistance, offer insights, and help you maximize the benefits of the program.

Commit to Continuous Growth

The Cognitive Performance & Recovery guide and workbook is more than just a resource- it's a pathway to continuous growth and enhancement. Whether you follow the structured approach or customize your journey, your commitment to the process will yield significant improvements in your cognitive abilities and overall performance. Embrace the opportunity to push your limits, develop new skills, and achieve peak performance.

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil
Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil
CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

YEAR 1 CYCLE 1:

The first step in periodizing Cognitive Performance & Recovery (CP&R) is to establish a baseline assessment of your current cognitive abilities, personality and leadership traits, mindset towards improved performance, sleep and recovery habits. This comprehensive assessment process is crucial in determining which areas the program must focus in order to optimize your abilities.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

— Viktor E. Frankl

Please take a few minutes to complete the following assessments to get a baseline on performance and develop self-awareness.

The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI)

Instructions: The following questions relate to your usual sleep habits during the past month only. Your answers should indicate the most accurate reply for the majority of days and nights in the past month. Please answer all questions. During the past month,

1. When have you usually gone to bed? _____
2. How long (in minutes) has it taken you to fall asleep each night? _____
3. When have you usually gotten up in the morning? _____
4. How many hours of actual sleep do you get a night? (Circle one. This may be different from the number of hours you spent in bed.)

< 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. During the past month, how often have you had trouble sleeping because you...	Not during the past month (0)	Less than once a week (1)	Once or twice a week (2)	Three or more times week (3)
a. Cannot get to sleep within 30 minutes				
b. Wake up in the middle of the night or early morning				
c. Have to get up to use the bathroom				
d. Cannot breathe comfortably				
e. Cough or snore loudly				
f. Feel too cold				
g. Feel too hot				
h. Have bad dreams				

i. Have pain				
j. Other reason(s), please describe, including how often you have had trouble sleeping because of this reason(s):				
6. During the past month, how often have you taken medicine (prescribed or "over the counter") to help you sleep?				
7. During the past month, how often have you had trouble staying awake while driving, eating meals, or engaging in social activity?				
8. During the past month, how much of a problem has it been for you to keep up enthusiasm to get things done?				
9. During the past month, how would you rate your sleep quality overall?				

Component	#9 Score	
Component	2 Score (s15min= 0; 16-30 min=l; 31-60 min=2, >60 min=3) + #5a Score (if sum is equal 0=0; 1-2=1; 3-4=2; 5-6=3)	
Component	#4 Score (>7=0; 6-7=1; 5-6=2; <5=3)	
Component	(total# of hours asleep)/(total # of hours in bed) x 100 >85%=0, 75%-84%=1, 65%-74%=2, <65%=3	
Component	Sum of Scores #5b to #5j (0=0; 1-9=1; 10-18=2; 19-27=3)	
Component	#6 Score	
Component	#7 Score+ #8 Score (0=0; 1-2=1; 3-4=2; 5-6=3)	
	Add the seven component scores together. **Global PSQI Score:**	

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Military Mental Skills Questionnaire

This Questionnaire measures seven important aspects of the mental side of mission performance. They are; Imagery Ability, Mental Preparation, Self-Confidence, Anxiety and Worry Management, Concentration Ability, Relaxation Ability, and Motivation.

		Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
Imagery Ability							
1	I can rehearse my tasks/missions in my mind.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I rehearse my skills in my head before I use them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	It is difficult for me to form mental pictures.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4.	I can easily imagine how movements feel.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mental Preparation							
5	I always set myself goals in training.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	I always have very specific goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I always analyze my performance after I complete a mission or task.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I usually set goals that I achieve.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Self-Confidence							
9	I suffer from lack of confidence about my performance.	6	5	4	3	2	1
10	I approach all tasks/missions with confident thoughts.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	My confidence drains away as a mission draw nearer.	6	5	4	3	2	1
12	Throughout missions I keep a positive attitude.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

Anxiety and Worry Management

13	I often experience fears about failing	6	5	4	3	2	1
14	I worry that I will disgrace myself during a mission.	6	5	4	3	2	1
15	I let mistakes worry me when I perform.	6	5	4	3	2	1
16	I worry too much about missions.	6	5	4	3	2	1

Concentration Ability

17	My thoughts are often elsewhere during missions/briefings.	6	5	4	3	2	1
18	My concentration lets me down during missions/briefings.	6	5	4	3	2	1
19	Unexpected noises put me off my performance.	6	5	4	3	2	1
20	Being easily distracted is a problem for me.	6	5	4	3	2	1

Relaxation Ability

21	I am able to relax myself before a mission.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	I become too tense before missions	6	5	4	3	2	1
23	Being able to calm myself down is one of my strong points	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I know how to relax in difficult circumstances.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Motivation

25	During missions I am usually psyched enough to perform well	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	I really enjoy a tough mission/task.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	I am good at motivating myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	I usually feel that I try my hardest.	1	2	3	4	5	6

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Mental Skill Questionnaire Scoring

The Percentage scores do not represent a right or wrong score as you would get in an exam. These percentages simply show you where you are now, and you should use them in the future to assess if you have progressed from this starting point.

Mental Skills Questionnaire
Results

Date:	Score:	%:
IMAGERY		
MENTAL PREPARATION		
SELF-CONFIDENCE		
ANXIETY AND WORRY		
CONCENTRATION		
RELAXATION		
MOTIVATION		

Next, select the three area's that you need the most work on. Seek out training in these skill areas to improve your mission performance!

Mental Skills to focus on:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

All scores should be at least
60%
90% is elite
70-80% is above average
60% is acceptable
50% or less = problem area

Formula= Group total/.24
= (Group total /24)xl00

Score Total	%
24	100
23	95.8
22	91.7
21	87.5
20	83.3
19	79.2
18	75
17	70.8
16	66.7
15	62.5
14	58.3
13	54.2
12	50
11	45.8
10	41.7
9	37.5
8	33.3
7	29.2
6	25
5	20.8
4	16.7

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

FOUNDATION I

YEAR 1 CYCLES 1 & 2:

Phase 2 of the CP&R training program takes place during your first and second 10-week cycles on the trail. This phase focuses on building a strong foundation for CP&R improvement as a DS. The exercises in this phase are relatively simple and straightforward to allow you to become acclimated and comfortable with the training program. The Foundational Phase is broken down into five sub-phases.

The objectives of this Year 1 Foundational Phase of the program focus on:

1. Self-Awareness (Initial Assessments & SWOT Analysis)
2. Refine SMART Goal (Focus on Habits & Discipline
3. Time Management Skills
4. Sleep & Sleep Hygiene (Why it is important & How to improve it)
5. Energy Management Skills

SLEEP HYGIENE

"Sleep is an investment in the energy you need to be effective tomorrow." –Tom Roth

- **Sleep only as much as needed to feel refreshed the following day.**
    - Calculate a target bedtime based on your fixed wake up time and do your best to be ready for bed around the same time each night.
- **Have a routine wake up time, seven days a week.**
    - A regular wake up time in the morning will help set your "biological clock" and leads to regular sleep onset.
- **Bedroom should be comfortable and free from light and noise.**
    - Minimize light as it hinders the production of melatonin, a hormone that the body produces to facilitate sleep.
        - Black-out shades, sleep masks.
    - Excessively warm or cold rooms can disrupt sleep.
    - Noises can be masked with background white noise (such as the noise of a fan) or with earplugs.
- **Avoid Caffeine 4-6 hours before bed.**
- **Avoid Nicotine before bedtime.**
    - Although some smokers claim that smoking helps them relax, nicotine is a stimulant.
- **Avoid alcohol after dinner.**
    - As alcohol is metabolized, sleep becomes disrupted and fragmented.
- **Take naps as able.**
    - Limit napping to the early afternoon. Naps improve mental and physical functioning.

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

SLEEP HYGIENE

- **Avoid vigorous exercise within 2 hours of bedtime.**
    - Regular exercise in the later afternoon or early evening seems to aid sleep, although the positive effect often takes several weeks to become noticeable.
- **Avoid excessive liquids in the evening.**
- **Follow a nightly routine.**
    - Keep the routine consistent.
    - Plan time to review the day, plan the next day, or deal with any problems. Worrying in bed can interfere with sleep onset and cause you to have shallow sleep.
    - Unplug from electronics 30-60 minutes prior to getting into bed. Blue light decreases melatonin production.
    - Meditation, mindfulness, paced breathing, and other relaxation techniques can put you in the right mindset for bed.
- **Restrict in-bed activity.**
    - To build a link in your mind between sleep and being in bed, it's best to only use your bed for sleep with sex being the one exception.
- **Don't toss and turn.**
    - If you're unable to fall asleep within a reasonable time (15-20 minutes) or when you notice that you're worrying about falling asleep, get out of bed. Get up and stretch, read, or do something calming in low light. Return to bed only when you are sleepy.
- **Sleep medications are temporarily effective.**
    - Research has shown that sleep medications lose their effectiveness in about 2-4 weeks when taken regularly.
    - When sleeping pills have been used for a long period, withdrawal can lead to an insomnia rebound. Thus, many individuals incorrectly conclude that they "need" sleeping pills in order to sleep normally (Suni and Rosen 2024).

LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil
Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil
Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

SELF-AWARENESS

"Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes."

– Carl Jung

Self-awareness: the ability to focus on yourself and how your actions, thoughts, or emotions do or don't align with your internal standards.
Research has found that 90% of people would describe themselves as self-aware whereas only about 10-15% truly are.

Steps to practice:

- Reflection → there is no learning without it
    - It's important to ask *what* questions versus *why*; why gets us caught up looking in the rearview mirror.
- Feedback → begins with introspection
    - Perspective is key; view feedback as a gift.
    - Should be given with the intention of helping the recipient grow.
- Work → consistently reflecting strengthens self-awareness and allows you to show up differently for yourself and others.
    - Once a week will make a difference

SWOT Analysis utilizing this framework, you can start to separate yourself from your peers, and further develop the specialized talents and abilities you need to advance your career, help you achieve your personal goals, and increase your overall self-awareness.

- Focuses on strengths
- Minimizes weaknesses
- Allows you to take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available to you (Leigh 2010)

SELF-AWARENESS

Strengths	Weaknesses
• What do you do well? • What unique resources can you draw on? • What do others see as your strengths? • Which of your achievements are you most proud of? • What values do you believe in that others fail to exhibit?	• What could you improve? • Where do you have fewer resources than others? • What are others likely to see as weaknesses? • What tasks do you usually avoid because you don't feel confident doing them? • Do you have personality traits that hold you back in your field?
Opportunities	**Threats**
• What opportunities are open to you? • Are any of your peers failing to do something important? • If so, can you take advantage of their mistakes? • How can you turn your weaknesses into opportunities? • How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?	• What obstacles do you face? • Could any of your weaknesses prevent you from succeeding? • Do any of your strengths hold you back? • Do you have any obligations (work or otherwise) that may limit your development? • Are you competing with others for what you want?

LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil

Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil

Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

PRIORITIZING SLEEP

YEAR 1 OFF-CYCLE:

"Sleep is that golden chain that ties health and our bodies together." – Thomas Dekker

Sleep is unique in that it's a necessity, a tool and a skill. There is no activity, nor substance, that can substitute for sleep. While the benefits far exceed the desire of mere survival, and the complications of insufficient recovery cause a catastrophic cascade of consequences, many of which go unnoticed by the individual due to the sometimes-insidious nature of perceptual adaptation, most Soldiers seem to do little to practice the skill.

Take control over your strongest tool to improve your health, focus, recovery, and total lifespan. Start taking intentional steps towards improving your sleeping skills.

The "weight" of poor sleep:

You might be familiar with the impact of poor sleep on your daily routine – feeling drowsy on your drive to work, trouble concentrating or focusing on tasks, or limited patience for your family when you come home. But what about your weight? Sleep plays a significant role in metabolism, appetite, and even your food choice. Ultimately, sleep impacts your weight and your chance of becoming overweight or obese.

Sleep is vital to restore your body and mind. Your circadian clock oversees your 24-hour sleep/wake cycle. When you don't sleep well or enough, your circadian clock is off, impacting how you metabolize and digest food.

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

PRIORITIZING SLEEP

How to Prioritize Sleep:

1. **Eliminate screen time before bed:** power down your phone an hour or two before bed—no matter how much you want to do one last scroll of the news or check in on your social media accounts. Place your mobile device in a space away from where you sleep, you won't be tempted to use them—and by setting a time to turn off your electronics, you get used to not using your screens before bed. This helps promote a regular sleep schedule.

2. **Make a bedtime routine:** Build a routine and stick to it! A bedtime routine is crucial for teaching your body when to sleep and when it should wake up—and the best part about the process is that it's all up to you. When it comes to putting together a routine, you have many options. You can brush your teeth, run a warm bath, read for 20 minutes, or drink some tea. Just remember: Building a routine shouldn't be tedious— as long as you incorporate activities that help you wind down. It should be something you look forward to every night.

3. **Exercise:** Simply moving your body (even for as little as 20 minutes a day) can do wonders for your overall health and improve the quality of your sleep. Studies show exercise can alleviate sleep-related problems and help you get an adequate amount of rest by reducing the amount of time it takes you to fall asleep once you turn the lights out.

4. **Create your ideal sleep environment:**

    - **Cut the lights out:** Light can prevent you from falling asleep because it tricks your body into thinking it is daytime. Opt for blackout curtains or a sleep mask so you don't peep a single light in your bedroom.
    - **Keep it cool:** Lower your thermostat to somewhere between 60-67 degrees Fahrenheit, the ideal temperature range for optimal sleep. You can also use cooling sheets to prevent waking up with night sweats (Walker 2018).

LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil
Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil
Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

PRIORITIZING SLEEP

Napping Benefits

Nap: A nap is a short period of sleep that usually occurs during the day. For many adults, naps can help to maintain alertness, overcome daytime fatigue, improve endurance, reaction times, and cognitive performance.

How Long Should a Nap Be? Generally, adults' best nap length is about 20 minutes and no longer than 30 minutes. Sleeping for 20 minutes allows the napper to get light sleep to boost alertness without entering deep sleep.

How Sleep Works During Nap Time

Whether at night or during the day, sleep unfolds in a series of stages that make up a sleep cycle.

- **Stage 1:** Stage 1 is the lightest and briefest stage of sleep, lasting only one to seven minutes.
- **Stage 2:** Stage 2 follows stage 1 and lasts about 10 to 25 minutes. During stage 2 sleep, the muscles relax, and body functions slow. However, sleep in this stage is still relatively light.
- **Stage 3:** Stage 3 is a deeper, more restorative stage of sleep, and it can be difficult to wake up while in this stage. Stage 3 usually lasts between 20 and 40 minutes.
- **Rapid eye movement (REM):** During REM sleep, the body's muscles are temporarily paralyzed, and the eyes move quickly under closed eyelids. Dreaming tends to take place during REM sleep.

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

SMART GOAL-SETTING

"The great danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark." –Michelangelo

Nearly 90% of the time, setting specific and challenging goals leads to better performance than "do your best" goals or none at all.

Goals direct attention, mobilize effort, increase persistence, and help you form good strategies and habits.

The **SMART goal technique** meets these criteria:

- **Specific** → leave no room for doubt
    - For example, setting a goal to do better on your fitness tests may feel too large or vague a goal. Instead, break it up into a more narrowly focused target, such as "I want to improve my APFT run time."
- **Measurable** → decide how you'll measure progress
    - For example, you may want to shave 40 seconds off your APFT 2-mile run time (5 secs off each quarter mile). Achievable goals like this serve as great milestones because they fuel motivation to set and commit to high goals.
- **Achievable** → challenging but possible
    - Rather than using words like "I'll try to shave 40 seconds from my time", say to yourself "I am shaving 40 seconds off my time".
- **Relevant** → focus on how a goal applies to your personal or professional life
    - 40 seconds might be impossible if you're already in top shape, or it might not be practical now if you're in poor condition. It is easier to stay engaged and feel rewarded in the process when you set goals that fit what is both important and possible for you at the current time.
- **Time oriented** → help you meet a deadline
    - Sub-goals: both performance and process goals can serve as benchmarks for monitoring progress toward your overall goal.
    - Performance goals, such as shaving 5 seconds per week off your time, allow you to compare your performance between past and present, rather than focus on your rank compared to others (Weinberg and Gould 2019).

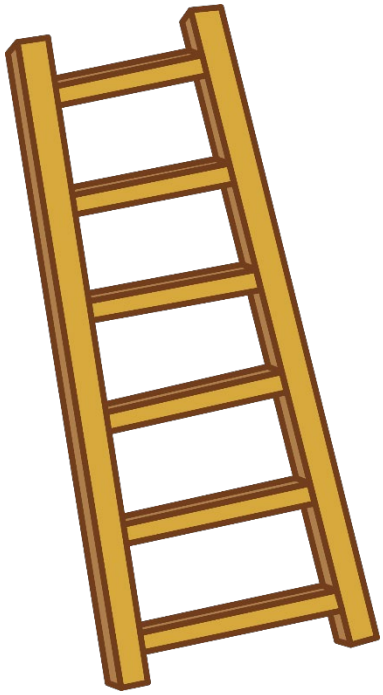
LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil
Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil
Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

SMART GOAL-SETTING

A **goal ladder** is a tool that helps you set smaller goals that lead up to one bigger goal- your SMART goal.

- Each rung = a sub-goal
- Bottom of the ladder = your first milestone
-

1. Identify your main goal. Put this on the top rung of your ladder.
2. Think about 3-4 smaller goals that will help you achieve your main goal. These sub-goals focus on specific skills or are smaller versions of your main goal.
3. Think of 2-3 things that could break a rung on your ladder and 2-3 ways that you can fix your rungs if they get broken.
    - Breaking a rung is not failure, it is a learning opportunity. It is important to think of these before they happen, so you are prepared.
4. Put your ladder in a place that you will look at each day. Make note of your progress and when you complete a rung, cross it off!



<u>What could break a rung?</u>

<u>Fixing the rungs</u>

Tips to adhere to your goal:

- Tell others → accountability
- Physical reminders
- If [obstacle], then [plan] statements
- Reconnecting to your why
- Visualize success

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

TIME MANAGEMENT

"The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot." -Michael Altshuler

Time is a **constant-** you cannot change or manipulate time. However, you **can** manipulate and change yourself- your goals, your priorities, how much time you devote to obligations and activities.

Why is time management important? It's important to be able to be productive as some jobs or careers have a higher operational tempo than others and require much more to support the unit. It not only is important for work tasks but for your personal life as well.

Strategies to defeat distractions:

- **Design a schedule** → when you plan down to the minute or in time blocks, you don't waste time in your day.
- **Prioritize** → instead of tackling everything on your to-do list at once, start by figuring out what's most important.
- **Avoid multitasking** → Every time you switch tasks, your brain has to refocus, breaking the extended. concentration needed for innovative thinking.
- **Eliminate distractions** → don't rely on willpower alone to reduce distractions.
- **Set boundaries** → Being clear about when you can be contacted and managing expectations for response times will make both you and others feel less frantic.
- **Do the hardest tasks when you feel the best** → Research shows that for most people, morning is the ideal time to take on challenging tasks, so try to stick to this schedule. Do tasks that require lower engagement during your "off times," and consider scheduling meetings then, too.

LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil
Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil
Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

TIME MANAGEMENT

Prioritizing: Put Your Obligations/Activities into Quadrants

Quadrant 1: Important/Urgent *Crisis/pressing problems, deadline driven projects*	**Quadrant 2: Important/Not Urgent** *New opportunities, planning, long-term projects*
Quadrant 3: Urgent/Not Important *Popular activities, interruptions, proximate pressing matters*	**Quadrant 4: Not Urgent/Not Important** *Busywork, time wasters*

- Individuals tend to spend most time in quadrant 4 because these activities usually do not cause any stress.
- Spending time in quadrants 3 and 4 at the expense of quadrant 1 and 2 activities is an insidious form of procrastination.
- When managing your time, make a list of the things you have to do then place in their appropriate quadrant.
- The secret to effectively managing time lies in quadrant 2. If you focus on quadrant 2 activities, you will have enhanced your vision, perspective, balance, discipline, and have fewer crises. Try to set aside time each day to work on something that is important but not necessarily urgent as a way of getting ahead (Kennedy and Porter 2021).

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil
Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil
CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

"You have power over your mind- not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength." –Marcus Aurelius

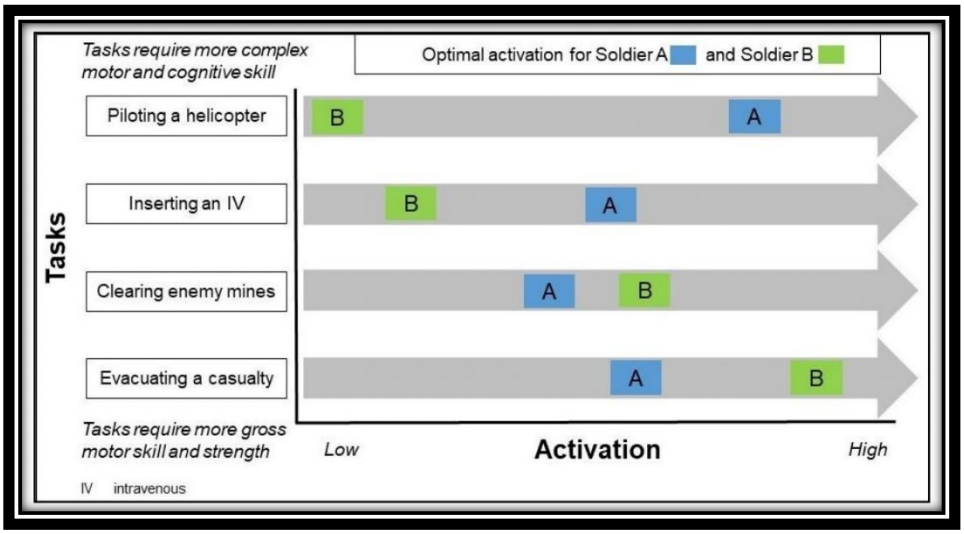
Cognitive energy fuels our cognitive processes, such as attention, memory, problem-solving, decision making, and creativity. It's our mental capacity to perform tasks requiring mental effort and concentration.

Cognitive energy works like a battery. Just as your smartphone battery drains when you use it, your cognitive energy is depleted when you use it to focus, make decisions, or perform mental tasks. When your cognitive energy is depleted, you may feel tired, irritable, or unmotivated. This is why managing your cognitive energy is essential to be productive.

"Arousal refers to the amount of energy devoted to an individual's level of physical and mental activation. Activation levels vary along a spectrum from low (being asleep) to high (awake, active and intensely excited).

Activation levels shift across this spectrum throughout the day in response to actual and perceived demands and level of training. For example, a Soldier participating in a six-mile foot march during morning physical training will likely have a significantly lower activation level than a Soldier performing airborne operations for the first time.

Activation levels also vary depending on the Soldier and the context. Some individuals appear to remain "cool and collected" even during activities that would "psych out" other individuals. Some Soldiers may not worry about rappelling from a tower while others may feel extreme stress. Activation levels required to optimize task performance can vary between Soldiers (Department of the Army 2020)".



ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Recognizing the physiological responses and mental processes that occur during these states is essential for comprehensive mental readiness. By helping Soldiers become more aware of the body-brain connection, they can better manage their activation levels. This includes both voluntary and automatic bodily responses, such as heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol levels, as well as subjective indicators like self-confidence and motivation (Department of the Army 2020).

Energy management techniques: Get just enough "amped" or just enough calm to do what's needed. Breathwork is one example of how to alter energy or activation levels.

- **Increasing energy → 5 – 3 – 3 Breathing**
    - This technique utilizes short inhales and long, deep exhales. It's ideally practiced first thing in the morning to get you energized and focused for the day ahead.
    - Start by taking **five deep** breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth. These should be breaths that fill up your entire lung capacity. Exhale entirely.
    - Next, take **three** very **quick** breaths, inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth.
    - Take **three loud** breaths, inhaling through the nose and releasing loudly with sound out the mouth.
- **Decreasing energy → 4 - 7 - 8 Breathing**
    - Find a comfortable position with your feet on the ground, hands in your lap.
    - Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of **four**.
    - Hold your breath for a count of **seven**.
    - Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of **eight**.
    - This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

RECOVERY

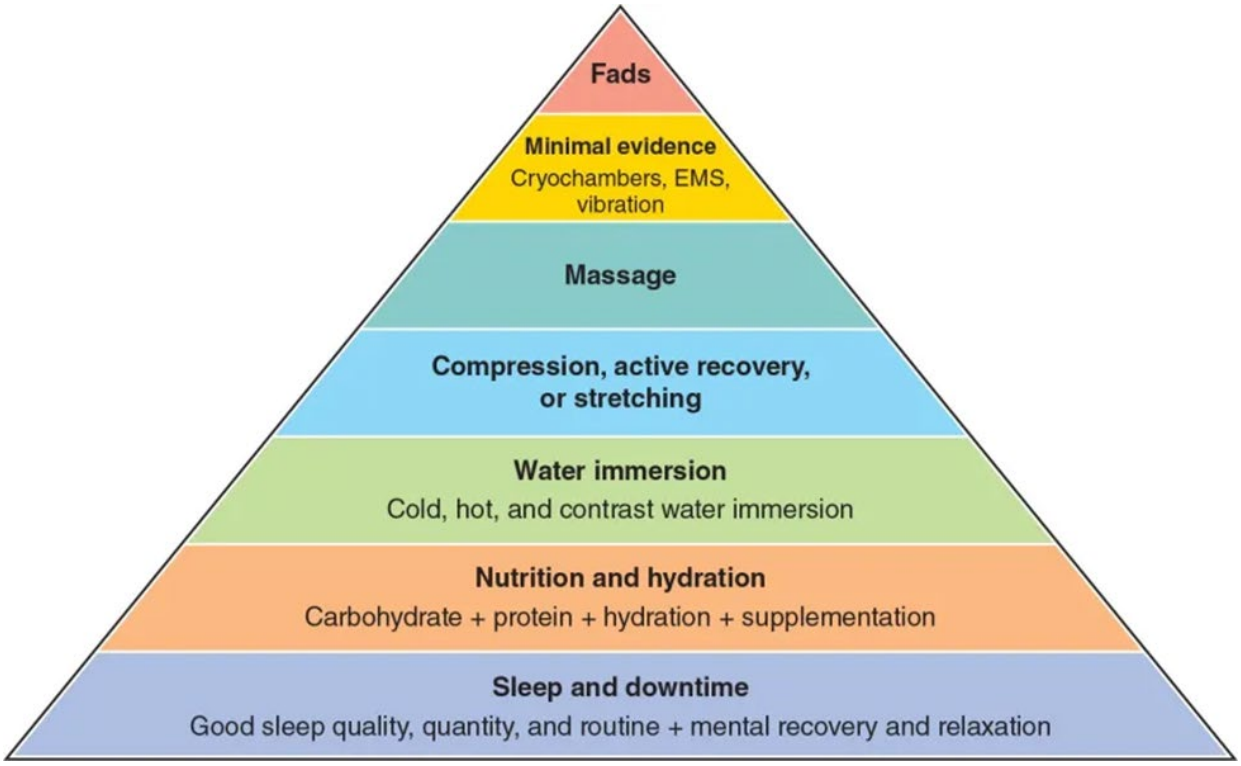
YEAR 1 OFF-CYCLE:

Optimizing recovery is the cornerstone of enhancing performance in any aspect of your life. The ability to bounce back, adapt, and thrive after physical, mental, or emotional exertion is what separates the average from the exceptional. The following pages will explore different recovery modalities and how to choose which modalities are best fit for you.

Optimizing recovery is the most efficient way to improve performance. Physical training begins the exercise-adaption cycle. Fatigue from training is what stimulates the body to repair and adapt. Adaptation occurs during the recovery period, where susceptible growth is stimulated.

What happens if I skip recovery? Skipping recovery leads to increased fatigue, susceptibility injuries, a halt in progress, and a decrease in cognitive performance.

Training and competition create an overload to stress the body, producing fatigue followed later by improved performance. What athletes do after their exercise and workout regime can affect their muscle recovery. The post-exercise routine can impact both fitness and sports performance. It is thus essential to have an after-exercise recovery plan.



LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil
Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil
Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

	FJ H2F Recovery Decision Matrix	High Soreness	High Fatigue	Low Motivation	High Stress	Achy Joints	Poor Sleep	Tissue Regeneration / Healing	Low-Readiness (Oura)	Low-HRV (RMSSD-Oura)	High-Resting Heart Rate (Oura)	Low Overall Subjective Wellness	Pre-Strength Training	Pre-Conditioning Training	Post-Strength Training	Post-Conditioning Training	High Trainining Load
	Light Bed (PBM)	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			x
	Cryostimulation (WBC)	x		x		x	x	x	x			x	x	x			x
	Float Pod Session		x		x		x		x	x	x	x			x		x
*	Hot-Cold Tub Contrast	x								x						x	x
	Cold Tub Plunge (CWI)	x				x				x							x
	Hot Tub Plunge	x				x			x						x		x
	Compression / Cooling	x	x			x		x	x	x					x	x	x
*	Sauna	x		x		x	x										
*	Soft-Tissue / Mobility	x	x			x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Easy Aerobic Recovery	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
*	Muscular Electrical Stimulation	x	x			x		x						x	x		
*	Reducing Training Load	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x
*	Ideal Nutrition	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
*	-Vit D	x	x		x	x	x	x	x			x					
*	-Food Intolerance Specific Diets	x	x		x	x	x	x	x			x					
*	Cognitive Perforamnce Strategies		x	x	x		x			x	x	x					x
*	-Meditation			x	x		x		x	x		x			x	x	
*	-Breathing			x	x		x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
*	-Mindset			x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
*	Optimized Sleep Strategies	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
*	-Earlier time to bed	x	x				x	x	x	x							
*	-Mid-Day Napping Availability						x		x		x						x
*	Spiritual Intervention			x	x		x		x			x					
*	-Community Fellowship			x								x					
	-Equine Therapy			x			x					x					
*	Art Therapy			x			x					x					
	Fear Emersion			x					x			x					
	Vagus Nerve Stimulation			x	x		x		x	x	x	x					x
	TRT																

* No equipment needed

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

RECOVERY: CRYOTHERAPY

"Cryotherapy is one of best modern-day technologies and is essential for my recovery and daily routine together." – Tony Robbins

Ice water immersion and contrast temperature water immersion therapy post-exercise is fast becoming a common practice among athletes involved in a variety of sports.

1. With intense exercise, there will be some microtrauma and tears in the muscle fibers affected. This muscle damage will stimulate muscle cell activity (hypertrophy in the long term) and help repair and strengthen the muscle. This is also thought to explain the delayed onset pain and soreness (delayed onset muscle soreness), which often presents 12–72 hours post-exercise.
2. The ice bath will cause constriction of blood vessels. This has been suggested as a mechanism that helps with the flushing of waste products, such as lactic acid, out of the affected tissue.
3. With the cold temperature, there will be a reduction of the metabolism, and this can cause a slowing down of the physiological processes.
4. The cold temperature will reduce swelling and tissue breakdown.
5. Ice water immersion is also said to be able to shift lactic acid.

LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil
Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil
Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

RECOVERY: BREATHING TECHNIQUES

"I like living, breathing better than working... Each second, each breath is a work which is inscribed nowhere, which is neither visual nor cerebral. It's a kind of constant euphoria." –Marcel Duchamp

Breathing has long been used to regulate level of arousal and anxiety.

Meditation (focus on breathing) allows individuals to relax and focus on a single thought, lowering anxiety and arousal.

- Breathing is linked to the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS).
    - Chest Breathing= Fatigued breathing. Pushes you to have a Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) response (Fight or Flight)
    - Belly Breathing/Diaphragmatic= Relaxed breathing. Pushed you to have a Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) response (Rest & Digest).
- Yoga uses breath to enable relaxation through the PNS.

RECOVERY: BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Pursed lip Breathing

Application: This simple breathing technique makes you slow down your breathing pace by having you apply deliberate effort in each breath. This technique is beneficial during activities such as bending, lifting, or stair climbing.

Practice: 4 to 5 times a day

To do it:

1. Relax your neck and shoulders
2. Keeping your mouth closed, inhale slowly through your nose for 2 counts
3. Pucker or pursed your lips as though you were going to whistle
4. Exhale slowly by blowing air through your pursed lips for a count of 4

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Application: Diaphragmatic breathing (aka belly breathing) can help you use your diaphragm properly

Practice: 5 to 10 minutes 3 to 4 times daily.

To do it:

1. Lie on your back with your knees slightly bent and your head on a pillow
2. You may place a pillow under your knees for support
3. Place one hand on your upper chest and one hand below your rib cage, allowing you to feel the movement of your diaphragm
4. Slowly inhale through your nose, feeling your stomach pressing into your hand
5. Keep your other hand as still as possible.
6. Exhale using pursed lips as you tighten your abdominal muscles, keeping your upper hand completely still

LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil
Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil
Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

RECOVERY: BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Breath Focus Technique

Application: This deep breathing technique uses imagery or focus words and phrases. You can choose a focus word that makes you smile, feel relaxed, or is simply neutral. Examples include peace, let go, or relax, but it can be any word that suits you to focus on and repeat through your practice.
Practice: As you build up your breath focus practice, you can start with a 10-minute session. Gradually increase the duration until your sessions are at least 20 minutes.

To do it:

1. Sit or lie down in a comfortable place.
2. Bring your awareness to your breaths without trying to change how you're breathing.
3. Alternate between normal and deep breaths a few times. Notice any differences between normal breathing and deep breathing. Notice how your abdomen expands with deep inhalations.
4. Note how shallow breathing feels compared to deep breathing.
5. Practice your deep breathing for a few minutes.
6. Place one hand below your belly button, keeping your belly relaxed, and notice how it rises with each inhale and falls with each exhale.
7. Let out a loud sigh with each exhale.
8. Begin the practice of breath focus by combining this deep breathing with imagery and a focus word or phrase that will support relaxation.
9. You can imagine that the air you inhale brings waves of peace and calm throughout your body. Mentally say, "Inhaling peace and calm."
10. Imagine that the air you exhale washes away tension and anxiety. You can say to yourself, "Exhaling tension and anxiety."

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil
Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil
CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

RECOVERY: BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Alternate Nostril Breathing

Application: Alternate nostril breathing is a breathing practice for relaxation. Alternate Nostril Breathing has been shown to enhance cardiovascular function and lower heart rate.

To do it:

1. Choose a comfortable seated position.
2. Lift your right hand toward your nose, pressing your first and middle fingers down toward your palm and leaving your other fingers extended.
3. After an exhale, use your right thumb to gently close your right nostril.
4. Inhale through your left nostril and then close your left nostril with your right pinky and ring fingers.
5. Release your thumb and exhale out through your right nostril.
6. Inhale through your right nostril and then close this nostril.
7. Release your fingers to open your left nostril and exhale through this side.
8. This is one cycle.
9. Continue this breathing pattern for up to 5 minutes. Finish your session with an exhale on the left side.

Resonant or Coherent Breathing

Application: Resonant breathing, also known as coherent breathing, is when you breathe at a rate of 5 full breaths per minute. You can achieve this rate by inhaling and exhaling for a count of 5.
Breathing at this rate maximizes your heart rate variability (HRV) which reduces stress.

To do this:

1. Inhale for a count of 5
2. Exhale for a count of 5
3. Continue this breathing pattern for at least a few minutes

LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil
Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil
Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

RECOVERY: BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Deep Breathing

Application: helps to relieve shortness of breath by preventing air from getting trapped in your lungs and helping you to breathe in fresher air. It may help you to feel more relaxed and centered.

To do this:

1. While standing or sitting, draw your elbows back slightly to allow your chest to expand.
2. Take a deep inhalation through your nose.
3. Retain your breath for a count of 5.
4. Slowly release your breath by exhaling through your nose.

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

DEVELOPMENT I

YEAR 1 CYCLE 3:

The Developmental Phase builds on the Foundational Phase of the CP&R program. The exercises in this phase are more challenging than those in the foundation phase.

The objectives of the Development Phase further focus on:

1. Decision Making & Problem Solving Skills
2. Motivation (Intrinsic, Extrinsic)
3. Sleep II (Performance Optimization, Sleep Cycles)
4. Coping Skills
5. Communication & Interpersonal Skills

This phase of the training program focuses on enabling you to integrate your newly acquired skills within your personal and professional roles and responsibilities as a DS. The exercises in this phase are more complex than those in the Foundational Phase and rely on a clear understanding of the skills and abilities acquired previously in the program. Additionally, an underlying objective of the Development Phase is to improve creativity, and decision-making to recognize when it is appropriate to utilize these newly acquired skills.

DECISION-MAKING & PROBLEM-SOLVING

"If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail." – Abraham Maslow

Problems are a part of everyday life, so it's important to be able to find and carry out solutions effectively. You may face external problems (things out of your control- your car breaking down unexpectedly), relationship conflict (with a friend or partner), or problems at work or within your unit. When problems arise, there are tools you can use to stay mentally strong and help your team operate effectively.

One way to think about a problem is as a **challenge** that results from too many demands and not enough resources. Often, the problems you face will require both **intrapersonal** (using your own mental or emotional resources) and **interpersonal** (using good communication and collaboration) problem-solving skills.

Strategies for intrapersonal (within) problem-solving:

- **Shift your thinking** → Think of obstacles as challenges and chances for growth. Challenge the assumptions you have (especially when it comes to your own capabilities) and look outside the box.
    - Notice the resources you do have, think positively, remember you do have control, and stay committed to keep working until you find a resolution.
- **Manage your feelings** → Setting aside unhelpful feelings will allow you to stay rational, brainstorm options, gather information, and decide on a course of action.
    - Emotional regulation allows you to take on or disengage from different emotions when it's appropriate.
- **Focus on the process** → Assess your perspective, weigh your options, try them out, and evaluate the outcome.

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil
Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil
CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

DECISION-MAKING & PROBLEM-SOLVING

Strategies for interpersonal (between) problem-solving:

- **Maintain flexibility** → Adapt and shift as needed when problem-solving with teammates or fellow unit members.
    - Keep an open mind, evaluate everyone's perspective, and maintain team cohesion.
- **Remember to cooperate** → True problem-solving is about collaboration that creates a good outcome and mutual advantage for everyone.
    - It can be easy to either dominate the other person, compete, or push your perspective, or to simply accommodate and "give in" to reach an end point.
- **Use each other's strengths** → Remember that you have twice as many ideas and strengths when working with another person (or group) as you would if you were on your own.
- **Focus on the process together** → Stay connected to the process. Identify the problem, brainstorm solutions, and decide what to try first.
- **Practice good communication** → This is key because you have to work together. Share your thoughts and hear the opinions of others.
    - Avoid argument traps that may lead to conflict and interfere with finding a resolution.
    - If you do find yourself in a conflict, take a break. Put aside unhelpful feelings and utilize your intrapersonal problem-solving skills.

MOTIVATION

"Motivation is the engine that drives your performance." – Justin Sua

Motivation is the desire to do things. It's the difference between waking up before dawn to pound the pavement and lazing around the house all day. It's the crucial element in setting and attaining goals. Research has shown that **you can influence your own levels of self-motivation and self-control.**

No matter which branch of service you select or command position you hold, you need to be motivated and prepared on many levels. People who need to be motivated typically crumble in training. **It is the self-motivated who rise to the occasion** when the days get long and the nights cold and wet.

1. **Turn off self-denial.**
    - The voice that makes you want to quit running has to be silenced. Resisting the urge for the easier option is taking motivation and discipline to its operational level.
    - Shut down negative thoughts and replace it with "can't quit," or "keep going." Find what works for you and give it a name. Make it your **performance cue**.
2. **Develop a daily routine.**
    - Planning out your day-to-day allows you to maximize your time and plan for potential obstacles.
3. **Remember the long-term gain.**
    - Establish short-term or sub-goals to maintain motivation and track progress.
4. **Set up your environment for success.**
    - To build positive habits set up your environment so it's easier to achieve your goals and harder to do the things that get in your way.
    - For example, an obstacle to exercising each day after work is that you normally like to sit and relax on your couch when you get home. One solution: pack your workout gear to bring to work to encourage you to exercise before you're tempted by the comforts of your couch.
5. **Make it simple.**
    - Overcome shifts in motivation to break goals or new habits into smaller manageable pieces. Try **the WOOP strategy** to increase your willpower and generate the energy and motivation you need to achieve your goals.

MOTIVATION

WOOP → Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan

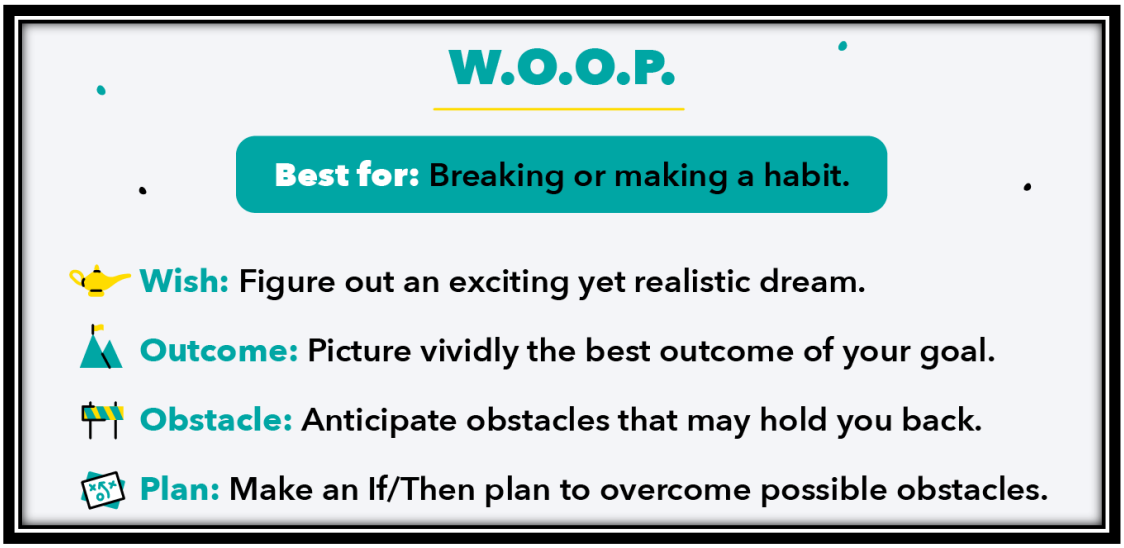
Setting goals can be easy. Achieving goals can be hard. Saying you want to max the APFT, writing it on a sticky note, and putting it on your wall is easy. You can do it right now. The hard part is having the determination to complete your workout each day, the motivation to run even though it's raining outside, and a set plan to overcome obstacles such as the delicious donuts suddenly appearing in the break room. You can use the WOOP strategy to achieve your goals.

1. **Wish** → Set a meaningful goal or "wish". Think about something in your life you want to work toward: your career, relationships, or anything personal. It should be challenging, realistic, and attainable. Utilize your SMART goal-setting here.
2. **Outcome** → Think about what it would look and feel like to have your goal fulfilled.
3. **Obstacle** → Imagine an obstacle that you can control from within (thoughts, feelings, bad habits, or actions) that might prevent you from working towards your goal.
4. **Plan** → Devise a plan to overcome the obstacles you identified. Utilize "When (obstacle), then I will (effective plan) statements for each obstacle you've identified (Oettingen and Gollwitzer 2018).

Fantasizing about the outcome gets you excited about your goal. This positive thinking might help you feel good, and it might be enough to get you to do the "easy things." However, it's not enough to generate the motivation you need to do the hard stuff. This is why you need to contrast your positive thinking with the reality of the obstacles standing in your way. Steps 2 and 3 together can provide you with the motivation to do what's needed to accomplish your goal.

LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil
Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil
Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

MOTIVATION



Example:

1. I want to max the APFT two-mile run.
2. I will feel accomplished, strong, and proud.
3. I tend to sit on the couch and watch TV when I get home from work instead of going for a run.
4. WHEN I come home from work, THEN I will immediately change into my running clothes and go for a run.

Wish:

_____

_____

Outcome:

_____

_____

Obstacle:

_____

_____

Plan:

_____

_____

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

SLEEP CYCLE

There are three processes that determine if you sleep, when you sleep, and how well you sleep. They are sleep need, sleep clock, and sleep disruptors:

1. **Sleep Need (if you sleep):**
    - Sleep Need is how much someone needs to sleep at a given time.
    - The longer you are awake, the more your Sleep Need builds up.
    - When you wake up after a full night of healthy sleep, its like you just finished filling up your gas tank in preparation for a busy day.
2. **Sleep Clock (when you sleep):**
    - A Sleep Clock is an internal clock that is “set” by the presence or absence of light. Each of us has a natural internal clock called a circadian rhythm. This clock triggers our bodies to feel, and do, different things at different times of the day.
    - Example of a Sleep Clock throughout a day:
        - 9:00 PM — Melatonin secretion starts. Melatonin is a natural hormone made by your body making sleep more inviting.
        - 2:00 AM — You have your deepest sleep during this time of the night. Your body should be hard at work repairing itself.
        - 7:30 AM — Melatonin secretion stops.
        - 10:00 AM — You will reach your highest peak of alertness and energy. This will help you be the most productive.
        - 3:30 PM — Your body's fastest reaction time. This is the best time for doing physical activities.
        - 5:00 PM — Highest blood pressure of the day

SLEEP CYCLE

3. Sleep Disruptors (How well you sleep):

- Sleep Disruptors are factors that disrupt or interfere with our Sleep Need or Sleep Clock.
- **Examples of a few Sleep Disruptors:**

1. **Drugs or alcohol** — Research suggests drinking alcohol or using other drugs to help you fall asleep may hurt you in the long run by disturbing the body's sleep-regulating mechanism.
2. **Caffeinated drinks** — Caffeine can help you wake up in the morning or stay alert during the day. But if you drink it late in the day, it can keep you awake at night when you are trying to sleep.
3. **Irregular sleep schedules** — If you sleep late on weekends, nap during the day, or work rotating shifts, your body has difficulty maintaining a regular sleep-wake schedule. Those disruptions to your sleep schedule can be long-lasting if not corrected.
4. **Medical issues** — Medical issues can include medications, chronic pain, depression, combat stress, disturbing thoughts, or memories.
5. **Negative emotional states** — These include times of high stress, anxiety, depression, combat stress, disturbing thoughts, or memories. Please be aware that there is a difference between times of short-term emotions causing temporary sleep disturbances which may go away and long-term chronic emotions that might be part of a more severe condition that requires medical attention.
6. **Illness** — Some illnesses involve a great deal of sleeping in the daytime and/or hospitalization (Walker 2018).

COPING SKILLS

"If you are faced with a mountain, you have several options. You can climb it and cross to the other side. You can go around it. You can dig under it. You can fly over it. You can blow it up. You can ignore it and pretend it's not there. You can turn around and go back the way you came. Or you can stay on the mountain and make it your home."
–Vera Nazarian

What is coping?

Coping is thoughts and behaviors mobilized to manage internal and external stressful situations. It is a term used distinctively for conscious and voluntary mobilization of acts. It differs from 'defense mechanisms' that are subconscious or unconscious adaptive responses which aim to reduce or tolerate stress.

Copying Styles: the varying ways of dealing with stressors

Types of Coping:

- Reactive Coping: a reaction following the stressors
- Proactive Coping: Aiming to neutralize future stressors

Proactive individuals excel in stable environments because they are more rigid, routinized, and are less reactive to stressors, while reactive individuals perform better in a more variable environment.

Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced: The Brief-COPE is a 28-item self-report questionnaire designed to measure effective and ineffective ways to cope with a stressful life event.

- The scale can determine your primary coping style with scores on the following three subscale
    - Problem-Focused Coping
    - Emotion-Focused Coping
    - Avoidant Coping

https://app.novopsych.com/administer

COPING SKILLS

Coping is generally categorized into four major categories:

1. **Problem-focused**, which addresses the problem causing the distress: Examples of this style include active coping, planning, restraint coping, and suppression of competing activities.
2. **Emotion-focused**, which aims to reduce the negative emotions associated with the problem: Examples of this style include positive reframing, acceptance, turning to religion, and humor.
3. **Meaning-focused,** in which an individual uses cognitive strategies to derive and manage the meaning of the situation.
4. **Social coping** (support-seeking) in which an individual reduces stress by seeking emotional or instrumental support from their community.

Coping Journal

Take a moment to note your preferred methods of coping. Note what coping skills and techniques you would like further training on.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

COPING SKILLS

Diversion

- Write, draw, paint, photography
- Play an instrument, sing, dance, act
- Take a shower or a bath
- Garden
- Take a walk, or go for a drive
- Watch television or a movie
- Play a game
- Go shopping
- Clean or organize your environment
- Read
- Take a break

Social/Interpersonal Coping

- Talk to someone you trust
- Set boundaries and say “no”
- Write a note to someone you care about
- Be assertive
- Use humor
- Spend time with friends and/or family
- Serve someone in need
- Care for or play with a pet
- Role-play challenging situations with others
- Encourage others

Cognitive Coping

- Brainstorm solutions
- Make a gratitude list
- Lower your expectations of the situation
- Keep an inspirational quote with you
- Be flexible
- Write a list of goals
- Take a class
- Act opposite of negative feelings
- Write a list of pros and cons for decisions
- Reward or pamper yourself when successful
- Write a list of strengths
- Accept a challenge with a positive attitude

Tension Releasers

- Exercise or play sports
- Engage in catharsis (yelling in the bathroom, punching a punching bag)
- Cry
- Laugh

LT Brandan Wolfolk, H2F OT
brandan.m.wolfolk.mil@army.mil

Meric Powell, H2F OT
david.m.powell50.mil@army.mil

Emily Seaman, H2F CPS
emily.seaman3.ctr@army.mil

COPING SKILLS

Physical

- Get enough sleep
- Eat healthy foods
- Get into a good routine
- Eat a little chocolate
- Limit caffeine
- Practice deep/slow breathing

Cognitive Coping

Spiritual

- Pray or meditate
- Enjoy nature
- Get involved in a worthy cause

Limit-Setting

- Drop some involvement
- Prioritize important tasks
- Use assertive communication
- Schedule time for yourself

COMMUNICATION

YEAR 1 OFF CYCLE:

CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

Those high-stakes, emotionally charged dialogues, hold the power to shape our relationships, decisions, and outcomes. They are pivotal moments when important issues hang in the balance, and how to navigate them can impact our personal and professional lives. Recognizing the significance of these conversations and mastering the art of handling them effectively is essential for success in both our interpersonal connections and our pursuit of meaningful objectives.

During your off cycle is an opportune time to engage in crucial conversations with others on your team, leadership, or individuals in your personal life. The following pages will introduce ways to improve communication to aid in facilitating crucial conversations.

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

"As much as others may need to change, or we may want them to change, the only person we can continually inspire, prod, and shape—with any degree of success—is the person in the mirror." -Joseph Grenny, author of Crucial Conversations

Though it might seem like a straightforward concept, communication can be quite complex. At the core, communication is about how you convey information, what you think you're conveying, and how the listener receives, understands, or interprets that information.

Effective Speaking Skills:

- Introduce your ideas with "I" statements instead of beginning with "you." It will help you think about why a particular situation matters to you.
- Be aware of your own body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice. Ask yourself if yours are consistent with the message you're trying to deliver.
- Before you act on your assumptions, ask open-ended, curiosity-driven questions such as:
    - What was that like?
    - How did that feel?
    - What did you think when that happened?
    - How did you end up making that decision?
    - Tell me more.

Effective Listening skills

- Focus on what the person is actually saying. If you notice you started to plan a response or waiting for your turn to speak, you've probably stopped listening.

- Listen with genuine curiosity. Assume there is something you need to learn.
- Ask open-ended questions to make sure you really understand what was discussed and where the other person is coming from.

Conversation escalating?

- **Tune into your reactions**.
- Even though it can be difficult to accurately anticipate and manage your emotions
- Emotional regulation is about slowing yourself and your reactions down just enough for your brain to process all the information around you so you can thoughtfully respond. Giving your brain a chance to catch up with your speech can also help you decide what you want to say in the clearest way possible.
- To strengthen your ability to manage emotions in a heightened state, turn to some relaxation practices (Patterson, et al. 2002).

PEAK PERFORMANCE I

YEAR 1 CYCLE 4:

The Peak Performance phase of the year one training program for DSs on the trail focuses on achieving peak cognitive performance. The exercises in this phase are the most challenging and demanding of the entire year one program.

The objectives of this phase focus on maximizing cognitive performance in:

1. Leadership (Helps develop future SDS)
2. Mindfulness

LEADERSHIP

"Your first and foremost job as a leader is to take charge of your own energy and then help to orchestrate the energy of those around you." –Peter F. Drucker

Self-leadership is the practice of understanding who you are, identifying your desired experiences, and intentionally guiding yourself toward them. It spans the determination of *what* we do, *why* we do it, and *how* we do it.

Founder of Self Leadership International, Andrew Bryant, defines self-leadership as "the practice of intentionally influencing your thinking, feeling, and actions towards your objectives". Why is this important? Self-leadership is a prerequisite for effective and authentic team leadership. To effectively lead a team or group, you must develop:

- **Self-awareness**: the ability to focus on yourself and how your actions, thoughts, or emotions do or don't align with your internal standards.
- **Self-learning**: the process by which individuals take the initiative, in diagnosing their learning needs, goals, resources, and outcomes.
- **Self-regulation**: the process of directing attention, emotion, and behavior to a given situation or stimulus, for the purpose of pursuing a goal.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership Self-Assessment

Complete this self-assessment to get a sense about your leadership skills, current leadership strengths, and areas where you may need to improve. For each item, fill in the number that corresponds with the statement that best describes how you feel

	Strongly Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 4	Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3	Somewhat Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
Delegating work to others comes easy to me					
Communicating clearly with others is easy to me					
I enjoy engaging with other people on an interpersonal level					
I am proactive in offering constructive criticism					
I place a high value on treating others fairly					
Seeking advice from others is something I do often					
Change energizes me					
Problem-solving is one of my strengths					
I am comfortable with being a role model					
Working as part of a team energizes me					
I am comfortable coaching and mentoring others					

	Strongly Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 4	Neither Agree Nor Disagree 3	Somewhat Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
Directing the work of others is comfortable for me					
I can set and accomplish goals					
I enjoy implementing new methods and strategies					
I am proactive in providing praise to others					
I am comfortable admitting and correcting my own mistakes					
I have strong conflict management skills					
Diversity and inclusion are important to me					
I enjoy really listening to what others have to say					
When I see problems, I immediately look for possible solutions					
Grand Total					

Scoring: total each column and add the total of each column together to calculate your total score. What is your final score? _____

What does your score mean?

50+: If your grand total is 50 or above, this indicates you see yourself as having many of the skills and tendencies necessary to succeed in a leadership role. It may also indicate a leadership role appeals to you.

49-: If your grand total is 49 or lower, you do not currently perceive yourself as having strengths in key areas, skills, and abilities associated with success in a leadership role. This may mean that a leadership role is not particularly appealing to you, or it may simply serve to help you identify areas where improvement may be needed before seeking out a leadership position.

LEADERSHIP

Application

Use this assessment to help you identify your leadership strengths (items with the highest numeric scores) and opportunities for growth (items with the lowest numeric scores). From there, create an action plan.

What are your greatest leadership strengths?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What are your opportunities for growth as a leader?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Action Plan

How can you capitalize on your strengths?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What can you do to improve in areas where you have opportunities for growth?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

LEADERSHIP

“The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things."–Ronald Reagan

Leadership refers to the ability of an individual to influence or guide others. Leadership happens at all levels within organizations and society, not just among those who work in defined “leadership positions.” Furthermore, it is not something you’re born with but something you can learn and develop over time.

Effective leadership enables followers to succeed. It sets direction, builds a vision, and adapts as circumstances require. Well-led teams and organizations tend to be more productive, competitive and responsive to change. Individuals have a clearer vision of where they are headed and why and are therefore more engaged and motivated.

There are many approaches to leadership. Building awareness of the different frameworks and styles can help you to develop your own approach and to be a more effective leader.

LEADERSHIP

Psychologist Kurt Lewin identified three major styles of leadership: Autocratic leaders, democratic leaders, and laissez-faire.

1. **Autocratic leaders** make decisions without consulting their team members, even if their input would be useful.
    - This may be appropriate when you need to make decisions quickly, or when there's no need for team input.
    - This style can be demoralizing and can lead to high levels of absenteeism.
2. **Democratic leaders** make the final decisions, but they include team members in the decision-making process.
    - These leaders encourage creativity, and people are often highly engaged in projects and decisions. As a result, team members tend to have high job satisfaction and productivity.
    - This style is not always effective when you need to make a quick decision.
3. **Laissez-faire leaders** give their team members a lot of freedom in how they do their work and set their deadlines. These leaders provide support with resources and guidance as needed, but otherwise they don't get involved.
    - This autonomy can lead to high job satisfaction but can be damaging if team members don't manage their time well, or if they don't have the necessary knowledge, skills, or motivation to do their work effectively.

Lewin's framework is useful as it encourages leaders to be less autocratic than they might instinctively be (Lewin, Lippitt and White 1939).

LEADERSHIP

Researchers Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee identified six emotional leadership styles. Each style has a different effect on people's emotions, and each has strengths and weaknesses in different situations (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2002).

You shouldn't use any one style all the time. Instead, use the six styles interchangeably- choose the one that best addresses the situation you're facing, the people concerned, and the emotions that they're experiencing.

1. **Commanding-** "*Do as I say"*
    - These leaders explain the mission and tell team members what to do. They expect team members to do the job and not question it.
    - When there's an urgent job to be done and no time to discuss it fully, this may be the best option. The best leaders will take time after the fact to explain the logic behind the decision.
    - Uses: during a crisis, dealing with problem employees, or pushing time-sensitive deadlines.

2. Visionary- *"Come with me"*

- These leaders understand the big picture and can communicate the message effectively. They can also explain how each team member fits into achieving a goal and what they get out of it.
- They take team members with them, get them excited, and motivate them to achieve.
- Uses: changing directions, providing teams with clear direction, or rallying a team around a mission.

3. Affiliative- "*People come first"*

- These leaders work to solve (or avoid) conflict through collaboration. They try to create harmony among team members so that everyone feels valued.
- This style works best when the team isn't creating the desired results because they are not working together efficiently. They must understand and take the emotions of all team members into consideration .
- Uses: healing teams, clearing up misunderstandings, or motivating individuals during stressful situations.

LEADERSHIP

4. **Democratic** "*What do you think?"*

- These leaders value team members by including them in the decision-making process. This requires high engagement and trust from team members.
- Uses: when you need input to make decisions, when you have knowledge gaps, and situations that require significant change and team commitment.

5. Pacesetting- *"Do it at my pace"*

- These leaders are focused on high-quality work that leads to results. They set the tone and may lead the charge.
- Team members may work independently while the pacesetting leader tries to rally them to achieve even more.
- Uses: with highly productive teams, or when needing performance improvements to reach short-term goals.

6. Coaching- *"Try this"*

- These leaders focus on the team's development. They help team members focus on and achieve goals by providing coaching and training.
- This helps build team competence by coaching weaknesses and nurturing strengths. It can foster a cycle of continuous improvement.
- Uses: when working with motivated employees who seek improvement, and for continuous long-term improvement.

There's no right or wrong leadership style. Successful and effective leaders may use different styles at different times in a company's development, or with different team members. The best leaders are the ones that learn what their employees need and provide the right type of leadership at just the right time.

LEADERSHIP

Positive vs. Negative Leadership

Positive leadership encourages, empowers, and energizes people, whereas negative leadership drains them, discourages them, and demoralizes them.

You can determine whether a leadership behavior is positive or negative (or neutral) by asking yourself these questions:

1. Does it encourage or discourage team members?
2. Does it empower or demoralize team members?
3. Does it energize or drain team members?

If the answer is the former (encourage, empower, energize), it is likely a behavior of positive leadership. If the answer is the latter (discourage, demoralize, drain), it's probably a negative leadership behavior.

How to Model Positive Leadership Behavior:

1. Model your personal values behind the behaviors, not just the behaviors themselves.
2. Promote self-determination in your followers by showing them how it's done.
3. Encourage positive emotions and positive social exchanges in the workplace.
4. Set high expectations and live up to them.
5. Make sure you deliver on the commitments you make.
6. Value your team and be sure to nurture relationships, skills, and professional development.
7. Work well with others and promote teamwork and collaboration.
8. Try to resolve the inevitable conflicts that will arise in the workplace as quickly and effectively as possible.
9. Be open about your desire and willingness to help, support, and develop others.

MINDFULNESS

"Mindfulness is simply observing, watching, examining. You are not a judge but a scientist." –Walpola Rahula

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness *is about being fully aware of whatever is happening in the present moment, without the lens of judgment*. While mindfulness as a practice is historically rooted in ancient Buddhist meditative disciplines, it's also a universal practice that anyone can benefit from.

Mindfulness has expanded beyond its spiritual roots and now psychology and mental and emotional well-being. Physicians are prescribing training in mindfulness practice to help people deal with stress, pain, and illness. Some of the greatest benefits of mindfulness come from examining your mental processes nonjudgmentally, as a scientist would. **When you have greater insight into your habitual ways of thinking, you have the power to enhance your psychological and physical well-being.**

The ancient Buddhist text the Dhammapada says**, "Mind is the forerunner of all… conditions. Mind is chief; and they are mind-made**." This quote signifies the importance of paying attention to, or being mindful of, your own mind. It is said that *intention* is the crux of all actions- that our intentions shape our thoughts, words, and deeds. If the intentions are unwholesome, the results will be fruitful and skillful. Conversely, if the intentions are unwholesome, the results will be unfruitful and unskillful. **In this way, our minds, through our intentions and thoughts, are the creators of our own happiness and unhappiness** (Stahl and Goldstein 2019)**.**

MINDFULNESS

Attitudes of Mindfulness

The practice of mindfulness is like cultivating a garden: it flourishes when certain conditions are present. In terms of mindfulness, these conditions include the following eight attitudes, which are essential to mindfulness practice:

- **Beginner's mind** → the quality of awareness sees things as new and fresh, as if for the first time, with a sense of curiosity.
- **Nonjudgment** → this quality of awareness involves cultivating impartial observation regarding any experience- not labeling thoughts, feelings, or sensations as good or bad, right or wrong, fair or unfair, but simply taking note of thoughts, feelings, or sensations in each moment.
- **Acknowledgement** → validating and acknowledging things as they are.
- **Non-striving** → there is no grasping, aversion to change, or movement away from whatever arises in the moment.
- **Equanimity** → a deep understanding of the nature of change that allows you to be with change with greater insight and compassion.
- **Letting be** → you can simply let things be as they are, with no need to try to let go of whatever is present.
- **Self-reliance** → this quality of awareness helps you see for yourself, from your own experience, what is true or untrue.
- **Self-compassion** → this quality of awareness cultivates love for yourself as you are, without self-blame or criticism.

These attitudes are interdependent; each influences the others, and by cultivating one you enhance them all.

MINDFULNESS

Everyday mindfulness

Mindfulness is a way of learning how to relate directly to your life. Because it's about your life, no one else can do it for you or tell you exactly how to do it. Fortunately, it isn't something you have to get or acquire. You already have it within you; it's simply a matter of being present. In fact, in the very moment you recognize you aren't present, you've become present. The moment you see that you've been trapped by your thoughts, you gain the freedom to step out of the trap.

Mindfulness can be practiced in two ways: formally and informally. Formal practice means taking time out each day to intentionally sit, stand, or lie down and focus on the breath, bodily sensations, sounds, other senses, or thoughts and emotions. Informal practice involves bringing mindful awareness to daily activities, such as eating, exercising, chores, and basically any action, whether at work, at home, or anywhere else you find yourself.

Mindfulness encourages you to take one moment at a time. Since we really live only in the present moment, why not be there for each moment? As you become more mindful of your inner state- your thoughts, emotions, sensations, and mental processes- you'll start to sleep better, be more able to cope with stressful situations, improve your self-esteem, renew your enthusiasm for life and work, and generally just feel better.

Do it! An ounce of practice is better than a ton of theories, so why not do some practice? Pick a task that you normally do on a daily basis, like brushing your teeth, and try to keep your attention on the task as you do it. Bring all of your senses to the experience. Feel and listen to the bristles of the toothbrush against your teeth and gums, smell and taste the toothbrush in your mouth, remind yourself that you're brushing your teeth. Try it out and see what you notice.

MINDFULNESS

Formal practice: Mindfully Eating a Raisin

Place a few raisins in your hand. If you don't have raisins, any food will do. Imagine that you have just come to Earth from a distant planet without such food.

Now with this food in hand, you can begin to explore it with all of your senses. Focus on one of the objects as if you've never seen such a thing before. Focus on seeing this object. Scan it, exploring every part of it, as if you've never seen such a thing before. Turn it around with your fingers and notice what color it is.

Notice the folds and where the surface reflects light or becomes darker. Next, explore the texture, feeling any softness, hardness, coarseness, or smoothness.

While you're doing this, if thoughts arise such as "Why am I doing this weird exercise?" "How will this ever help me?" or "I hate these objects," then just see if you can acknowledge these thoughts and let them be, and then bring your awareness back to the object.

Take the object beneath your nose and carefully notice the smell of it. Bring the object to one ear, squeeze it, roll it around, and hear if there is any sound coming from it.

Begin to slowly take the object to your mouth, noticing how the arm knows exactly where to go and perhaps becoming aware of your mouth watering.

Gently place the object in your mouth, on your tongue, without biting it. Simply explore the sensations of this object in your mouth.

When you're ready, intentionally bite down on the object, maybe noticing how it automatically goes to one side of the mouth versus the other. Also notice the tastes it releases. Slowly chew this object. Be aware of the saliva in your mouth and how the object changes in consistency as you chew.

When you feel ready to swallow, consciously notice the intention to swallow, then see if you can notice the sensations of swallowing the raisin, sensing it moving down to your throat and into your esophagus on its way to your stomach.

Take a moment to congratulate yourself for taking this time to experience mindful eating.

MINDFULNESS

Mindful eating journal

What did you notice with the raisin (or whatever food) in terms of sight, touch, sound, smell, and taste? Was anything surprising? Did any thoughts or memories pop up while doing this practice? Take a moment to write down your reflections.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Informal practice: Mindful Eating

Eating is a great focus for mindfulness. After all, everyone has to eat, yet we often do so while distracted by something else, like reading, working, or watching television. As a result, people often don't really taste or even notice what they're eating.

You can extend the approach in the formal practice of eating a raisin to any eating experience, allowing you to practice informally anytime you like. Simply give the experience of eating your full, undivided attention, and intentionally slow the process down. Try to be like a scientific researcher, observing the mind and body with curiosity and objectivity, and without judgement. Go ahead and practice this several times over the next week. You're likely to find that you enjoy eating more, while perhaps eating less, as you tune in to what your body really wants and needs.

MINDFULNESS

Formal practice: Mindful check-in

Here is a brief, three-minute practice to give you another taste of mindfulness: the mindful check-in. This short, powerful practice allows you to recognize how you're feeling physically, mentally, and emotionally and will help you recenter yourself in the present moment. We recommend that you incorporate this practice into your daily life, using it as often as you like during the day.

Do this practice in a relaxing environment without distractions. You can lie down or sit up, but if you find yourself falling asleep, try a more upright posture. We suggest closing your eyes since the main point of focus is your inner experience of your mind and body; however, you may keep them partially open if you prefer.

Take a few moments to be still. Congratulate yourself for taking this time for meditation practice.

Begin this mindful check-in by feeling into your body and mind and simply allowing any waves of thought, emotion, or physical sensation to just be.

Perhaps this is the first break you've taken amidst a busy day. As you begin to enter the world of being rather than doing, you may notice the trajectory of the feelings that you've been carrying within yourself.

There is no need to judge, analyze, or figure things out. Just allow yourself to be in the here and now, amidst everything that is present in this moment. Spend about three minutes simply checking in with yourself in this way.

As you come to the end of this mindful check-in, again congratulate yourself for doing this practice and directly contributing to your health and well-being.

MINDFULNESS

Formal practice log

Each time you do a formal practice, fill out the following log. As you fill it out and reflect on the previous week's practice, think about how your practice is going. Do you notice any patterns about what works for you? What changes could you make to sustain the discipline?

Date and Formal Practice	Time	Thoughts, feelings, and sensations that arose during this practice and how you felt afterward
10/15 *Mindful check-in*	*7 a.m.*	*My mind kept wanderings to all the work I had to do today. I noticed a tightness in my chest at times, but it subsided. That tightness in my chest was anxiousness, and I felt more calm after the practice*

MINDFULNESS

Reflecting on informal practice

Take some time every day to reflect on a least one instance of informal practice. You can use what you learn from these reflections to deepen your daily informal practice.

What did you Learn?					
What did you notice after?					
What did you notice before?					
What was the situation?					
Practice					

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

MINDFULNESS

The mind-body connection

Researchers have charted the neural pathways that connect our thoughts and emotions to physiology. This finding has confirmed that **our thoughts and emotions are indeed interconnected with our body's physical processes.** Centered within this mind-body connection, mindfulness has been found to reduce stress.

In prehistoric times, when a person encountered a life-threatening situation, like being attacked by an animal, the body needed to handle the emergency immediately. To do so, the body's physical energy was redirected in ways to fight, flee, or freeze. Our parasympathetic nervous system is responsible for this response. When this system kicks in, physiological changes to support heightened activity like shallow breathing, increased heart rate and blood pressure occur.

Life is different now, and while most of us seldom face immediate, life-threatening dangers we do face a multitude of daily stressors, and our bodies don't always know the different. As a result, the fight, flight, or freeze response can arise due to being stuck in traffic, feeling overwhelmed at work, or worrying about finances or death. If your brain perceives danger even when there isn't imminent danger and this automatic reaction occurs repeatedly, your level of stress can build over time. When cortisol and the neurotransmitters epinephrine and norepinephrine surge through your body, you can go into a kind of hyper-adrenaline overdrive. When day-to-day stress is prolonged and seldom subsides, your body doesn't get a chance to rebalance itself, contributing to high blood pressure, muscle tension, anxiety, insomnia, gastrointestinal and digestive complaints, and suppressed immune system.

MINDFULNESS

Stress reaction and response

When you become aware of the stress in your life and how it affects your body and mind, you can begin to develop skills to bring greater balance to your life and how you respond to stress**. Stress reactions** are generally fueled by unconscious patterns, often learned from past challenges and experiences. These patterns include negative coping techniques such as smoking, workaholism, and general busyness that often leads to mental and physical breakdown.

A **stress response** involves acknowledging emotions rather than suppressing them while also developing tools for working with them. As you learn to respond to stress mindfully, you can begin to break old default patterns of unawareness associated with stress reactions. Now you've opened the door to new ways of working with stress and transforming it. Awareness is like bringing a light to the darkness of mindless reactions. Once you can see them more clearly, you can choose to respond more skillfully.

An everyday example of how awareness can decrease stress is the common experience of getting stuck in traffic. Because it's easy to be unaware of the impact stress has on the body and mind, you may not have noticed tension throughout your body, rapid or irregular breathing, or that you're gripping the steering wheel tightly. It's even less likely that you'll notice other, more hidden impacts of anxiety and irritation, such as elevated heart rate, blood pressure, or body temperate. However, once you become aware of your physical tension, you've returned to the present moment and can release your death grip on the steering wheel. Once you stabilize your breath by breathing mindfully, internal symptoms of stress (heart rate and blood pressure) will regulate.

MINDFULNESS

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.”

- Anne Lamott

Mindfulness helps you recognize that **there are choices in how you respond to any stressful situation**. We have the freedom to choose how to respond. Just as water finds the path of least resistance, you’ll tend to fall back on habits because in many ways it is the easiest course to follow. This includes habitual ways of seeing and reacting. To help provide motivation for the challenging work of resisting habitual reactions and behaviors, the next exercise will help you explore how stress is impacting your life. Becoming truly aware of the stress in your life and how you interact with it is a necessary first step in choosing new, healthier responses.

Take some time to reflect on the following questions, noticing whatever comes up in your thoughts, feelings, and sensations. When you’re ready write some of your thoughts below.

How is stress about people affecting your life?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How is stress about work affecting your life?

_____
_____
_____
_____

MINDFULNESS

How is stress about the world affecting your life?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How is stress about food and eating habits affecting your life?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How is stress about sleep and sleeplessness affecting your life?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How is stress about exercise or lack of affecting your life?

_____
_____
_____
_____

As awareness grows, you can begin to see more clearly how stress and anxiety affects so many areas of your life. *Before you move on, take a moment to compassionately reflect on, acknowledge, and integrate everything you wrote in this exploration.*

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil
Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil
CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness can help with stress in several ways:

- **Stress awareness** → mindfulness encourages you to become aware of your thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations in the present moment. This heightened awareness allows you to recognize stress as it arises.
- **Stress reduction** → mindfulness can reduce the tendency to dwell on past regrets or future worries, which are common sources of stress.
- **Emotional regulation** → when you can observe your emotions without reacting impulsively, you can choose healthier responses to stressors.
- **Cortisol reduction** → mindfulness has been linked to lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Regular practice may help lower overall stress reactivity.
- **Enhanced resilience** → mindfulness builds resilience, making you better equipped to handle life's challenges and bounce back from stress for effectively.
- **Better decision-making** → with a clear, focused mind, you're more likely to make rational decisions even under stressful circumstances.
- **Improved sleep** → mindfulness can alleviate sleep problems associated with stress by calming the mind and reducing racing thoughts.

MINDFULNESS

Informal practice: Mindfulness Throughout Your Day

From the moment you wake up to the moment you lay down for the night, you can engage mindfulness as a way of life. However, if you're like most people, as soon as you awaken, the mind if already busy compiling to-do lists and thinking about how you'll accomplish everything. When you're at work you may find yourself thinking about your next task rather than what's in front of you, or just wishing the workday was over. A feeling of being rusher or overwhelmed may follow you into your household tasks and relationships, so that no matter what you're doing, part of your mind is thinking about other things you need to do or rehashing what has occurred.

By choosing to become mindful throughout the day, you can bring a greater focus and appreciation to whatever situation you find yourself in. You'll also feel calmer and at peace. Here are some suggestions for informal ways to weave mindfulness into your day:

- As you open your eyes in the morning, instead of jumping out of bed, take a few moments to do a mindful check-in. By starting the day with greater present moment awareness, you'll set the stage for a greater sense of calm during challenging moments throughout your day.
- Savor each sip of your morning coffee or tea, paying attention to the aroma, taste, and warmth.
- If possible, have a meal by yourself in silence and without distractions, savoring each bite and appreciating the flavors and textures of your food.
- As you walk to your office or to a meeting, notice the sensation of your feet hitting the ground, the sounds around you, and how your breath may have changed.
- Take short breaks to focus on your breath, inhaling and exhaling deeply for a minute or two. Notice this new sense of calmness and clarity.

MINDFULNESS

Reflecting on informal practice

What did you Learn?					
What did you notice after?					
What did you notice before?					
What was the situation?					
Practice					

MINDFULNESS

How to Practice Mindfulness Meditation

Mindful breathing often serves as the foundation for meditation practices because your breath is always with you, wherever you are, and it can be used as an anchor to the present moment.

- *All that's involved is simply being mindful when you breathe in and out. There is no need to analyze, count, visualize, or manipulate your breath in any way.*
- Breathe normally and be mindful of your breathe in your nose, chest, belly, or even entire body as it breathes in and out.
- We naturally breathe from our abdominal or belly. To determine if you're breathing from your abdomen, place your left hand on your chest and your right on your belly. Notice what expands as you inhale and contracts as you exhale. If your belly is not contracting and expanding, turn your attention to breathing more deeply and feeling your belly expand and contract with your breath.
- Abdominal or belly breathing is helpful in moderating irregular breathing patterns, which often arise due to stress or irritation. Anxiety can lead to shallow and rapid breathing. Bringing your breath back into the belly helps to balance the body.
- When anxiety arises, first acknowledge the feeling, then gently bring the attention to the abdomen and practice mindful belly breathing.

In practicing mindfulness, **your mind will inevitably wander**.

- With mindfulness meditation, you bring your focus to a particular object of awareness, such as the breath. After a short time of practicing, your mind will wander off. This is normal. Your job is not to judge yourself, but simply to patiently notice and acknowledge the mind wandering- letting it be- and then gently bring the focus back to the breath.

MINDFULNESS

How to Practice Mindfulness Meditation

Wandering mind cont.

- Rather than being angry or frustrated with yourself, think of it this way: If you weren't mindful, you wouldn't even know you had wandered off. The fact is, in the moment when you realize you aren't present, you have become present.
- It's important not to repress or suppress thoughts and feelings as they arise in the present moment. You are learning how to be with them as they are, rather than trying to force anything to be a certain way.
- *It's important to first acknowledge without judgement where your mind went, and then gently bring it back to the object of focus.*
- There are three benefits to bringing the mind back after wandering:
    1. It provides training in concentration.
    2. By coming back to the present moment, you may discover that you're filled with self-judgment, worry, sadness, anger, or confusion, signaling that you need to pay closer attention to and deal with certain thing in your life.
    3. You may notice physical symptoms accompanying your emotions, such as a clenched jaw. You are now aware of the mind-body connection in how your thoughts and emotions manifest in your body.

Posture and practice

- You may sit on the floor, on a meditation cushion, or in a chair. You can even stand or lie on your back.
- Most people meditate with their eyes closed, but if you are more comfortable doing so, you can keep them partially open.
- You can fold your hands on your lap or place them on your thighs.
- Position yourself to remain alert yet comfortable.

MINDFULNESS

Formal practice: 5-Minute Mindful Breathing

Take a few moments to be still. Congratulate yourself for taking some time for meditation practice.

Bring your awareness to your breath wherever you feel it most prominently in your body. It may be at the nose, neck, belly, or somewhere else. As you breathe in normally and naturally, be aware of breathing in, and as you breathe out, be aware of breathing out. Simply maintain this awareness of the breath, breathing in and breathing out.

There is no need to visualize, count, or figure out the breath; just be mindful of breathing in and out. Without judgment, just watch the breath ebb and flow like waves in the sea. There's no place to go and nothing else to do, just be in the here and now, noticing the breath- just living life one inhalation and one exhalation at a time.

As you breathe in and out, be mindful of the breath rising on the inhalation and falling on the exhalation. Just riding the waves of the breath, moment by moment, breathing in and breathing out.

From time to time, attention may wander from the breath. When you notice this, simply acknowledge where you went and then gently bring your attention back to the breath.

Breathing normally and naturally, without manipulating the breath in any wat, just be aware of the breath as it comes and goes.

As you come to the end of this meditation, congratulate yourself for taking this time to be present, realizing that this is an act of love. May we be at peace. May all beings be at peace.

Take some time to write about whatever arose for you mentally, emotionally, and physically during this practice.

_____
_____
_____
_____

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness of the body

The body is a vehicle you live within through the journey of life, and you must care for it to promote it's health, wellness, and longevity. Bringing mindfulness to the body can help you learn what your body does and doesn't need in order to thrive.

Through mindfulness of the body, you can begin to understand how stress and anxiety affect you, and also learn how to live better even with physical pain or illness. The **body scan** is one way to open the door to greater mindfulness of the body.

Formal Practice: Body Scan

Do this practice in a relaxing environment without distractions. We suggest lying down while doing the body scan, but if you find yourself sleepy or would just rather sit or stand, you are welcome to do that to. Pause after each paragraph to make the exercise last forty-five, thirty, or fifteen minutes.

Take a few moments to be still. Congratulate yourself for taking this time for meditation practice.

Do a mindful check-in, feeling into your body and mind and simply allowing any thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations to just be.

Perhaps it's been a busy day and this is the first time you're stopping. As you begin to enter the world of being rather than doing, you may notice the trajectory of the feelings you've been carrying within you.

There is no need to judge, analyze, or figure things out. Just allow yourself to be in the moment with all that's there.

When you feel ready, gently shift the focus to the breath.

Now become aware of breathing.

Breathe normally and naturally and focus on the tip or the nose or the abdomen. Breathing in and knowing you're breathing in, and breathing out and knowing you're breathing out.

MINDFULNESS

At times the mind may wander away from awareness of breathing. When you recognize this, acknowledge wherever you went and then come back to the breath, breathing in and out with awareness.

And now gently withdraw awareness from mindful breathing as you shift to the body scan. As you go through the body you may come across areas that are tight or tense, If you can allow them to soften, let that happen; if you can't, just let the sensations be, letting them ripple in whatever direction they need to go. This applies not only to physical sensations but also to any emotions. As you go through the body be mindful of any physical sensations and any thoughts or emotions that may arise from sensations.

Bring awareness to the bottom of the left foot where you feel the contact of your foot on the floor. It could be the back of the heel or the bottom of the left foot. Sensing into what is being felt. Feeling the heel, ball, and sole of the left foot.

Feel into your toes and the top of the left foot and back into the Achilles tendon and up into the left ankle.

Now move your awareness up to the lower left leg, feeling into the calf and shin and their connection to the left knee. Being present.

Let awareness now rise up to the thigh, sensing into the upper leg and its connection above into the left hip.

And now withdraw awareness from the left hip down to the left foot, shifting it into the right foot and bringing awareness to where you feel the contact of your right foot on the floor. It could be the back of the heel or the bottom of the right foot. Sensing into what is being felt. Feeling the heel, ball, and sole of the right foot.

Feel into the toes and the top of the right foot and back into the Achilles tendon and up into the right ankle.

Now move your awareness up to the lower right leg, feeling into the calf and shin and their connection to the right knee. Being present.

MINDFULNESS

Let awareness now rise up into the thigh, sensing into the upper leg and its connection above into the right hip.

And now lift the awareness to the abdomen and into the belly, the home of digestion and assimilation, feeling into your guts with awareness and letting be.

Now withdraw your awareness from the belly and move to the tailbone and begin to sense into the lower, middle, and upper parts of the back. Feeling sensations. Allow any tightness to soften and let be what's not softening.

Let the awareness now shift into the chest, into the heart and lungs. Being present. Feeling into the rib cage and sternum.

Now gently shift the awareness into the fingertips of the left hand. Feeling into the fingers and palm, and then the back of the hand and up into the left wrist. Proceed up into the forearm, elbow, and upper left arm. Notice the sensations.

Now shift awareness to the fingertips of the right hand. Feeling into the fingers and palm, and then the back of the hand and up into the right wrist.

Proceed up into the forearm, elbow, and upper right arm. Let the awareness then move into both shoulders and armpits and then up into the neck and throat. Being present to any sensations, thoughts, or emotions.

Now bring your awareness into the jaw and then gently into the teeth, tongue, mouth, and lips. Allowing any resonating sensations to go wherever they need to go and letting be.

Feel into the cheeks, the sinus passages that go deep into the head, the eyes, and the muscles around the eyes. Feel into the forehead and the temples, being present.

MINDFULNESS

Let the awareness move into the top and back of the head. Feeling into the ears and then inside of the head and into the brain. Being present.

Now expand the field of awareness to the entire body from head to toe to fingertips. Connect from the head through the neck to the shoulders, arms, hands, chest, back, belly, hips, pelvic region, legs, and feet.

Feel the body as a whole organism, with its various physical sensations, thoughts, and emotions. Being present.

Breathing in, feel the whole body rising and expanding on an inhalation and falling and contracting on an exhalation. Feel the body as a whole organism. Being present.

As you come to the end of the body scan, congratulate yourself for taking this time to be present. May you know that this is an act of love. May all beings be at peace.

Body Scan Journal

As you feel into the body, acknowledge and validate all experiences, barring none. Many of us often experience unexplainable aches and pains. By practicing the body scan, you may discover that these reflect your tension or emotions, perhaps stored in your chest, neck, jaw, shoulders, back, or stomach. Did the body scan help you become aware of where you carry tension or emotions in the body? Take a moment to note whether you felt stress, anxiety, elation, sadness, anger, joy, or any other emotion in the body.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

REASSESSMENT

YEAR 2 CYCLE 5:

The next step in periodizing Cognitive Performance & Recovery (CP&R) is reassessing your current cognitive abilities, personality and leadership traits, mindset towards improved performance, sleep and recovery habits. This reassessment is essential for tracking progress and identifying areas that need continued focus or adjustment to further optimize your performance.

REASSESSMENT

"There's no way around hard work. Embrace it. You have to put in the hours because there is always something you can improve on."
— Roger Federer

Please take a few minutes to complete the following assessments to get a baseline on performance and develop self-awareness.

The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI)

Instructions: The following questions relate to your usual sleep habits during the past month only. Your answers should indicate the most accurate reply for the majority of days and nights in the past month. Please answer all questions. During the past month,

5. When have you usually gone to bed? _____
6. How long (in minutes) has it taken you to fall asleep each night? _____
7. When have you usually gotten up in the morning? _____
8. How many hours of actual sleep do you get a night? (Circle one. This may be different from the number of hours you spent in bed.)

< 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. During the past month, how often have you had trouble sleeping because you...	Not during the past month (0)	Less than once a week (1)	Once or twice a week (2)	Three or more times week (3)
a. Cannot get to sleep within 30 minutes				
b. Wake up in the middle of the night or early morning				
c. Have to get up to use the bathroom				
d. Cannot breathe comfortably				
e. Cough or snore loudly				
f. Feel too cold				
g. Feel too hot				
h. Have bad dreams				

i. Have pain				
j. Other reason(s), please describe, including how often you have had trouble sleeping because of this reason(s):				
6. During the past month, how often have you taken medicine (prescribed or "over the counter") to help you sleep?				
7. During the past month, how often have you had trouble staying awake while driving, eating meals, or engaging in social activity?				
8. During the past month, how much of a problem has it been for you to keep up enthusiasm to get things done?				
9. During the past month, how would you rate your sleep quality overall?				

Component	#9 Score	
Component	2 Score (s15min= 0; 16-30 min=l; 31-60 min=2, >60 min=3) + #5a Score (if sum is equal 0=0; 1-2=1; 3-4=2; 5-6=3)	
Component	#4 Score (>7=0; 6-7=1; 5-6=2; <5=3)	
Component	(total# of hours asleep)/(total # of hours in bed) x 100 >85%=0, 75%-84%=1, 65%-74%=2, <65%=3	
Component	Sum of Scores #5b to #5j (0=0; 1-9=1; 10-18=2; 19-27=3)	
Component	#6 Score	
Component	#7 Score+ #8 Score (0=0; 1-2=1; 3-4=2; 5-6=3)	
	Add the seven component scores together. **Global PSQI Score:**	

REASSESSMENT

Military Mental Skills Questionnaire

This Questionnaire measures seven important aspects of the mental side of mission performance. They are; Imagery Ability, Mental Preparation, Self-Confidence, Anxiety and Worry Management, Concentration Ability, Relaxation Ability, and Motivation.

		Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
Imagery Ability							
1	I can rehearse my tasks/missions in my mind.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I rehearse my skills in my head before I use them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	It is difficult for me to form mental pictures.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4.	I can easily imagine how movements feel.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mental Preparation							
5	I always set myself goals in training.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	I always have very specific goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I always analyze my performance after I complete a mission or task.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I usually set goals that I achieve.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Self-Confidence							
9	I suffer from lack of confidence about my performance.	6	5	4	3	2	1
10	I approach all tasks/missions with confident thoughts.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	My confidence drains away as a mission draw nearer.	6	5	4	3	2	1
12	Throughout missions I keep a positive attitude.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

Anxiety and Worry Management

13	I often experience fears about failing	6	5	4	3	2	1
14	I worry that I will disgrace myself during a mission.	6	5	4	3	2	1
15	I let mistakes worry me when I perform.	6	5	4	3	2	1
16	I worry too much about missions.	6	5	4	3	2	1

Concentration Ability

17	My thoughts are often elsewhere during missions/briefings.	6	5	4	3	2	1
18	My concentration lets me down during missions/briefings.	6	5	4	3	2	1
19	Unexpected noises put me off my performance.	6	5	4	3	2	1
20	Being easily distracted is a problem for me.	6	5	4	3	2	1

Relaxation Ability

21	I am able to relax myself before a mission.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	I become too tense before missions	6	5	4	3	2	1
23	Being able to calm myself down is one of my strong points	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I know how to relax in difficult circumstances.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Motivation

25	During missions I am usually psyched enough to perform well	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	I really enjoy a tough mission/task.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	I am good at motivating myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	I usually feel that I try my hardest.	1	2	3	4	5	6

REASSESSMENT

Mental Skill Questionnaire Scoring

The Percentage scores do not represent a right or wrong score as you would get in an exam. These percentages simply show you where you are now, and you should use them in the future to assess if you have progressed from this starting point.

Mental Skills Questionnaire
Results

Date:	Score:	%:
IMAGERY		
MENTAL PREPARATION		
SELF-CONFIDENCE		
ANXIETY AND WORRY		
CONCENTRATION		
RELAXATION		
MOTIVATION		

Score Total	%
24	100
23	95.8
22	91.7
21	87.5
20	83.3
19	79.2
18	75
17	70.8
16	66.7
15	62.5
14	58.3
13	54.2
12	50
11	45.8
10	41.7
9	37.5
8	33.3
7	29.2
6	25
5	20.8
4	16.7

Next, select the three area's that you need the most work on. Seek out training in these skill areas to improve your mission performance!

Mental Skills to focus on:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

All scores should be at least 60%
90% is elite
70-80% is above average
60% is acceptable
50% or less = problem area

Formula= Group total/.24
= (Group total /24)xl00

FOUNDATION II

YEAR 2 CYCLES 5 & 6:

The next phase of the CP&R training program takes place during your fifth and sixth 10-week cycles on the trail. This phase continues to focus on building a strong foundation, with an emphasis on preparing you for your return to your MOS or future roles. The exercises in this phase build upon the skills you've honed during your first year on the trail, fine-tuning your cognitive performance and resilience to ensure you're fully prepared for the demands of your career.

The objectives of this Year 2 Foundational Phase of the program focus on:

1. Identity and Purpose
2. Emotional Regulation
3. Tactical Mobility and Recovery (TMAR)
4. Memory (Attention and Recall)
5. Self-talk
6. Imagery

IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

"Who you are, what your values are, what you stand for, they are your anchor, your north star. You won't find them in a book. You'll find them in your soul." -Anne Mulcahy

Identity is a complex concept that involves our beliefs, values, experiences, and roles in life. Understanding one's identity is crucial for personal growth, self-awareness, and overall well-being. Identity exploration can be particularly beneficial for individuals experiencing life transitions or facing challenges. It can help an individual navigate changes, adapt to new circumstances, and find a sense of purpose or direction.

It's also worth noting that identity is not static. It evolves over time as we grow, learn, and experience life. Regular reflection on one's identity can help track personal growth and more effectively adapt to life's challenges.

Our core values are our fundamental beliefs that guide decisions, actions, and interactions. They are the principles that matter most to an individual and serve as a compass for their life. Highlight the core values below that resonate the most with you, and feel free to write in your own as this list is not all encompassing.

Altruism	Dependability	Integrity	Generosity	Courage
Gratitude	Creativity	Self-respect	Adaptability	Honesty
Authenticity	Loyalty	Perseverance	Faith	Resilience
Kindness	Happiness	Fun	Humor	Fairness
Ambition	Collaboration	Family	Empathy	

Think about situations where you truly felt yourself and what values were at play. How do your identified core values show up in your daily life and decisions? How do they influence your behavior and relationships? How can you align your actions more closely with your values? Use the space below to reflect.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil
Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil
CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

Character strengths are a foundational part of who we are, as well. These influence how we think, act, and feel and represent what we value in ourselves and others. The VIA Character Strengths Survey is a validated tool that can help us discover our strengths, including those that we tend to rely on the most. Go to http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu to complete the VIA Character Strengths Survey. If you are a first-time user, you will need to register prior to taking the survey. To register, go to the site main page, go to the “Questionnaires” tab and select “VIA Survey of Character Strengths.” Once that page loads, select “Register” and begin filling in the information. Please answer the questions holistically; in other words, consider who you are 24 hours/day, not only while on duty. If the website only displays the top five Character Strengths, move the cursor down the page to “show more”. Although it does not appear to be so, this is a hyperlink that will display all 24 of the Character Strengths.

Knowing your VIA character strengths increases self-awareness and helps you understand your core qualities, which fosters personal growth. It promotes a positive mindset by focusing on strengths, enhancing well-being and resilience when facing challenges. Additionally, it improves relationships by encouraging better communication and appreciation of others’ strengths. Lastly, using your strengths boosts performance, allowing you to thrive in personal and professional settings.

Our personal interests and passions are powerful indicators of who we are at our core. These are the activities, topics, or causes that naturally capture our attention and bring us joy. By exploring what we are drawn to- whether it’s a particular hobby, creative pursuit, or area of study- we can uncover important aspects of our identity. Our passions often reflect our deepest values and desires, offering insight into what motivates us and what we truly care about. When we engage in activities that align with our passions, we feel more connected to ourselves, and our sense of purpose becomes clearer. This connection between passion and identity not only enhances our self-awareness but also fuels our growth and fulfillment.

The roles we play in life- such as being a family member, friend, professional, or community member- are key components of our identity. Each role brings with it different responsibilities, perspectives, and opportunities for growth, shaping how we see ourselves and interact with the world. For instance, the role of a leader might foster qualities like responsibility and decisiveness, while being a supportive friend might highlight empathy and loyalty. Our relationships within these roles also influence our identity, as they often reflect the values and traits we hold dear. However, it’s important to recognize that we are more than any single role; our identity is a blend of all the roles we inhabit. By reflecting on the roles that are most meaningful to use and how we balance them, we gain a fuller understanding of our identity and how it is expressed in different areas of our lives. Balancing these roles effectively allows us to maintain a cohesive and authentic sense of self.

Identity is not a fixed concept; it is a dynamic and evolving aspect of who we are. As we grow, experience new things, and face different challenges, our understanding of

ourselves naturally changes. This evolution is a normal and healthy part of life, reflecting our capacity to adapt and grow. Embracing change in our identity allows us to stay true to ourselves while also being open to new possibilities. It's important to recognize that shifts in identity do not mean losing who we are; rather, they represent the expansion and deepening of our self-understanding. By regularly reflecting on how our identity is evolving- through self-assessment, journaling, or mindful observation- we can remain aligned with our true selves, even as we navigate life's changes. This ongoing process of reflection and adaptation helps us stay connected to our purpose and remain resilient in the face of life's uncertainties.

Exercise: Match Your Life

Find a 3x5 index card or something similar. On one side of the card, make a list of the top two or three things you typically spend your money on. Now list two or three things that you typically spend your time on. Lastly, list two or three things that seem to constantly occupy your mind. What are you worried about? What do you dream about or yearn for? Now, flip the card over and list the top two or three most important things in your life. Do the two sides of the card match? Is what you're spending time, money, and your mental space on leading you to the things you seem to value most? If yes, great! If not, reflect on what work you need to do to change this.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

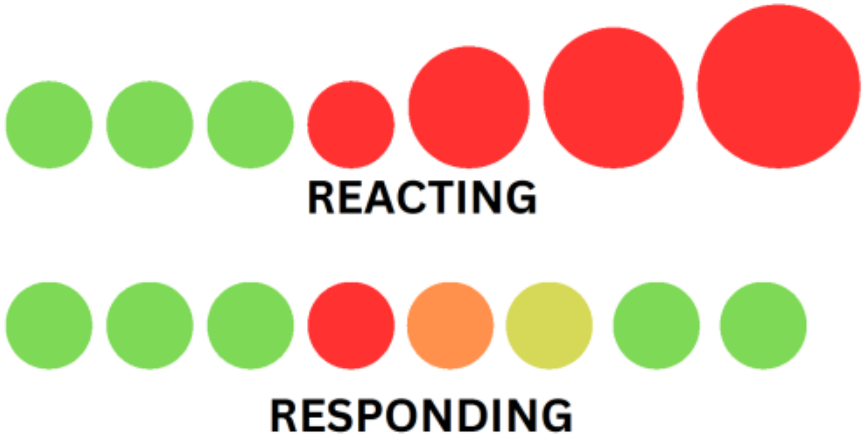
"My message for everyone is the same: that if we can learn to identify, express, and harness our feelings, even the most challenging ones, we can use those emotions to help use create positive, satisfying lives." -Marc Brackett

Emotions heightened between Orlando Magic's Matt Barnes and the L.A. Laker's Kobe Bryant during their infamous game on March 7th, 2010. After a series of petty contacts and verbal exchanges, it became increasingly clear that Barnes was frustrated with Bryant. During an in-bound pass, Barnes pump-faked the ball towards Bryant's head, who was only standing two feet away. Barnes was reacting to his heightened emotions and failed to make the ever-stoic Bryant flinch. Bryant held his eye contact with Barnes as the broadcasters who commentated on the game reacted to the statue-like reaction that Kobe maintained, even though Barnes had convincingly faked a hard ball toss at his head.

What drove Barnes' motive to fake hit Bryant? What allowed Bryant to keep his poise and not move a muscle?

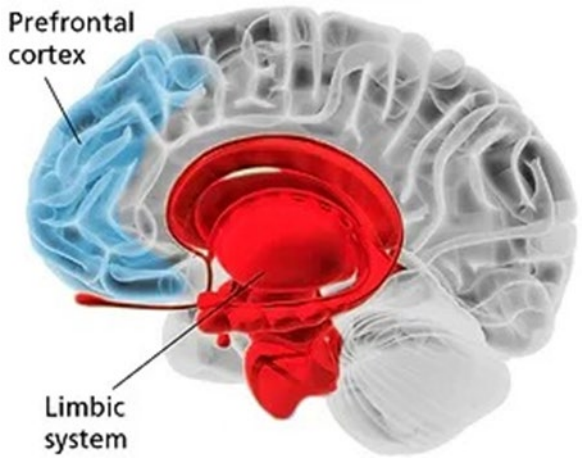
The key difference between the two athletes is likely a function of their ability to **emotionally regulate**.

Emotional regulation is the extrinsic and intrinsic processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions. In other words, it is the capacity to manage the emotions we experience, as opposed to letting the emotions manage us. It is important to understand that individuals with a high capacity to emotionally regulate still experience the same feelings we all do— they are simply better at *responding* to their emotions instead of *reacting*.



Challenging emotions may derive from something we are experiencing in our external environment (i.e., someone insults us). When we react to our feelings, we give our locus of control to the external world and our emotions drive our behaviors. Our emotions continue to build and become more consuming as we react (our red circles get bigger). However, when we respond we experience the same acute emotion, but we keep our locus of control, create the mental space to down-regulate our emotions, and proceed with rational thinking. This stops the emotions from accumulating and allows us to return to baseline (our circle returns to green).

It is helpful to understand that reacting to our emotions is natural and likely evolutionary. Our ancestors who were better at emotionally reacting to the various threats (i.e., jumping away from snakes in the grass) were more likely to survive. Those who were slow to react to the threats (i.e., getting bit by the snakes) died and did not pass down their emotionally reactive genetics.



Your brain is a testament to these adaptations. In the center of your brain, there is an area known as the “limbic circuit.” The limbic circuit has many jobs but is highly associated with emotions and the fight or flight response. This brain structure was likely more efficient in our ancestors who survived various threats. In addition, you have an area of the brain known as the “prefrontal cortex”. The prefrontal cortex also has many jobs but is highly associated with rational thinking and decision-making. While most animals have a prefrontal cortex, the human prefrontal cortex is more complex (more neutral connections) and can compress more information (can tell the difference between say, a harmless snake and a harmful snake). When reacting to our emotions, our limbic circuit is most likely activated, with minimal prefrontal cortex activation. In contrast, when responding rationally to our emotions, our prefrontal cortex is likely more activated while the limbic circuit activation dampens.

Thus, you are neurologically wired to both emotionally react and rationally respond. However, these two options rarely occur simultaneously, and one normally comes at the expense of the other. Thankfully, you are not at the mercy of these brain circuits and can choose which circuits to use in different situations. You can literally condition your prefrontal cortex to be more primed for action in emotional moments than your limbic

circuit. In psychology, we call this “neuroplasticity”. Neuroplasticity refers to our brain’s ability to adapt and grow new neural pathways (the fancy term for this is “learning”). Neuroplasticity is not a metaphor and is a literal occurrence that takes place throughout our life span. In 1994, Psychologist Donald Hebb coined the term “Hebb’s Law”, which states that “neurons that fire together wire together.” In other words, just as muscle fibers in your arm regenerate and strengthen as they are more frequently used, so do neurons in the brain. This is observable through various brain imaging techniques, such as fMRI. As you create a habit of reacting to your emotions, you are quite literally strengthening your limbic circuit. As you strive to respond with rationality to your feelings, you start to strengthen your prefrontal cortex.

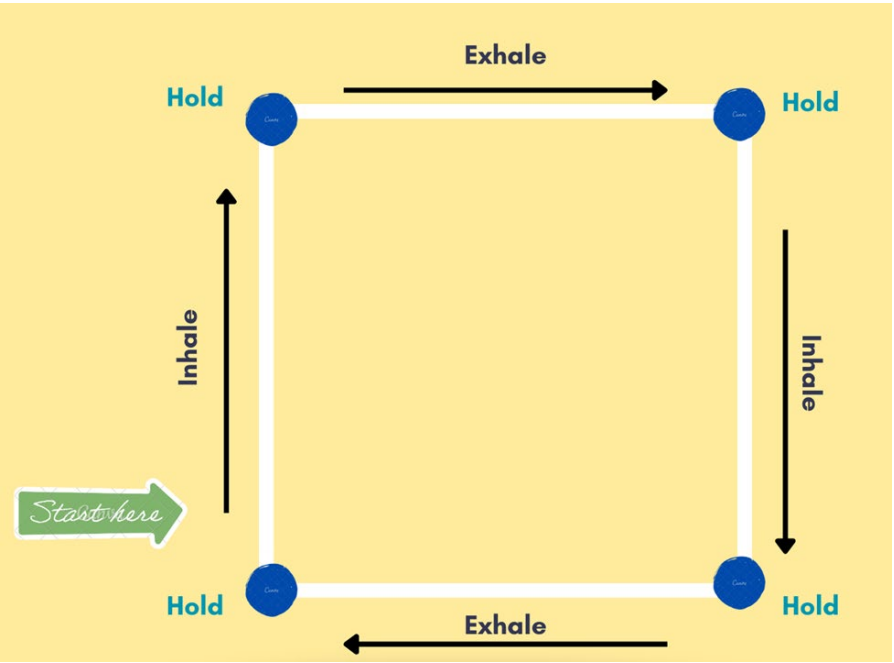
So, how do we leverage neuroplasticity in our favor and make a habit of responding rather than reacting? Here are three evidence-based protocols.

Breathwork

During emotional moments, we often experience an increase in HRV and thought processing speed, making it difficult to rationally respond. Breathing is an effective way to lower both HRV and thought processing speed. Here are two breathing techniques that are quick yet effective.

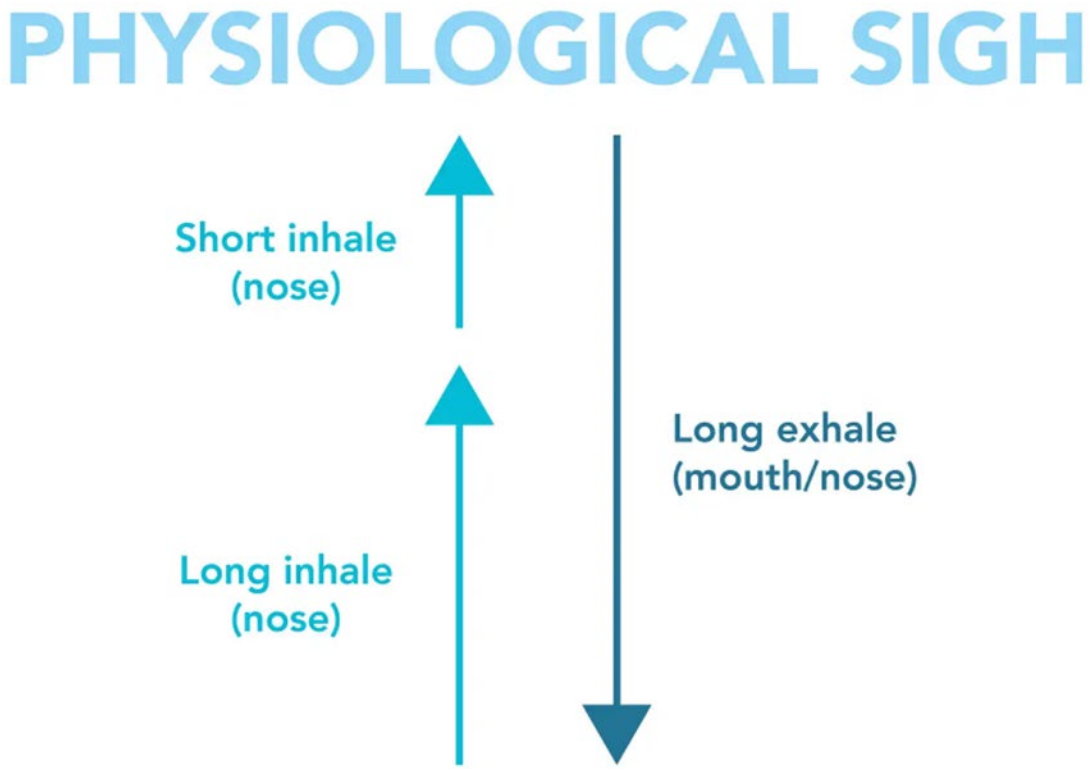
Box Breathing

This breathing technique includes holding an equal pattern of inhales, exhales, and holds. This is done in a repetitive pattern of inhale, hold, exhale, hold, inhale, hold, exhale, hold, etc. Typically, each portion is completed over four seconds; however, you may adjust the timing as needed. You may also do as many rounds as needed. Follow the graphic below for a visual representation of box breathing.



Physiological Sigh

This breathing technique includes a long inhale through the nose to near-max capacity, a short pause, and then another short inhale through the nose before fully exhaling through the mouth. Research suggests that just a few rounds of the physiological sigh are effective for reducing HRV and activating a calming response. Follow the graphic below for a visual representation of the physiological sigh.



(image credit: Dr. Miguel Balbin, "5 tips for overcoming public speaking anxiety at scientific conferences")

Mindfulness Techniques

As explained in year 1, cycle 4 of this workbook, mindfulness is an effective way of bringing attention to what we are experiencing. When we become aware of what we are feeling (i.e., upset because of what a leader said), the limbic circuit reaction is often buffered. The limbic circuit is activated by the perception of threat. However, when we recognize emotions as concepts we experience, rather than snakes in the grass, our limbic circuit reacts less.

One mindfulness activity known as "*affect labeling*", is very effective at buffering the limbic response. This technique requires labeling the emotions as you experience them. You can either label the emotions as their most basic title (i.e., anger, sadness, etc.) or you can give your emotions categorical nicknames. For example, when someone gets mad, they may think, "That is my inner Adam Sandler talking" (Adam Sandler is known for playing characters with anger problems). While this may feel immature or silly, that is exactly the point. This brings down the threat response and thus dampens the limbic response. It is difficult for emotions to control you when you have reduced their meaning to a title.

Please see year 1, cycle 4, for more ideas on how to exercise mindfulness.

Value Driven Behavior

The most difficult aspect of responding rationally is not knowing what behavioral action to take. Even when you have calmed your thinking speed with breathing, and have lowered your limbic circuit reactions with mindfulness, you still may not know how to rationally respond to the situation. In the previous section on Identity and Purpose, you reflected on the values you most align with. Once you are clear on which values are most important to you, you should strive to understand how those behaviors manifest. For example, how does "bravery" behave when under pressure? How does "leadership" behave when a trainee insults to you? Ask yourself, "What value should I have strived to pursue the last time I was emotionally reacting? What specifically should I have done to live that value in that moment?" Understanding how these values manifest gives you a list of options. When something in the external world occurs, you can either choose to allow the emotions drive your behavior (react) or you can permit your values drive your behavior (respond). Over time, thanks to neuroplasticity, this becomes easier to do.

TMAR

The practice of yoga asanas develops strength and flexibility, while soothing your nerves and calming your mind. The asanas affect the muscles, joints and skin, and the whole body – glands, nerves, internal organs, bones, respiration and the brain.

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

U.S. Army Center for Initial Military Training (CIMT) has developed a Tactical Mobility and Active Recovery (TMAR) video series that breaks down TMAR movements/poses into short videos demonstrations. This video series also includes a 20-minute warmup,20 minute cool down, and 60 minute workout.

CIMT Training Videos

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwlu1NFWsQMw06NsrnsPEAw/videos

60 Minute TMAR Workouts

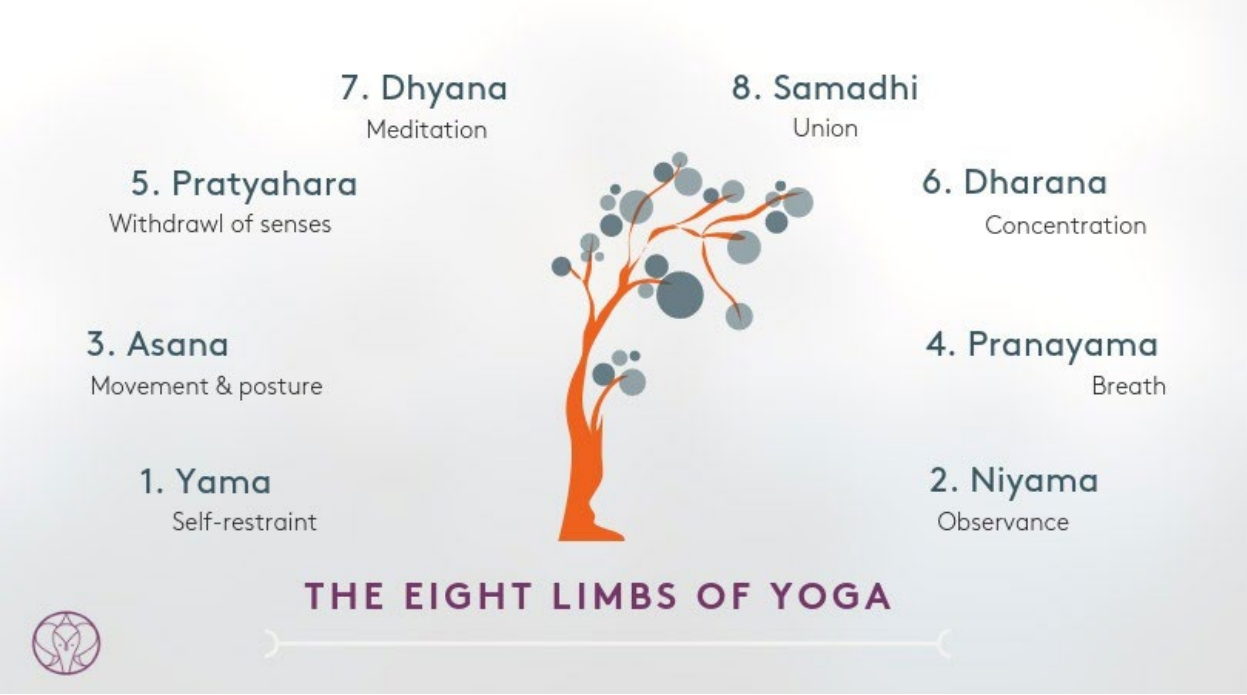
https://youtu.be/BudWo4Ix7Nk (studio)

https://youtu.be/SdOhoTTjNsQ (gym)

20 Min TMAR Warmup

https://youtu.be/a6Id_BXkbP0 (studio)

https://youtu.be/bF_x8lPGcbY (gym)



MEMORY

"A side effect of memory training, in other words, is an improvement in your general ability to concentrate. This ability can then be fruitfully applied to any task or demanding deep work." – Cal Newport

Please pause for a moment. Close your eyes and take three deep breaths.

Now grab your phone and set an alarm clock for 15 seconds.

Press the start button on your alarm and look at the image below. When the alarm goes off, move on to the next page.

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil

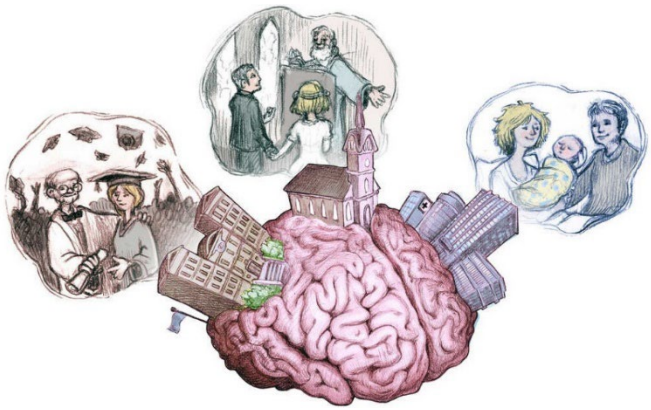
Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil

CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

Where was the spoon in the previous photo? Right or left side of the plate? How close was the spoon to the plate? How many spoons did you see?

How many forks and knives were in the photo?

Did you see the napkin in the top left corner? FYI, there were no napkins in the photo



What is memory?

Memory is the power to retain and recall information and past experiences.

The Cognitive System: Attention, Memory, Executive Functions & Communication

Have you ever felt like your ability to remember names, events, or items is starting to decline. Or maybe you fell as if you're always forgetting something: What time is that meeting? Where did I put my keys and cellphone? Did I lock the front door? The list goes on and on.

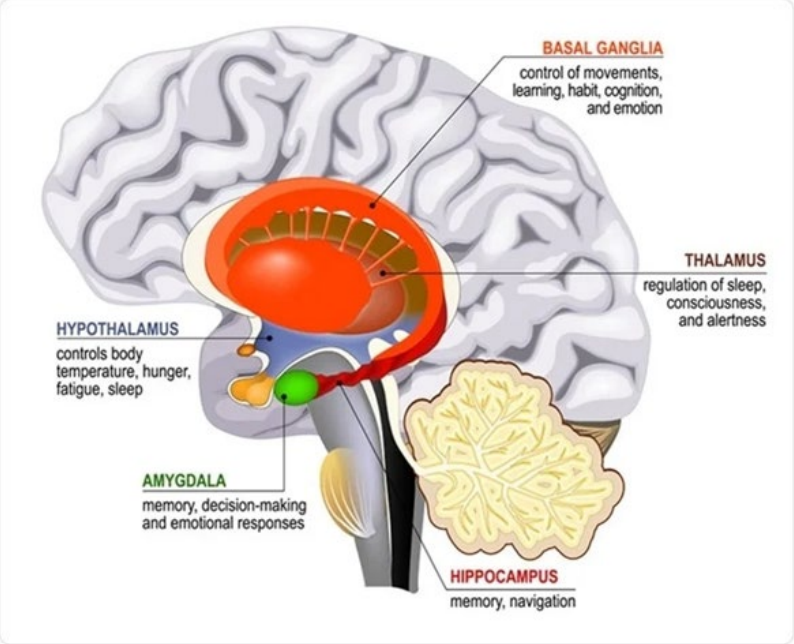
When your memory is lacking, learning and concentrating can be quite difficult. But fear not. Like most things, you can improve your memory with time and practice

Different Functions of Memory

There are three types of memory that are important to learning

Long-Term Memory *"Associative"*	All of your life-long memories are held here. Think: How you walk, how you talk, and your treasured memory of our birthday this past year. Examples: To know capitals of countries, play an instrument, speak another language
Short-Term Memory *"Retaining"*	Short-term memory allows you to remember and process pieces of information at the same time. That means it's enabling you to read and understand this right now! Examples: Repeating capitals of countries, remembering a phone number, retrieving names
Working Memory *"Automatic Conducts"*	Working memory (while sometimes used interchangeably with short-term memory) refers to the structures and processes for temporarily storing and using information. Short-term memory is just one component of this. Examples: Driving, writing, suturing

Where are Memories Stored? The hippocampus is a part of your brain that's responsible for your memory and learning. This small structure helps you remember, both short- and long-term, and gain awareness from your environment.



How does Memory Work?

1. *Encoding:* The process through which information is learned. That is, how information is taken in, understood, and altered to better support storage.
    a. Types of Storage Methods: Visual encoding (how something looks); acoustic encoding (how something sounds); semantic encoding (what something means); tactile encoding (how something feels)
2. *Storage:* Refers to how, where, how much, and how long encoded information is retained within the memory system. Encoded information is first stored in short-term memory, and then, if needed, is stored in long-term memory.
3. *Retrieval:* The process through which individuals access stored information.

Improving Memory

Mental Training

- Greater cognitive stimulation in workplace is associated with higher levels of cognitive functioning.
- Sudoku puzzles have positive impact on working memory, particularly with digit symbol and letter memory performance (Grabbe, 2017)
- Activities to engage the mind: crossword puzzles, reading, board games, exploring new hobbies, learning how to plan a musical instrument.

Spend time with others

- Social interaction helps ward off depression and stress. Both of those can contribute to memory loss.
- Look for opportunities to get together with friends, family, loved ones, and other people.

Physical Exercise

- Improves cognitive function and prevents neurological decline. Raises blood flow to the whole body, including the brain.
- Aerobic exercise increases size of hippocampus and improves spatial memory (Erickson et al., 2015)

Consolidation

<u>Sleep and Rest</u>

- Optimizes consolidation of newly acquired information
- Necessary for synaptic homeostasis and recovery (Assadzadeh & Robinson, 2018)
- Sleep deprivation causes decreased hippocampal activity for episodic memory encoding and retention.

<u>Meditation</u>

- Not “clearing your mind,” but giving your mind focus and clearing distractions (attention and awareness).

- Improves ability to stay on task and improves working memory capacity.

Stay Organized

- Use notebooks, calendars, or electronic planner to track tasks and appointments
- Repeat each entry out loud as you write it down to help keep it in your memory
- Keep to-do lists up to date. Check off items you've finished.
- Limit distractions

How to Remember Names with Jim Kwik:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kyo4RPnTxVw

4 Keys to Remember Things Better with Jim Kwik:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aopwBmXmu8

SELF-TALK

"Self-talk is the most powerful form of communication because it either empowers you or it defeats you." – Wright Thurston

In Dr. Craig Manning's book, "*The Fearless Mind",* he tells the story of an Olympic skier who struggled with performance anxiety. Dr. Manning is a mental performance coach and has worked with many professional athletes and teams. Much of his work focuses on the words we tell ourselves and our inner thoughts—also known as *self-talk.* Dr. Manning helps athletes manage their self-talk to enhance their performance. This particular skier had low confidence levels, despite being an Olympic athlete. She often ruminated over negative thoughts, such as, "I am not good enough to be here", or "What if I mess up?" Dr. Manning challenged her to verbally use a "power phrase" whenever she noticed herself using these negative thoughts. She decided to say the words, "Today is my day!" which she could be heard screaming before her Olympic qualifying run. Yelling this phrase became part of her pre-ski routine.

There are various ways we can use self-talk to enhance our performance and mood. There are several families of self-talk, which include: Positive, Negative, Neutral, Helpful, Unhelpful, Motivational, and Instructional.

Positive, Negative, and Neutral

One way to categorize our self-talk is via the affect (general emotion) most associated with it. For example, “I suck” is negative, “the sky is blue” is neutral, and “I am the best” is positive. In general, high performance and elevated mood is facilitated by neutral and positive self-talk.

Neutral self-talk can be effective at decreasing anxiety caused by negative self-talk. For example, some basketball players will mentally sing a song or count in their head as they shoot free throws in order to fill their attentional space and keep negative thoughts out of their mind. If a soccer player were to be struggling with missing shots during pressure situations due to thoughts such as “everyone is watching me” or “don’t mess up”, a potential solution would be for the individual to deliberately focus on neutral thoughts. Important performance-enhancing cues that help the individual focus on relevant skill information (e.g., keep your eye on the ball) also count as neutral thoughts, but we will talk more about instructional self-talk later.

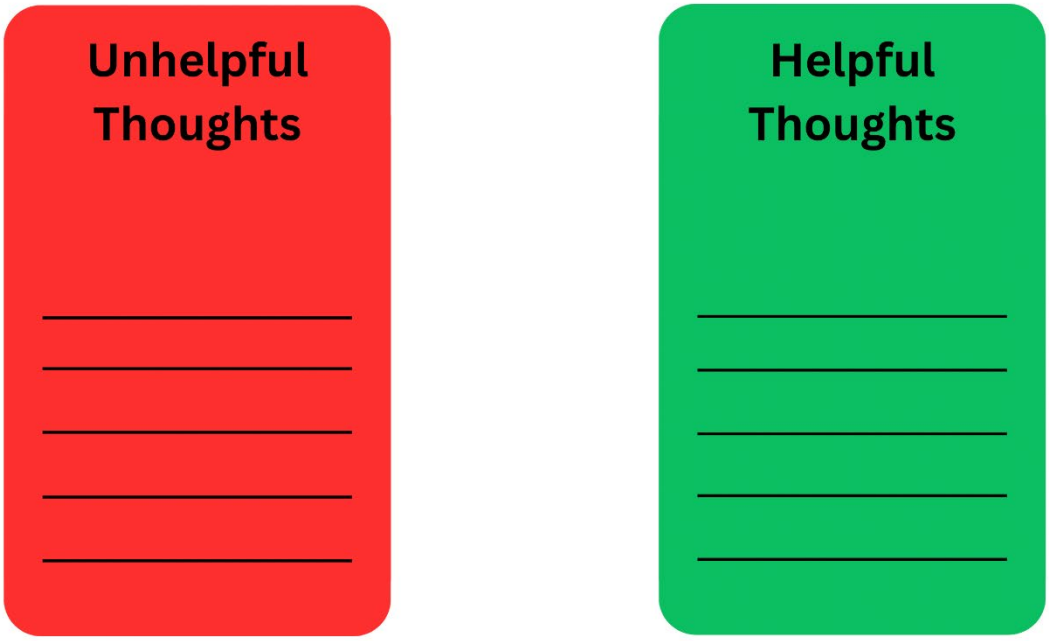
One self-awareness activity is to label your thoughts as either red (negative), yellow (neutral), or green (positive). Think about the thoughts you experienced last time you had to do your job well (reciting a pitch to the trainees, completing the ACFT, etc.) What red thoughts did you experience? What yellow thoughts did you experience? What green thoughts did you experience? Which color were your thoughts the most? Which color were your thoughts in the least? Feel free to use the graphic below to write out the different types of thoughts you experienced.

Helpful and Unhelpful

Another way to categorize your self-talk is by labeling them as helpful or unhelpful for your performance. For the skier, her self-talk was “helpful”, as it enhanced her performance. Her other thoughts which centered on insecurities and doubts were unhelpful.

With this method, positive thoughts may be unhelpful, and negative thoughts may be helpful. For example, thinking the words “I am the best” (positive self-talk) may encourage complacency and result in decreased efforts. In contrast, “I am not very good at this”, may motivate effort and result in growth. This is dependent upon the individual and their preference.

Let’s redo the same self-awareness activity and think about the last time you had to do your job well. What helpful thoughts did you experience? Why were they helpful? What unhelpful thoughts did you experience? Why were they unhelpful? Which type of thought (helpful or unhelpful) did you experience the most?



Motivational and Instructional

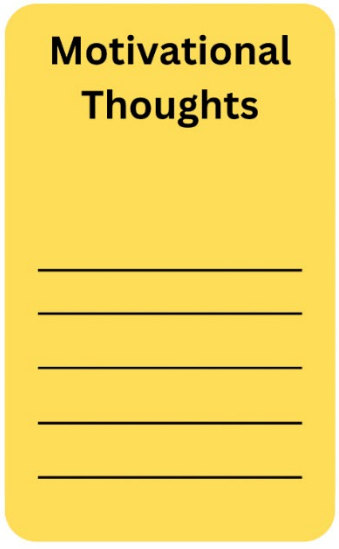
The last way we can categorize self-talk is concerned with how it assists our performance. Motivational self-talk is energy facilitating, HRV elevating, and stimulating to the sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight). On the other hand, instructional self-talk is focus narrowing and important for skill development.

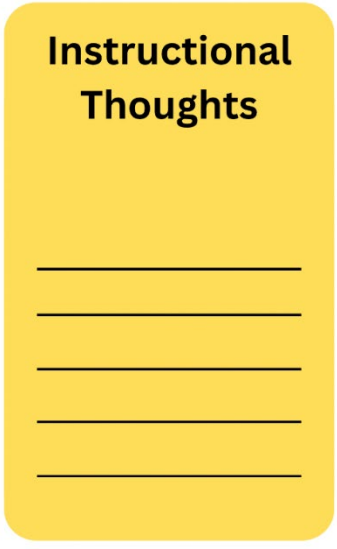
The skier's power statement of "today is my day" would be a good example of motivational self-talk. Often with motivational self-talk, the goal is to help oneself into their optimal arousal level (be it higher or lower than where their current arousal level is). This could be a football coach giving a motivational speech to increase the team's energy, or an MMA fighter saying "I am prepared" before a fight to calm their nerves

One way to use motivational self-talk is via "power statements", which is a short catchphrase that is memorized and repeated when needed. The key is to choose a power statement that is personal and has significant meaning. When the power statement is meaningful, it is more likely to be rememberable during stressful moments and have the desired response. An example of this is Muhammad Ali's phrase, "I'll show you, how great I am." This phrase likely carried much significance for him and enabled him to feel optimal levels of energy.

On the other hand, instructional self-talk can be viewed as "cues" or focus points. For example, a basketball player shooting a free throw may think, "hit the back of the net" or "shoot from the legs." The objective of instructional self-talk is similar to neutral-self talk (it fills the attentional space so negative self-talk cannot). However, it also helps the individual direct their focus towards skill-enhancing cues. For a drill sergeant, their instructional self-talk may include thoughts like, "Speak slowly" (when reciting pitches) or "Pull trigger exhale" (while completing rifle qualification).

Which form of self-talk would best enhance your performance? How would motivational self-talk enhance your performance? How would instructional self-talk help your performance? What are the skills you are trying to develop? How would self-talk support the acquisition of these skills?





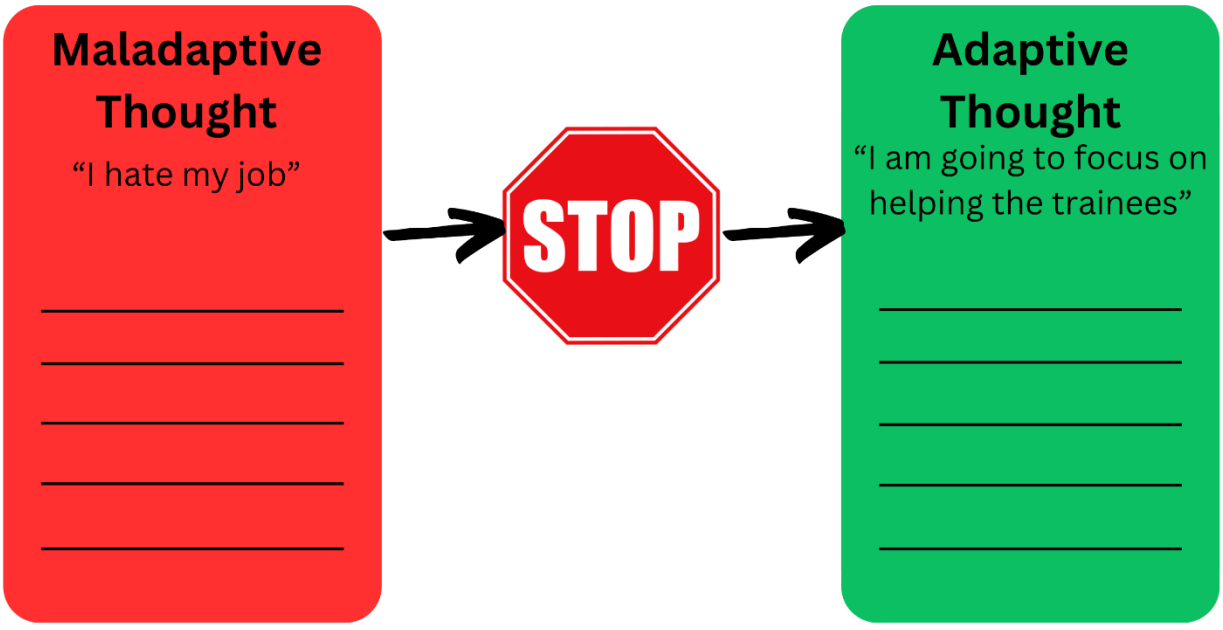
Self-Talk Interventions

Unfortunately, we are not born with the habit of thinking in optimal self-talk styles. We often think in ways that create anxiety and worry, which consequentially worsen performance. Perhaps you found a type of self-talk that you would like to implement. However, what if you habitually use maladaptive self-talk? Popular therapeutic approaches, such as Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) or Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) offer advice on how to handle unwanted forms of self-talk.

Thought-Stopping:

Thought-stopping is a CBT technique that includes recognizing when we are using maladaptive self-talk and telling ourselves a cue to stop the thought from progressing. For example, someone may use the cue "TURN IT OFF!" when they notice they are thinking in an unwanted way. An executive officer who experiences the thought, "I am too messy to be good at my job", should attempt to mentally or verbally say, "TURN IT OFF", in response. Once they have effectively stopped the thought, they should attempt to redirect their focus towards one of the more effective forms of previously described self-talk.

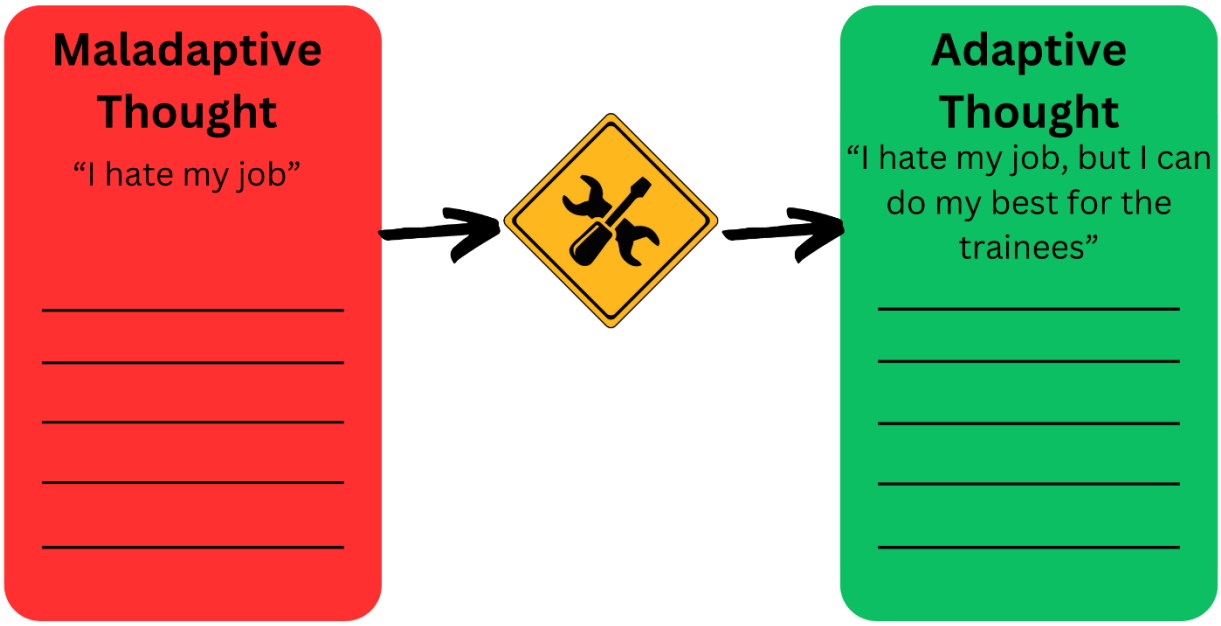
Thought Reconstruction:



Thought reconstruction is CBT technique similar to thought-stopping. However, when an individual notices that they are using maladaptive self-talk, they attempt to change the same thought to something more adaptive, rather than just stop the thought. For example, when someone thinks, "I can't memorize these pitches", they attempt to

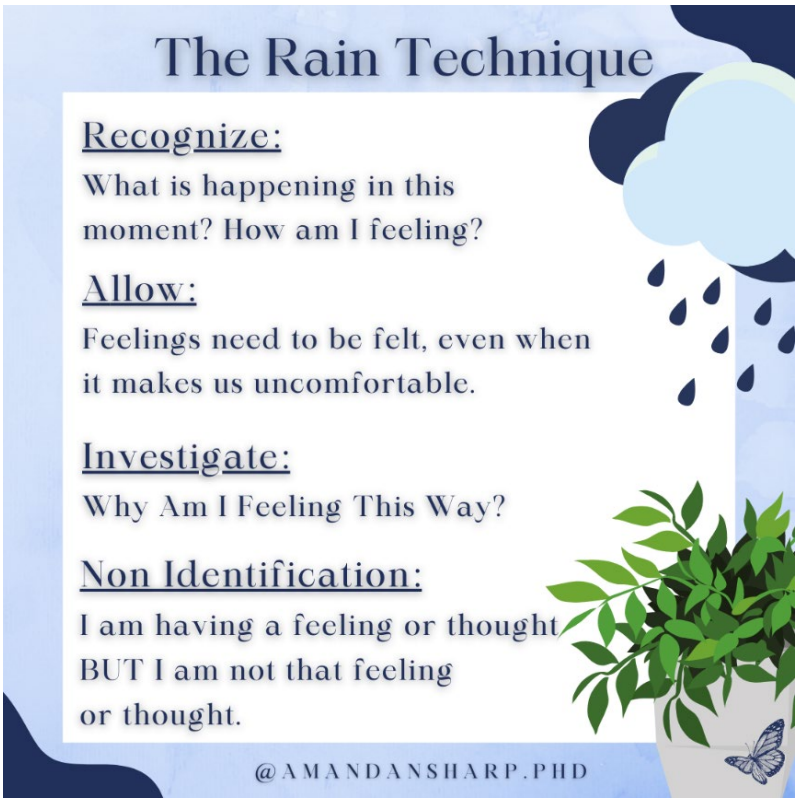
mentally/verbally repeat a similar version of the thought that is more positive or helpful, such as “I can memorize these pitches if I work hard.”

Two different popular methods of thought reconstruction include using “but” or “yet”. This works by inserting either word at the end of the unwanted thought. This may look like a cadre member who is new to a company and feels he/she does not fit into the group. When they think, “I don't belong here”, they would then say, “BUT, over time I will start to become more a part of the team”, or “I don’t belong here YET; however, I will work on talking more with my teammates to build trust.”



RAIN Method:

The RAIN method is an ACT technique which does not attempt to change or stop the unwanted thoughts but strives to distance ourselves from the unwanted thoughts. RAIN is an acronym, standing for Recognize, Allow, Investigate, and Non-identification. When you notice yourself experiencing unpleasant thoughts, you simply follow the RAIN acronym, as described in the graphic:



The goal is to go through each step of RAIN, with the hope of learning how to view the maladaptive thoughts as nothing more than a pesky itch in our brain that will naturally come and go, and not something that is innately true or part of who we are.

While this method may seem childish, its theoretical underpinnings come from stoicism, and mindfulness practices, and are used by some of the highest-performing athletes.

Thought Labeling:

As described in the emotional regulation chapter, thought labeling is an ACT approach that also attempts to distance ourselves from becoming too wrapped up in the unpleasant thought by simply lowering the perceived “seriousness.” We do not seek to change or challenge the thought but attempt to see it as it truly is (just a thought). For more information on this technique, please refer to the emotional regulation chapter.

IMAGERY

"Dreaming means 'rehearsing' what you see, playing it over and over in your mind until it becomes as real to you as your life right now." -Emmitt Smith

Mental imagery (visualization) is a performance skill that involves mentally creating an experience, typically from memory, which imitates a real experience. Building an imagery script can help boost your confidence while reducing stress and anxiety about an important upcoming performance.

It has been scientifically proven that the brain processes the experience the same whether you physically execute it or if you just vividly imagine it. Simply said, if you lie in bed the night before an event and you play the next day's event in your mind, you are imprinting the blueprint of your performance in your mind making it more likely that you will achieve performance excellence during the actual event. If you are constantly striving to maximize your ability, then visualization is an essential tool you should add to your routine.

Steps to practice:

Step 1: Have an idea for something specific that you want to imagine doing well.

Step 2: Get your body comfortable. You want to focus on what you're doing, not the tension your body may be holding.

Step 3: Take one minute or so to breathe a little bit deeper and a little bit slower than you normally do. Breathe into your belly as this triggers a relaxation response and opens your mind to this power. It's optional whether you want to close your eyes or not.

Step 4: Direct your thinking and focus to the act of performing your best for what you came up with in step 1. In other words, what you will be doing is mentally practicing performing your skills beautifully and effectively… and do it over and over and over again.

The best imagery practices all five senses to paint a vivid image- sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. Images should contain not only the conditions of the situation (ruck marching on the pavement) but also on one's behavioral response (driving your arms hard), psychological responses (feeling confident, feeling anxious), and physiological responses (sweating, feeling your heart race) to the situation (Hale 1998).

Vividness: First, you must develop vivid images. Like using a fine-tuning control on a microscope, increasing the vividness of images sharpens the details of the image.

Exercise: *Place yourself in a familiar place where you usually perform (field, track, post roads, etc.). It is empty except for you. Stand in the middle of this place and look all around. Notice the quiet emptiness. Pick out as many details as you can. What does it smell like? What are the colors, shapes, and forms that you see? Now imagine yourself in the same setting, but this time there are many fellow service members there. Imagine yourself getting ready to perform. Try to experience this image from inside your body. See those around you. Try to hear the sounds of others' boots hitting the pavement, their chatter, the sound of the breeze blowing through trees. Re-create the feelings of confidence and motivation that you have before heading off. How do you feel?*

Controllability: Second, you must be able to control your images. Controllability exercises involve learning to manipulate images by will.

Exercise: *Choose a skill that you have trouble performing. Begin practicing the skill over and over. See and feel yourself doing this from inside your body. If you make a mistake or perform the skill incorrectly, stop the image and repeat it, attempting to perform perfectly every time. Re-create past experiences in which you have not performed the skill well. Take careful notice of what you are doing wrong. Now imagine yourself performing the skill correctly. Focus on how your body feels as you go through different positions in performing the skill correctly. Build a perfect machine!*

Self-awareness: Third, you need to enhance your ability to engage in self-awareness. This refers to becoming more aware of underlying thoughts and feelings that often influence our performance without realizing it.

Exercise: *The purpose of this exercise is to help you become more aware of things that happen during events that bother you when you perform. Think about the times when your performance suddenly went from good to bad. Re-create several of these experiences in your mind. Try to pinpoint the specific factors that negatively influenced your performance (e.g., someone moving much faster and passing you, stiffness in your upper body, your feet beginning to hurt). After becoming aware of these factors that negatively affected your performance, take several minutes to re-create the situations, develop appropriate strategies to deal with the negative factors, and imagine the situations again; but this time imagine yourself using your strategies to keep the negative factors from interfering with your performance. Reinforce yourself by feeling proud and confident that you were able to control the negative factors and perform well.*

Example: Rucking Guided Imagery Script

Before beginning this visualization exercise of mentally performing every step of the preparation, action, and cool down of your ruck, breathe deeply and methodically in through your nose and exhaling steadily through your mouth. Continue this focused breathing until your body is relaxed and your mind is alert and open for productive thoughts (PAUSE 15 seconds).

You squat down and open your rucksack. You start with your sleeping system, placing it in the very bottom of your rucksack. Next, you pack your heavier items tight to the back of the pack, so they rest against your shoulder blades. Then you begin packing uniform items around this to keep the heavier items in place. Finally, you place extra socks, snacks for fueling, and your CamelBak at the top of your ruck. You pull the strings of your rucksack, cinching it closed. You close the top flap and buckle it in place. Once buckled, you tighten the top strap, making the rucksack as tight and small as possible. You grab the handles of your rucksack and flip it over your head, pulling your arms through the shoulder straps. You fasten your waist and sternum straps, allowing most of the weight of the rucksack to rest on your waist. You pull your ruck's straps tight enough to cinch down on your shoulder girdle, leaving little space underneath your armpits (PAUSE 10 seconds).

You're stepping onto the trail. You feel the cool breeze blowing through the trees and hear the leaves rustling across the ground. You smell the crisp fresh air. You taste your toothpaste from brushing your teeth before coming out to the trail. You take in your surroundings, noticing the beauty around you. You feel ready to step off with your battle buddies (PAUSE 10 seconds).

You take a deep breath to center yourself and prepare for the march ahead. You notice how you think and feel at this moment. You feel confident in your ability to carry your rucksack, but anxious about the distance you'll travel and how your body will feel after. You experience the familiar tension in your calf muscles and increased heart rate as your time to perform draws closer. These thoughts and feelings tell you that you're prepared to perform (PAUSE 10 seconds). Your squad leader says, "Step", and you're off. You keep your forward lean in your hips and ankles. Keep your chin up, eyes forward, and settle into your natural stride. Your shoulders are relaxed, and you have a natural swing in your arms. You continue to march forward, reminding yourself to keep this forward lean and head up (PAUSE 15 seconds).

You've reached mile 6, your halfway point. You notice that your calves and back feel heavier with each step. You notice that your breathing has picked up. You keep your forward lean in your hips and ankles. Keep your chin up, eyes forward, and settle into your natural stride. Your shoulders are relaxed, and you have a natural swing in your arms. You continue to march forward, reminding yourself to keep this forward lean and head up. You notice that you begin to tell yourself that "I'm never going to finish! I can't do it!" You fight these thoughts and motivate yourself by saying, "I know I can do this!

I've been training!" You feel re-energized and continue to march on (PAUSE 10 seconds).

You've reached mile 9. Your legs feel heavier with each step, and you find yourself saying, "I'll never make it!" You remind yourself that you have done hard things before and that the end is near. You use your self-talk cues, "Take a deep breath" or "I've done hard things before, this is nothing in comparison" and march on (PAUSE 10 seconds). You are in your last half mile. The end is near. You continue to march with a forward lean and remind yourself to hold your head up (PAUSE 10 seconds). You no longer feel any pain as you near the end. You march across that 'finish line' and a wave of accomplishment and pride flows over you. You drop your pack and sit with your battle buddies. You talk with others about the ruck and how they are feeling. You are now ready to continue with your day, taking with you this feeling of accomplishment.

In designing your imagery program, apply the **FITT** principles, as we do with physical training:
F is for Frequency - Aim to incorporate imagery into every day of your training schedule. For busy people, just before you sleep could be a good time, and it helps if you are in a relaxed and tranquil state.
I is for Intensity - Try to create an all-sensory experience that is as vivid and clear as possible. Initially, practicing in a quiet environment can help to minimize distractions and facilitate clear images.
T is for Time - Imagery should make big demands on your attention, so short (5-10 minutes) frequent quality sessions are preferable to long ones.
T is for Type - Remember to decide on your desired outcome and select the type of imagery to match it.
This is what separates great soldiers from average soldiers.

Use the space below to create your own imagery script:

RECOVERY: SAUNAS

"I've long been a sauna enthusiast and recommend it to cleanse the skin, soothe sore muscles, or merely relax. In asking you to take up the practice of sweat bathing, I cannot separate it's physical and spiritual aspects." – Dr. Andrew Weil

Saunas have been used for centuries for relaxation and health benefits. Recent research has provided insight into the numerous advantages of regular sauna use, particularly concerning cardiovascular health, muscle recovery, mental well-being, and overall physical fitness.

Cardiovascular health:

- The heat from saunas causes blood vessels to dilate, increasing blood flow and improving circulation. This can help reduce blood pressure and improve overall heart health.
- Studies have shown that regular sauna use can decrease the risk of cardiovascular diseases, including heart attack and stroke, by improving vascular function and reducing arterial stiffness.

Muscle recovery and pain relief:

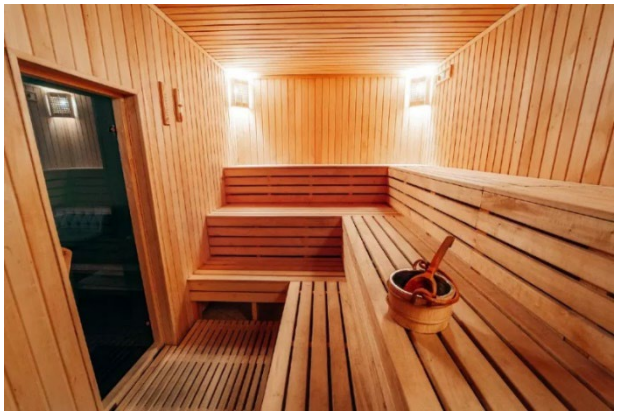
- Post-exercise, saunas can help reduce muscle soreness and accelerate recovery by increasing blood flow to tired and strained muscles, facilitating the removal of metabolic waste products.
- The heat from the sauna can help alleviate chronic pain conditions such as arthritis and fibromyalgia by relaxing muscles and joints.
- The heat stress response you encounter in a sauna, triggers a cascade of hormonal activities, including an increase in the secretion of Human Growth Hormone (HGH). Studies have shown that regular sauna use can significantly elevate HGH levels. Higher HGH levels contribute to better muscle recovery and growth by promoting protein synthesis and the repair of muscle tissues. Using a sauna after exercise can further amplify the natural post-exercise increase in HGH, as exercise itself is a potent stimulator of HGH secretion. When combined with sauna use, the effects can be synergistic.
- Elevated HGH levels are associated with improved fat metabolism, leading to increased fat burning and a reduction in body fat percentage. Regular sauna sessions can contribute to this metabolic boost, helping with weight management (Patrick and Johnson 2021).

Mental well-being:

- Saunas can significantly reduce stress levels, which in turn helps lower cortisol levels. The heat exposure and subsequent relaxation promote a sense of well-being and reduce the physiological stress response.
- Sauna sessions stimulate the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers and mood elevators. This endorphin surge can counteract the effects of cortisol, leading to a more relaxed and positive state of mind.
- Lower cortisol levels contribute to better sleep quality. Regular sauna use can improve sleep patterns, as the relaxation and reduction in stress hormones facilitate more restful and restorative sleep. In a small survey of men and women who sauna bathed one to two times per week, 83.5% reported improved sleep after sauna use (Hussain, Greaves and Cohen 2019).
- Exposure to the heat in saunas induces a mild form of stress known as heat stress. This stress prompts the body to adapt and protect itself, leading to increased production of Brain-Derived Neurotropic Factor (BDNF). This process is similar to the way exercise induces physical stress and promotes beneficial adaptations. BDNF is a protein that plays a critical role in brain health. It supports the survival, growth, and differentiation of neurons, and is essential for long-term memory, learning, and overall cognitive function. Higher levels of BDNF are associated with improved brain health and a reduced risk of neurodegenerative diseases. Regular sauna use has been shown to stimulate neurogenesis, the growth of new neurons in the brain. This is partly mediated by the increase in BDNF, which supports the development and maintenance of these new neurons (Patrick and Johnson 2021).

Enhanced immunity function:

- Regular sauna use has been linked to enhanced immune function. The heat can induce a mild hyperthermia that stimulates the production of white blood cells, enhancing the body's ability to fight off infections.



It is recommended to start with shorter sessions and gradually increase the time spent in the sauna. Beginners should start with 10-15 minutes per session and can work up to 20-30 minutes as they become more accustomed to it. One study found that 57 minutes per week is the optimal amount of time to spend in the sauna to reap its benefits.

Using a sauna after exercise can be more beneficial as it aids in muscle recovery and reduces soreness. The increased blood flow helps in the faster removal of lactic acid and other metabolic byproducts.

RECOVERY: RED LIGHT THERAPY

Light therapy is among the earliest recorded healing modalities. Solar therapy was first used by the Egyptians and forms of light therapy were also practiced by the ancient Greeks, Chinese, and Indians. Clinical studies are now establishing how different wavelengths of light affect the body at a cellular level, the conditions that can be successfully treated using light therapy, and the optimal conditions needed to absorb the benefits of light-based treatments.

All light falls along a spectrum of wavelengths. Red, blue, and infrared light that falls within the wavelength of 480-1060 nanometers (nm) is extremely beneficial, and often referred to as the “therapeutic window”. Red light emits wavelengths between 620-700 nm. All red-light wavelengths are effective and offer health benefits, although certain wavelengths are more powerful than others- particularly those that fall between 630-680 nm. Visible red light within this range can penetrate deep into the skin, offering rejuvenating and balancing outcomes for a range of health conditions.

Sunlight includes a component of red light; it is this light wavelength that contributes to the enhanced sense of well-being we experience after a few hours outdoors. LED therapy, therefore, is the therapeutic science of utilizing blue, red, and infrared light wavelengths to assist with the treatment of health conditions and promote general well-being. Below are the benefits of LED light therapy:

Reduce inflammation: Near-infrared (NIR) light reduces overall inflammation in the body by decreasing the presence of inflammatory markers. This reduction can help ease the symptoms associated with joint pain, sore muscles, autoimmune diseases, arthritis, traumatic brain injuries, and spinal cord injuries.

Improve circulation: In many studies, LED light therapy has been clinically proven to increase the diameter of blood vessels and to improve circulation. What’s more, LED light therapy also protects red blood cells against oxidative stress and limits platelet loss during surgical procedures.

Reduce recovery time: For high-performance athletes (and those that train like them) LED light therapy can help accelerate muscle repair following fatigue and injury. Mitochondria within cells are particularly responsive to LED light therapy, and muscle cells and exceptionally rich in mitochondria. LED light therapy may also stimulate stem cells, further assisting in muscle recovery.

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil
Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil
CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

Promote cellular health: The most significant benefit of LED light therapy is the effect it has on the body's cells. One of the most critical outcomes of LED light therapy on cellular function is the stimulation of collagen production. Collagen strengthens hair, is responsible for the health of connective tissue, and provides our skin with firmness and elasticity.

Stimulate hair growth: Alopecia, or hair loss, is a common disorder affecting 50% of males over the age of 40 and 75% of females over 65. Studies have shown that LED light therapy can stimulate hair growth. Red light wavelengths are believed to stimulate hair growth. Red light wavelengths are believed to stimulate epidermal stem cells in the hair follicle, shifting the follicle into the anagen (active growth) stage.

Reduce pain: In a clinical study, neuropathic pain caused by a spinal cord injury was dramatically reduced by the application of red-light treatment. Near-infrared light wavelengths reduce overall pain by easing joint stiffness and soreness, diminishing inflammation, easing muscle spasms and enhancing blood flow.

Increase fertility: Around the age of 30, male testosterone levels naturally start to decrease. Men hoping to achieve a natural boost to their sex drives, sexual satisfaction, fertility, and physical performance can reap benefits from LED light therapy. Red and near-infrared wavelengths can stimulate photoreceptor proteins in the testes causing higher testosterone production. Other studies have theorized that low-level light therapy may affect the pineal gland in the brain, which bears a significant impact on reproduction.

Improve skin health: LED light therapy can dramatically transform the skin. Red light wavelengths in particular target the mitochondrial chromophores within skin cells, generating production of collagen proteins. Collagen stimulation yields more holistic and enduring benefits than simply resurfacing the outer layers of the skin. Stem cells may also be activated, increasing tissue repair. The result is accelerated healing and wound repair, improved appearance in hypertrophic scars, a reduction in fine lines and wrinkles, and improved skin texture (Platinum Therapy Lights 2024).

As a rule of thumb, it has been found that 10-20 minutes per day at a distance of 8"-14" for deep tissue or 16"-24" for superficial facial skin therapy on bare skin with a max of 2-3 treatment areas per day to be a great average usage guideline for basically all applications. It's recommended to use light therapy 3 to 5 times a week for optimal results. You can start slower/farther at first and then work your way up to the closer distance/longer exposure once your tolerance to the light has been found.

DEVELOPMENT II

YEAR 2 CYCLE 7:

The Year 2 Developmental Phase builds on the Year 2 Foundational Phase of the CP&R program. The exercises in this phase are more challenging than those in the foundation phase. This phase continues to focus on developing the skills and abilities acquired previously in the program. The objective of the Year 2 Development Phase is to prepare you to return to your MOS or future roles.

The objectives of the Development Phase further focus on:

6. Emotional Intelligence
7. Situational Awareness
8. Decision-Making Under Pressure
9. Sleep: Long-Term Impacts

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

"It is very important to understand that emotional intelligence is not the opposite of intelligence, it is not the triumph of heart over head- it is the unique intersection of both."
-David Caruso

Emotional intelligence, also known as emotional quotient (EQ), is the ability to understand and manage your own emotions and understand the emotions of others.

Emotional intelligence helps you to connect with your feelings, turn intention into action, and make informed decisions about what matters most to you. This helps build stronger relationships, succeed at school and work, and achieve your career and personal goals.

There are five key elements to EQ: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Where do emotions come from?

In most cases our thoughts create our emotions. Our subconscious mind and senses are constantly picking up cues from our environment. Those cues are then interpreted by our brains which then trigger an emotional response. These cues can be sensory inputs, such as sights, sounds, or smells. They can also include contextual elements, such as social situations, settings, or time-related factors. Common interpersonal cues include: reading a person's body language or facial expression and having an automatic emotional response. Another example is interpreting something as dangerous and having an automatic fear response.

Situation -> Interpretation (thought) -> Emotion

If we control our thoughts then we can control our emotions. This is not easy but it is a skill that can be learned.

Recognize Emotion -> Identify Thought -> Change Thought -> Change Emotion

The Emotional Ladder

There are a wide range of emotions that we experience and we have hundreds of different words to describe these experiences. The emotional scale below contains 30 common emotions ranked at 12 levels of intensity. Level 5, contentment and boredom, is the most neutral emotional state and intensity. As you move up or down the emotional scale, the emotions are felt more intensely.

1. Joy/Appreciation/Empowered/Love
2. Passion/Enthusiasm/Happiness
3. Positive Expectation/Belief
4. Optimism/Hopefulness
5. Contentment/Boredom
6. Pessimism/Frustration/Uncertainty
7. Overwhelmed/Disappointment/Doubt
8. Worry/Anxiety
9. Anger/Revenge
10. Hatred/Rage
11. Sadness/Grief/Guilt
12. Fear/Despair/Powerlessness

For the scale emotions are categorized as pleasant/positive or unpleasant/negative. Everything above level 5 is pleasant, while the emotions listed below level 5 are unpleasant. We avoid using labels such as good or bad because all emotions serve a purpose and are therefore good.

Moving UP the scale provides relief from where you were and, feels better in comparison to the lower levels. For example, when you move from despair to anger, it feels better, and then when you find your way to frustration, you feel even better. The goal is to progress from unpleasant/negative emotions toward pleasant/positive emotions.

It is important to note that you cannot jump very high up the scale all at one time. The thought processes and physiological states of each level have a strong connection with the present moment that keeps you feeling the way you do. By deliberately reaching for a better thought and feeling you can move your way up the scale incrementally. So if you recognize that you are at a level 11- sadness/grief/guilt then work your way to a level 8- worry/anxiety and from continue to climb the ladder to a level 6 and so forth.

Simple activity to climb the emotional ladder:

Do not try to solve the problem. The goal is to find a better way of thinking about the problem that makes you feel better. You're looking for incremental relief.

1. Select a subject that bothers you. (Example: I am fat.)
2. Describe what you think about this subject most of the time. What do you tend to think about it? What phrase sums this up? (I feel stuck, like I can't do anything about it.)
3. Identify the emotion that represents how this statement makes you feel. (Look at the scale and identify which emotion.)
4. Feel it now. (Powerlessness)
5. Identify a thought about this subject that is true but feels slightly better. You can look at the scale and select an emotion that is higher up the scale and find a new phrase that matches that emotion.
6. Either state it out loud or write it down.
7. Think and feel about this new phrase. Do you feel a sense of relief? You can try out several phrases. For each one, assess if it makes you feel better, worse, or neither. If it feels better—even a little—you're going the right direction.
8. Once you attain an emotion that is a slight improvement, reach for another thought/emotion that is slightly better.

TIP #1: Be general. When something is bothering you, the more specific you are about the details of what bothers you, the worse you feel. For example, if you think, "Oh my gosh, my bank account just went negative" you'll probably feel a sinking pit in your stomach. Feels like worry/anxiety. But simply by being more general, you can feel slightly better. For example, "I need to deposit money into my account."

TIP #2: Don't try to jump too high. If you do, it won't be believable. If you hear yourself thinking "yeah right" that's a sign it's too big of a jump. You're not trying to be "positive" here, you're only looking for something that is "less bad." For instance, an angry thought is better than a depressed one. With the bank account example, telling yourself, "no worries, I'll be a millionaire one day" doesn't help because you don't really believe it.

Example:

- "It's my parent's fault for feeding me the way they did as a kid."— Anger (slightly more general, blaming feels better than hopelessness)
- "I'm tired of being fat."— Frustration (simple expression of emotion without judgement of the situation)
- "Even if I'm fat, I have amazing qualities and a lot to offer and I like myself." — Contentment (looking for positive aspects)
- "I might not ever be my ideal weight but I've had success in the past when changing my eating and exercise habits and I felt great. I could do that again." — Hopefulness (remembering evidence of your own power)

Overcoming 3 common unpleasant or negative emotions:

- Uncertainty/Insecurity
- Anxiety/worry
- Fear

Fear is the most intense level of emotion. It can be completely overwhelming to our minds and bodies. Fear is caused by the belief that you are under threat or will experience pain or danger. When you're in a state of fear, nothing else matters or exists but to protect yourself and get to safety. You are operating in survival mode. The object of your fear can be real or imagined.

Anxiety is less intense than fear, and if allowed to spiral out of control it can lead to fear. It's a feeling of worry, nervousness or unease and is usually about an anticipated future event that is unpleasant or uncertain.

Uncertainty is less intense than anxiety, however continued thinking along these lines leads to a worsening of the emotional state toward anxiety. Uncertainty is a feeling of apprehension, resistance, suspicion, or lack of confidence when you believe outcomes are unpredictable or risky. Often people use the world insecurity to refer to similar feelings.

The more intense an emotion is the more challenging it is to change it. For this reason, the goal is to catch the emotion at "uncertainty" and implement the techniques you learn before your mind has a chance to spiral your thoughts down into anxiety and then into fear. The earlier you can intercept the emotional state the easier it will be to change it (Rivera and Rivera 2024).

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

"Situational awareness is the currency that buys you the time and opportunity to solve the tactical problem." -Steve Tarani

Situational awareness is simply being aware of what's going on around you so you can anticipate things happening and take action, ideally before it happens. By being situationally aware, you are cognizant and continually aware of your surroundings at any given moment. Situational awareness helps in making informed decisions and is critical in high-stakes environments like military operations.

Humans are programmed for survival, but this programming is incomplete and requires additional data, especially in our modern world. Our brains help complete this programming by organizing potential dangers into mental frameworks known as schemas. Schemas contain information about experiences, and while they encompass more than just dangerous incidents, schemas related to threats are more easily formed and quickly accessed to protect us from future hazards. For example, touching a hot stove once typically creates a lasting schema.

These schemas also aid in complex processes. The more detailed and accurate these mental frameworks are on a particular topic, the greater a person's expertise. This allows for more effective orientation and quicker decision-making. This sequence- observe, orient, decide, act- is called the OODA loop, a concept first introduced by U.S. military strategist Colonel John Boyd. In urgent situations, these mental frameworks provide tactical shortcuts, often referred to as intuition.

Intuition is not innate; it develops as people build expertise, allowing them to quickly access their knowledge and apply case-based reasoning to new problems. When faced with a new issue, the brain compares it to known cases and uses the closest match to solve the problem. For instance, a toddler may observe moving cars but lacks the expertise to predict danger. In contrast, a 6-year-old can use case-based reasoning to avoid walking in front of moving vehicles, applying their understanding of car hazards to other vehicles like trains.

While the mind's ability to remember applying past lessons is remarkable, it is imperfect. Researcher Daniel Kahneman explains in *Thinking, Fast and Slow* how our brains process information. He describes two systems: System 1, which handles automatic, reflexive tasks like simple arithmetic, and System 2, which takes over for more complex, deliberate tasks like multiplying large numbers. The brain prefers using System 1 to conserve energy, a principle Kahneman refers to as the "law of least effort".

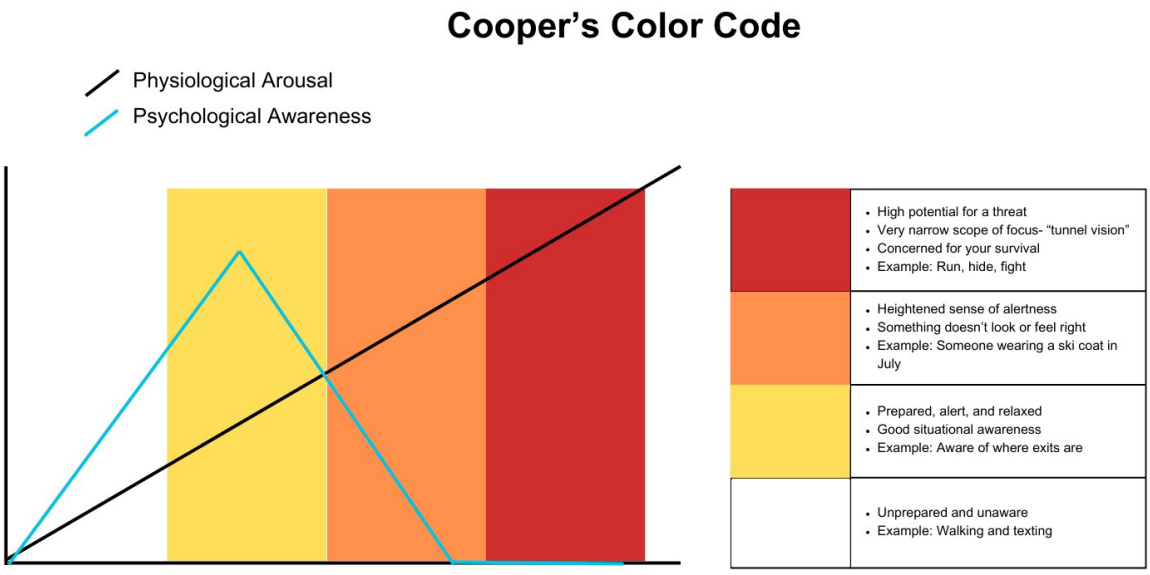
Intuition, often described as immediate recognition or "knowing without knowing why", operates within System 1. Issues arise when a situation demands more detailed analysis than System 1 can provide. This does not mean intuition is always incorrect; it

often responds appropriately and acts in your best interest. However, intuition can be fallible and should be critically evaluated, especially for important decisions. Consider this example: quickly solve this math problem in your head. A baseball bat and ball cost $1.10 in total. The bat costs $1.00 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?

If you haven't encountered this problem before, your intuition might suggest 10 cents, which is incorrect. System 1 likely performed a quick subtraction, leaving 10 cents as the answer. However, the correct answer is 5 cents for the ball and #1.05 for the bat, totaling $1.10. System 1 thinking is excellent at observation, but its strength is not orientation. Whenever time allows, break the law of least effort and fully orient before acting (Kahneman 2011).

Color-Coding Awareness

Like many skills, situational awareness exists on a spectrum. Jeff Cooper, a U.S. Marine and tactical training pioneer, introduced a system for categorizing awareness levels known as Cooper's Color Code. This system has been used for decades to train military and law enforcement personnel. While the levels can sometimes overlap, Cooper's Color Code provides a valuable framework for understanding and enhancing situational awareness.



White is the lowest situational awareness level and necessary for rest. At its extreme, it involves being asleep, but even during waking hours, constant high-level situational awareness is impossible. When relaxed, the mind's situational awareness abilities diminish.

Yellow is ideal for most situations, representing a state of relaxed alertness. Both intuitive (System 1) and analytical (System 2) thinking operate well in this state, making it optimal for general preparedness.

Orange indicates heightened alertness to potential danger. This focused state can lead to “focus lock” where attention is so concentrated on one thing that other details are missed. Focus lock is sometimes necessary, such as when a police officer looks for specific vehicle. However, it can also result from distractions, like looking at a smartphone. Orange is mentally taxing and not sustainable long-term.

Red is action mode, where all attention is on dealing with an immediate threat. This level is also unsustainable for long periods.

The mind can easily shift between these levels, although sudden transitions under stress can be challenging. Being startled from a relaxed state (white) to emergency action (red) can cause panic. Therefore, reserving the white level for safe environments, like home, and staying in yellow in public helps prevent abrupt escalations. This state of relaxed alertness is sustainable and allows for quick transitions to higher alertness levels is needed. Transitioning back to yellow from higher levels like orange is typically easy, ensuring ongoing preparedness and safety (Cooper 1989).

Training Your Observations Skills to Improve Situational Awareness

All of this is fine, but one crucial aspect if missing. Without keen observation skills, we could miss the signs we’re looking for, even if we’re in condition yellow. Developing the ability to see what’s right in front of us takes time. You can’t simply decide to live in condition yellow and do it perfectly without practice. You need to practice both situational awareness and observation skills. This means learning to see in a new way, which will enhance your situational awareness. Here are some situational awareness training exercises you can choose from to help improve your abilities:

Kim’s Game: This game takes its name from Kipling’s novel “Kim”, where the main character learns it as part of his spy training for the British Secret Service. It’s a memory exercise where you have a limited time to memorize a series of objects and then recall each one. It’s surprisingly challenging. To play, have someone lay out 10 to 15 items without you seeing them. The items should be separated but close enough to be easily covered. Once ready, you have exactly one minute to memorize them. After the minute, the items are covered, and you must recall as many as you can. Start with a small number of objects and increase as you improve. Challenge yourself by remembering details like color or distinguishing marks.

Expanding Peripheral Vision: Most of us go through life with tunnel vision, usually focused on our phones. However, when looking for movement, our peripheral vision is more effective as it easily detects motion, though it doesn’t provide much detail. To improve your peripheral vision, practice scanning everything in front of you without moving your head, just your eyes. Start by scanning from right to left, covering the area

directly in front of you. Then refocus a bit farther away and scan back from right to left. Repeat this, dividing the space into segments by distance and scanning each one. As you improve, try describing objects at the edges of your peripheral vision without staring directly at them.

Locate all the Exits: This is a crucial part of situational awareness and directly applicable to everyday life. When entering a store, restaurant, or any place, quickly identify all the exits. Don't just look for the main ones- windows can also serve as exits and may be especially useful in an active shooter situation.

Describe the Area You've Just Been Through: Walking, whether through town, a shopping center, or the woods, is a great opportunity to practice situational awareness. One effective method is to randomly ask each other to describe the area you just passed through. For this exercise to be effective, the question must be unexpected to catch others off-guard. Before asking, take a good look around the area and note several obvious details you expect them to notice. You can also ask them to describe something specific in the area. As your group improves, make it more challenging by choosing less obvious details to ask about.

Don't expect to become an expert in situational awareness overnight. It takes considerable time and effort to develop this skill, and progress might be slow and subtle. However, with consistent practice, you will improve. You'll know you're getting better when those around you are amazed at what you notice, and they don't. The more you practice these exercises, the faster your situational awareness will improve.

DECISION-MAKING UNDER PRESSURE

"Truly successful decision-making relies on a balance between deliberate and instinctive thinking." -Malcolm Gladwell

Making decisions under pressure is a critical skill, especially in high stress environments. This section will guide you through understanding the process and provide exercises to build your ability to make effective decisions under pressure.

Understanding Decision-Making Under Pressure

The nature of pressure involves both external and internal factors that create a sense of urgency, stress, or anxiety, influencing how we perceive and respond to situations. External factors include:

- Deadlines: Time constraints that necessitate quick and efficient decision-making.
- High stakes: Situations where the outcomes significantly impact success, safety, or well-being.
- Expectations from others: Pressure from supervisors, peers, family, or stakeholders to meet certain standards or achieve specific results.

Internal factors include:

- Fear of failure: Anxiety about making the wrong decision and facing negative consequences.
- Self-doubt: Lack of confidence in one's abilities or judgment, leading to hesitation.
- Anxiety: General nervousness or stress than can cloud thinking and impair performance.

Understanding these factors helps in recognizing the sources of pressure and developing strategies to manage them effectively.

The Impact of Pressure on Decision-Making

Pressure significantly influences the decision-making process, often leading to impaired judgment and suboptimal choices. Understanding these impacts is crucial for developing strategies to mitigate them. When under pressure, individuals may experience a fight, flight, or freeze reaction. The fight response can lead to aggressive and impulsive decisions as the person confronts the challenge head-on. The flight response may cause avoidance or procrastination, as the person tries to escape the pressure situation, potential resulting in indecision. The freeze response can paralyze the individual, leading to inaction or missed opportunities.

Excessive stress can overwhelm the brain, making it difficult to process information efficiently. Under pressure, individuals tend to focus narrowly on immediate threats or details, often missing the bigger picture or other important factors. Stress can also impair working memory, making it challenging to retain and recall critical information for decision-making.

Under pressure, individuals often struggle to thoroughly analyze options and outcomes, leading to superficial evaluations. The need for quick decisions can result in snap judgments without sufficient consideration of alternatives. Stress can also exacerbate cognitive biases, such as confirmation bias, where individuals favor information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs, or availability bias, where they rely on immediate examples that come to mind.

Pressure can amplify emotions like fear, anger, or frustration, which can cloud rational thinking. Heightened emotions often lead to impulsive actions, resulting in decisions made without considering long-term consequences. Emotional responses to pressure can thus significantly impair the quality of decision-making. By understanding these impacts, individuals can develop strategies to manage pressure, maintain clarity, and make more effective decisions even in high-stress situations.

Strategies for Effective Decision-Making Under Pressure

- Stay calm by practicing mindfulness or deep-breathing exercises. These techniques help reduce stress and maintain focus.
- Gather information quickly by quickly focusing on the most crucial information needed, and prioritize what information is most important and relevant.
- Manage the decision by dividing it into smaller parts and handling one aspect at a time.
- Trust your training; use past experiences and learned skills to guide your decisions.

This structured approach will help you navigate high-pressure situations by understanding the nature of pressure, its impact on your decision-making abilities, and employing effective strategies to make sound decisions even under stress.

Exercises to Improve Decision-Making Under Pressure

Exercise 1: The 5- 4- 3- 2- 1 Grounding Technique

- Identify 5 things you can see.
- Identify 4 things you can touch.
- Identify 3 things you can hear.
- Identify 2 things you can smell.
- Identify 1 thing you can taste.

- Reflect: How do you feel after completing this exercise? Take note of any changes in your stress level or clarity of thought.

Exercise 2: Rapid Decision-Making Drill

- Choose a partner to help you with this exercise.
- Your partner will present you with a scenario where a quick decision is needed (e.g., a sudden work crisis, a personal emergency).
- Set a timer for 30 seconds. Make a decision based on the given scenario.
- Discuss the decision you made and its potential outcomes.
- Reflect: How comfortable were you with making a quick decision? What strategies did you use? What could you improve next time?

Exercise 3: Pros and Cons List Under Time Constraint

- Choose a real-life decision you need to make.
- Set a timer for 2 minutes.
- Write down the pros and cons of each option as quickly as possible.
- Make a decision based on your list when the timer goes off.
- Reflect: How effective was this method in helping you make a decision? Did you feel rushed? How can you refine this process?

Improving decision-making under pressure takes practice and reflection. Use these exercises regularly to build your skills, and remember to stay calm, prioritize information, and trust your abilities.

SLEEP: LONG-TERM IMPACTS

"Sleep deprivation erodes both mental and physical resilience. Over time, the lack of sleep chips away at cognitive function, mood stability, and the body's ability to repair itself." -Matthew Walker

Short term effects

Sleep loss negatively affects how a person feels, thinks, and performs. Some of these effects occur at the physiological level.

Sleep loss affects hormones that control appetite. Leptin tells the body it is full. Ghrelin tells the body it is hungry. Sleep loss has been shown to decrease leptin and increase ghrelin production. Sleep loss in combination with poor quality food and over-abundance of food can lead to unhealthy eating (Taheri, et al. 2004).

Sleep loss impairs thinking and decision making. Research shows the brain is negatively affected. Sleep loss weakens brain structures, slows reaction time, and decreases attention and memory (Khan and Al-Jahdali 2023).

Sleep loss can increase pain and delay muscle recovery. Poor sleep affects hormones that control pain and increases inflammation. Inflammation can impair muscle repair. (Dattilo, et al. 2019)These can affect the ability to get better sleep and form a negative feedback loop. (Haack, et al. 2020).

Long term impacts

Obesity. Chronic poor eating, poor quality food, and over-abundance of food contribute to obesity. Chronic sleep loss and stress are reported by obese individuals (Vgontzas and Bixler 2008).

Chronic pain and disease. Long-term sleep loss changes the body's response to pain making it more sensitive and, in turn, affects the ability to sleep. Chronic inflammation from sleep loss can impair the immune system making it harder to fight sickness (Haack, et al. 2020).

Mission readiness

Delayed recovery, prolonged stress, and fatigue decrease performance and mission readiness. No single factor acts alone. Many factors negatively influence each other. Soldiers show these negative effects as decreased motivation to train, interpersonal conflicts, communication problems, poor task performance, and decreased job satisfaction. Physical injury is often a secondary sign of prolonged problems.

Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil
Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil
CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

Making changes
The following guides are in addition to the Sleep Hygiene and Sleep Cycle sections from Year 1 of this manual. Just as no one factor impacts readiness alone, no one strategy may be enough to fix chronic health problems. Consider which strategies that fit individuals' needs.

Restoring sleep routines
Drill Sergeants, support personnel, and leaders experience sleep loss in different ways at different times. Periods of prolonged sleep loss like the Forge and continuous operations take time to recover sleep debt. The days and weeks between field exercises and cycles afford Soldiers time to restore sleep routines. Leaders must set the example and fully support their subordinates in these crucial recovery periods.

Transition periods such as ETS or PCS leave are vital periods for Soldiers to restore sleep routines. Soldiers can regain physical, mental, spiritual, and nutritional readiness by placing increased focus on sleep throughout the training year but may have the best opportunity to do so during transition periods. Improving sleep during transition periods may help Soldiers better cope with stress as they relocate and pursue post-service careers. For Soldiers transitioning to new duty locations, improving sleep may help Soldiers optimize performance as they train for the return to the operational force.

Making diet changes
Eating balanced meals and high-quality foods as regularly as possible will improve Soldier performance and overall fitness. Operational stress may require Soldiers to fuel differently for short periods. Ideally, Soldiers will rebalance their diets as operations normalize and they get proper rest and recovery.

Eating habits and certain foods impact sleep quality. Eating dinner close to bedtime and late-night snacks can lower sleep quality (Crispim, et al. 2011). Avoid snacking/eating 2 hours before sleep. Whole grains, fruits, and vegetables have compounds that can improve sleep quality (Zuraikat, et al. 2021).

Improving physical fitness for sleep
Physical exercise can improve sleep. Moderate exercise, performed at least three times a week, can improve sleep quality and reduce symptoms of sleep disorders (Alnawwar, et al. 2023).

Plan your recovery
As you progress your second year on the trail and prepare for your transition (or third year), reflect on how sleep loss has impacted your health. Choose one or many strategies to try in these areas:

Improving Sleep Hygiene: _____
Improving Nutrition Habits: _____
Improving Physical Exercise: _____

PEAK PERFORMANCE II

YEAR 2 CYCLE 8:

The Peak Performance phase of the year two training program for DSs focuses on enhancing a Soldier's cognitive ability to excel in their career and future endeavors.

The objectives of this phase focus on maximizing cognitive performance in:

3. Recovery: Heart Rate Variability
4. Return to lethality
5. Managing and developing effective teams

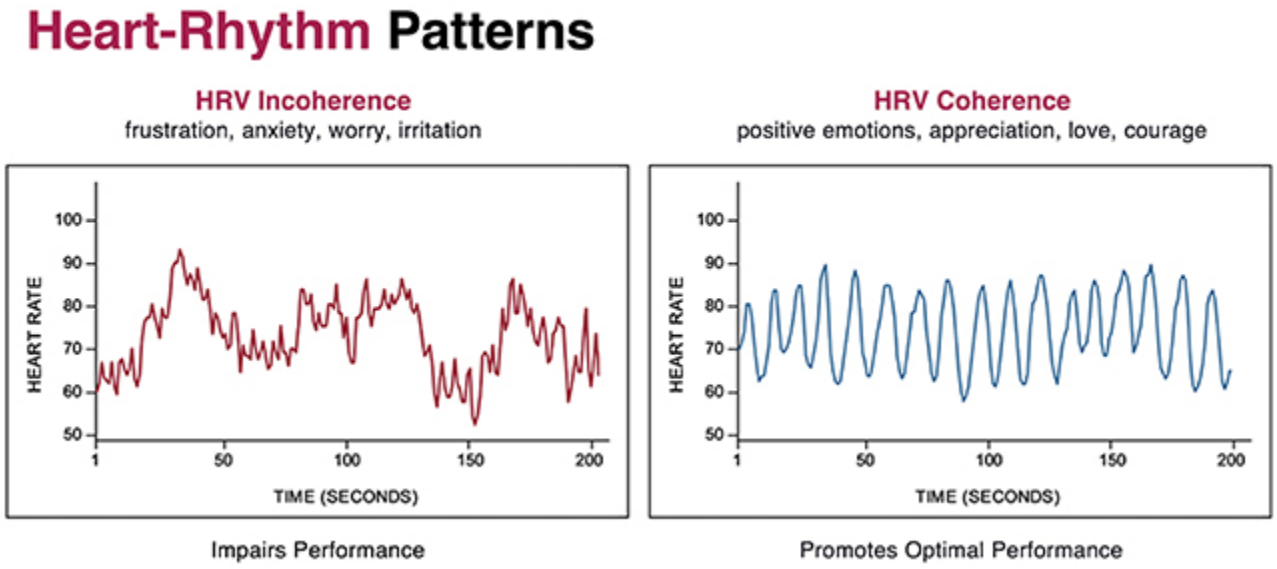
Paul Tandoc, H2F OT
paul.g.tandoc.civ@army.mil
Derek Sorensen, H2F CPS
derek.c.sorensen.ctr@army.mil
CPT Jane Marshall, H2F OT
jane.e.marshall2.mil@army.mil

RECOVERY: HEART RATE VARIABILITY

"HRV is like a window into your body's internal stress and recovery processes. It gives athletes a glimpse into how they're truly responding to training, enabling more personalized recovery strategies" -Marco Altini

Heart Rate Variability (HRV) is a measurement of the variation in time between each heartbeat in milliseconds. According to several studies, high HRV seems to signal a healthy heart, because it reflects the heart's ability to respond quickly to rapid changes occurring throughout the body. HRV is actually a reflection of your autonomic nervous system rather than your heart. This primitive part of your nervous system works on autopilot, regulating your heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, and digestion. There are two parts: one governs the stress (fight-or-flight) response. The other controls the relaxation (rest and recovery) response.

In a healthy person, HRV should increase when your heart rate drops, as it does during relaxing activities such as reading or meditating. HRV decreases as the heart rate rises, such as when you exercise or are under stress. In fact, it changes constantly, both throughout the day and from day to day. But chronic stress, poor sleep, lack of exercise, and an unhealthy diet can disrupt the balance, and your fight-or-flight system can shift into overdrive (HeartMath n.d.).



Research has found that some factors that influence HRV are out of our control, like genetics, age, and gender. There is no such thing as a universally “good” or “bad” HRV- it’s personal. You could follow identical health routines as someone else but still have wildly different readings.

HRV tends to be higher in the morning than at night. This is because right when you wake up, your body will (hopefully) be fully recovered. As the day goes on, workouts and stressors will tax your nervous system and bring your score down. Most experts recommend taking a HRV reading first thing in the morning to get a sense of your baseline. Get in the habit of taking your reading at the same time every day to get a sense of trends over time. Changes in your weekly score can tell you how you’re doing in the recovery department that week. While monthly changes give you an idea of how your overall fitness is trending. The easiest way to take a reading at home is to use an HRV monitor like Fitbit, WHOOP, Apple Watch, Polar Watch, or Oura ring. These wearables estimate your HRV using pulse readings. While they aren’t as accurate as an electrocardiogram (ECG) reading, they make it easy to track your HRV over time and monitor its changes from home. It’s best to wear them during sleep for a more accurate reading but putting them on first thing in the morning works, too.

If you’re interested in **improving your HRV**, adopting habits and lifestyle changes that promote overall cardiovascular health and reduce stress are essential. You can engage in regular exercise, practice mindfulness and meditation, prioritize quality sleep with a regular sleep schedule, eat a balanced diet, stay hydrated throughout the day, avoid excessive alcohol and tobacco use, and practice controlled breathing techniques. Biofeedback techniques can help you learn to control physiological functions, including HRV.

RETURN TO LETHALITY

In the military, the mission is never complete; it evolves. For Drill Sergeants, the time at Fort Jackson should be viewed as one of many deployments- a critical assignment that demands not only focus on the present task but also preparation for the next mission. “Return to Lethality” serves as a reminder to hone the essential skills needed when transitioning back to the operational force. Whether it’s rebuilding self-efficacy, refining communication under pressure, or fine-tuning marksmanship after time away from the range, this section will provide the tools to stay combat-ready and maintain a lethal edge.

Self-Efficacy:
Self-efficacy, as defined by psychologist Albert Bandura, is "the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations (Bandura 1997).” This concept is all about your confidence in your ability to accomplish specific tasks and achieve your goals, even when faced with challenges. Unlike general self-confidence, which is a broader measure of belief in yourself, self-efficacy is task-specific and directly linked to your actions (Bandura 1997).

It’s essential to differentiate self-efficacy from self-esteem and self-confidence. Self-esteem refers to how much value you place on yourself as a person. It's a more general sense of self-worth, independent of specific tasks or abilities. While self-confidence relates to your general belief in your abilities across various situations. It's more about an overall sense of assurance, rather than confidence in a particular skill or task. Self-Efficacy focuses specifically on your belief in your ability to succeed in particular situations or accomplish specific tasks. It’s more dynamic and can vary depending on the task at hand.

Why is Self-Efficacy Important?

For Soldiers, self-efficacy is crucial in building mental readiness and resilience. When you believe in your ability to overcome obstacles, you're more likely to persevere through tough situations, maintain focus, and put in the necessary effort to succeed. High self-efficacy impacts not only your motivation but also how you handle stress, recover from setbacks, and approach challenges.

Self-efficacy is also fundamental in goal setting, particularly for Drill Sergeants preparing to return to their MOS. Strong self-efficacy enables you to set ambitious yet achievable goals, both in your career and personal life. When you believe in your ability to succeed, you’re more likely to set meaningful goals, stay committed to them, and see them through to completion. This mindset is essential for getting excited about the next steps in your career and life, helping you approach future challenges with confidence and enthusiasm.

Exercises to Strengthen Self-Efficacy

- Mastery Experiences: Start with small, achievable goals. Completing these tasks successfully builds confidence in your abilities and prepares you for more challenging tasks. For example, in a military context, this might involve breaking down a complex training exercise into smaller steps.
- Vicarious Experiences: Learn from others. Observing peers who are similar to you succeed at a task can boost your belief that you can succeed as well. This is particularly effective when watching someone who shares similar experiences or challenges.
- Create a Personal Highlight Reel or Top Ten List**:** If you have the footage, create a highlight reel of your best moments. Compile clips of yourself successfully completing tasks or reaching goals and watch them back. As you review these moments, focus on the self-talk, emotions, and sensations you experienced. This practice not only boosts your confidence but also enhances self-efficacy by reinforcing positive memories and serving as a form of imagery rehearsal (Williams and Krane, Understanding and Using Imagery in Sport 2015). Alternatively, write out a top ten list of your biggest accomplishments or proudest moments. Keep this list visible as a powerful reminder of your ability to achieve goals, overcome challenges, and succeed. This visual affirmation can significantly boost your self-efficacy, reinforcing your belief in your capabilities (Zinsser 2022).
- Verbal Persuasion: Positive reinforcement, whether from others or through self-talk, can significantly enhance self-efficacy. Studies have shown that self-talk not only boosts self-confidence but also improves performance, making it a key tool for strengthening self-efficacy (Williams and Krane 2015).
- Emotional and Physiological States: Managing your emotional and physical state plays a role in self-efficacy. Techniques such as deep breathing, visualization, and positive self-talk can help you stay calm and focused, which in turn supports your belief in your abilities.
- Reflective Journaling: Reflect on past successes and how you overcame challenges. Journaling can help you recognize patterns of success and reinforce your belief in your ability to handle future challenges.

By developing self-efficacy, you enhance your ability to face adversity with confidence, contributing to a stronger, more resilient mindset both in the military and in everyday life. This strengthened mindset is particularly important as you prepare for your return to the operational force, enabling you to set and achieve goals that propel you forward in your career and personal life.

Communication Under Pressure:

Under extreme physical and mental stress, the ability to communicate clearly and concisely becomes paramount. Effective communication ensures mission success and

strengthens team cohesion, even in the most chaotic environments. By mastering this skill, Soldiers can lead with confidence, maintaining control and focus when it matters most. Key points to remember include:

- Clarity in commands: In high-pressure situations, concise and precise commands are essential to ensure swift execution of tasks. Soldiers must practice delivering instructions with clarity and confidence, even amidst chaos.
- Active listening: Actively listen to your teammates and superiors to ensure that critical communication is not overlooked. This requires focus and the ability to filter out distractions.
- Adaptability: Situations can change rapidly. You must be prepared to adjust your communication strategies on the fly, whether it's shifting roles, altering plans, or responding to unforeseen challenges.
    - APPLY- Practice maintaining composure and adaptability during stressful situations by participating in simulations or role-playing exercises. Learn to regulate your emotions, stay focused, and adjust your communication strategy as needed.
- Non-verbal communication: In environments where verbal communication may be hindered, non-verbal cues become invaluable. Soldiers must be adept at interpreting gestures, signals, and facial expressions to maintain effective communication.
    - APPLY- Create scenarios with a partner where you must communicate a message or convey an emotion using only non-verbal cues.
- Maintaining composure: Under pressure, emotions can run high. It's crucial that you remain composed and level-headed, avoiding panic or frustration that could disrupt communication flow.

The best way to perform well under pressure is to practice with pressure. Adding components of pressure to your training:

- Time
- Space
- Difficulty
- Importance

Be aware of how you communicate with these added components of pressure. Think of everything that could potentially go wrong or breakdown your communication and walk through how you would think/feel in that scenario. Devise a plan to effectively handle the situation should it arise.

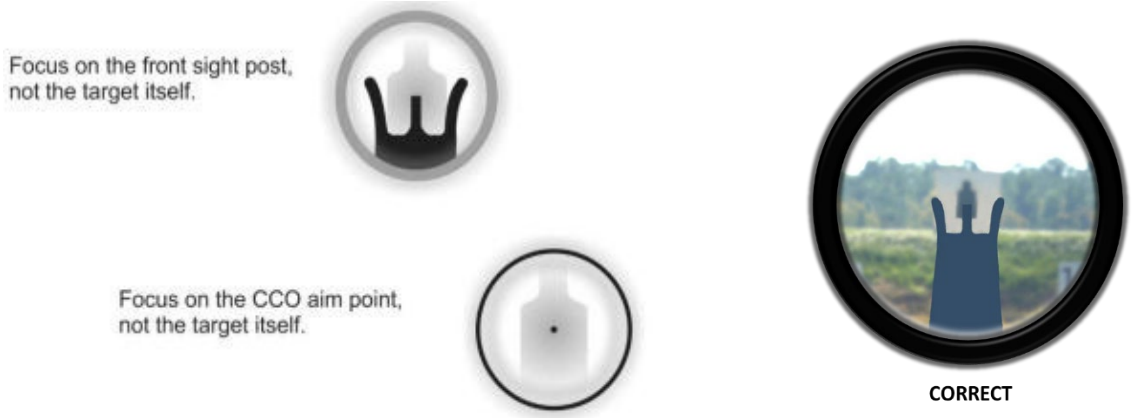
Marksmanship:

“Good shooting is good execution of the fundamentals. Great shooting is great execution of the fundamentals (Lessler 2023).”

The following is not a comprehensive guide to marksmanship but some key points to add to already established Army doctrine found in TC 3-22.9 and TC 3-20.0.

Marksmanship comes down to executing the fundamentals precisely each time that you pull the trigger. These basic skills can be practiced during live fire training and at various other times when not shooting. The key is regular and consistent practice.

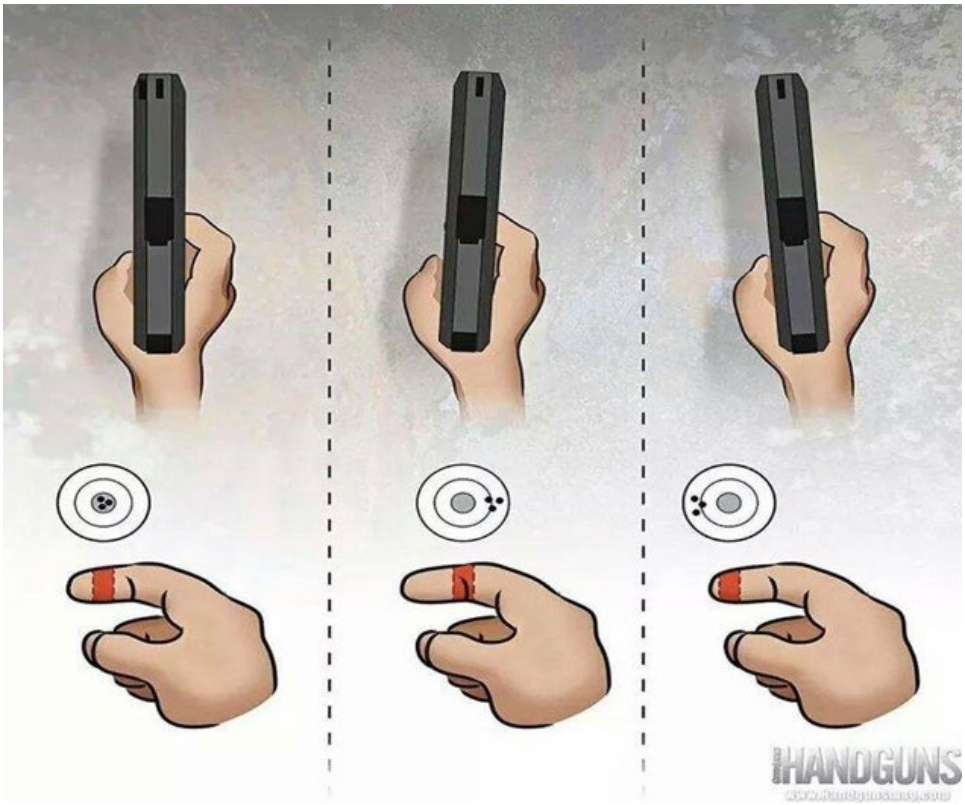
- Eye dominance- One of the first steps in improving your ability to aim is understanding which eye is more dominant. This is not always the same side as your dominant hand. To figure out which eye is dominant look at a distant object with both eyes open and then extend your arm and place your thumb over the object. Alternate closing one eye and see which eye keeps your thumb in place and which appears to make your thumb appear to jump to the side. The eye that keeps the object in place is your dominant eye. (Lessler 2023) If you are cross dominant, meaning that your dominant eye is opposite of your dominant hand, then you may have to learn to shoot with your weak hand for better performance.
- Sight Alignment- Keep the front sight centered in the rear aperture with your eye centered behind the aperture. Your eye will naturally center itself behind any hole that you look through. Your eyes can only focus on one thing at a time. Therefore, it is impossible to focus in on the rear sight, front sight, and target at the same time. The front sight is the most important thing to focus on because where the front sight goes is where the shot goes. (Lessler 2023)



- Cheek Weld- Correct and repeatable cheek weld is what guarantees proper eye alignment behind your sights. To check this make sure that you are seeing your sights first as you raise the rifle. Pay attention to where the stock butt goes into your shoulder and where the stock comb touches your cheek. Remember that

position and how it physical feels. Doing this every time that you shoot will ensure that you get your cheek in the correct position when you shoot.

- Trigger Management- Trigger management generally is what makes or breaks a shooter and ensures a good shot versus a miss. The hand should be relaxed with only the trigger finger moving. The trigger finger should pull straight back with the pad of the end of the finger centered on the trigger. The motion should be smooth and gentle avoiding any side-to-side or up-or-down motions when squeezing the trigger. You should be able to see your front sight on the instant of discharge.



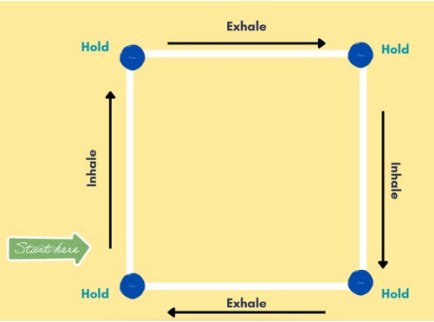
(Workman n.d.)

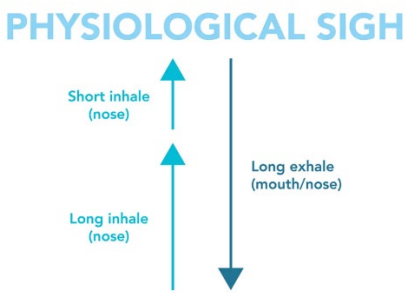
- Breathing- The natural process of breathing will cause a weapon to rise and fall with the inhale and exhale of the shooter. We will break breathing up into two time frames. First will be breathwork to perform prior to shooting and second will be breath control while shooting.

    Pre-Shooting Breathwork- Being calm and relaxed prior to shooting will allow the shooter to better focus on the task at hand, think and move through the steps of shooting more fluidly, and more quickly and accurately engage with their intended target.

    Earlier in this manual in the Emotional Regulation section we discussed breathwork and gave two methods of using our breath to control our thought process and internal physiological state. The two previously

provided were Box Breathing, utilized by the Navy SEALS, and Physiological Sigh. If these don't work for you then there are a myriad of other techniques available. As with any new skill it takes time and practice to develop and perfect. We recommend practicing the breathwork routine regularly even when not at the range so that it becomes a natural skill versus a novel procedure done only when shooting.





Breath Control while Shooting- Generally when shooting your sights will move downward when you inhale and upward when you exhale. For this reason you want to learn to take your shot during the natural pause between breaths. As with breathwork when to take the shot is based on the shooter's preference. Some people shoot after they inhale, and others shoot after they exhale. Don't hold your breath for too long waiting on a shot and don't rush a shot in order to breath. Practice this by taking normal breaths and during the natural pause clench your trigger finger as if you were shooting. Do this prior to picking up a weapon to shoot.

- Visualization- Research has shown that mental practice has been shown to improve movement accuracy and velocity (Bernardi, et al. 2013). As mentioned previously consistent practice leads to perfecting skills and mastery. We discussed visualization previously in the Imagery section and want to take those same principles and apply them to marksmanship. With visualization you want to make it multi-sensory and as vivid as possible. When visualizing incorporate how things also feel, smell, sounds, and potentially taste. Below is a sample script to use prior to initiating the Army Individual Weapons Qualification.

Marksmanship Imagery

You're at the range about to engage in basic rifle marksmanship training. Getting into a comfortable low ready position, you're about to fire your M4 in single-shot bursts. You feel your weapon in your hands and anchor your body against the ground, preparing to shoot. Looking ahead, you see the target in your rifle sights at 50 meters. You hear your peers on the firing line. In about 60 seconds, your event will start.

You notice how you think and feel in this moment. You feel nervous in your ability to execute your best performance today. And you experience the familiar tension in your muscles and increased heart rate as the time to perform draws closer. At first, you think about missing the target and not qualifying, but you remember how to refocus: "Breathe, Relax, Aim, Squeeze." These thoughts and feelings tell you that you're ready to start.

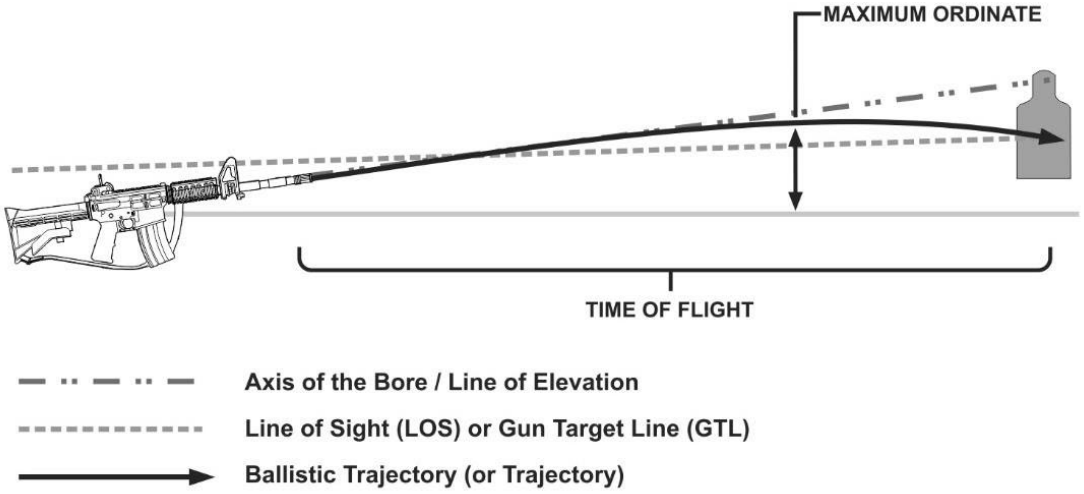
In the past, you experienced these thoughts and feelings and performed well. Today's performance matters, and your feeling confident in your ability to do well. Your breathing and attention are calm and controlled. Nothing can affect you today. Your platoon sergeant gives the command, "Fire when ready."

You take a slow, centered breath. Prior to your trigger squeeze, you sight your target, deeply inhale, position your finger over the trigger, exhale fully... 3, 2, 1. You squeeze the trigger and see the bullet strike the target exactly where you aimed. Firing your weapon feels effortless. You transition into the prone position, anchoring your body properly against the ground.

You continue firing rounds with the same level of focus and calm, taking each shot one at a time as you execute your technique effectively.

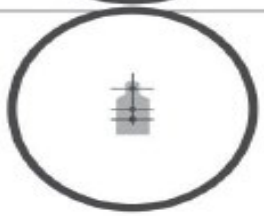
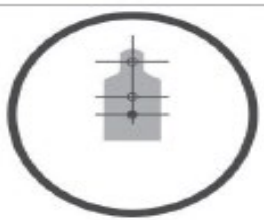
You finish your event and acknowledge your good performance. You also reflect on the nerves you felt at the start of the event. Your muscle tension and increased heart rate before starting helped you perform your best today. You're confident in your ability to refocus in the moment and recognize that these nerves are important in helping you perform successfully. And you understand that this routine is going to lead to good performances in the future.

- External ballistics- Are the physical actions and effects of gravity, drag, and wind along the projectile's flight to the target. It includes only those general physical actions that cause the greatest change to the flight of a projectile. External ballistics begins at shot exit and continues through the moment the projectile strikes the target (Headquarters, Department of the Army 2016).



Being familiar with ballistics gives a shooter an advantage to aim accurately at a target based on distance and the zero of the weapon. The following chart is

based on the Army standard 300 meter zero which has been shown to work well in all tactical situations, including close quarters combat.

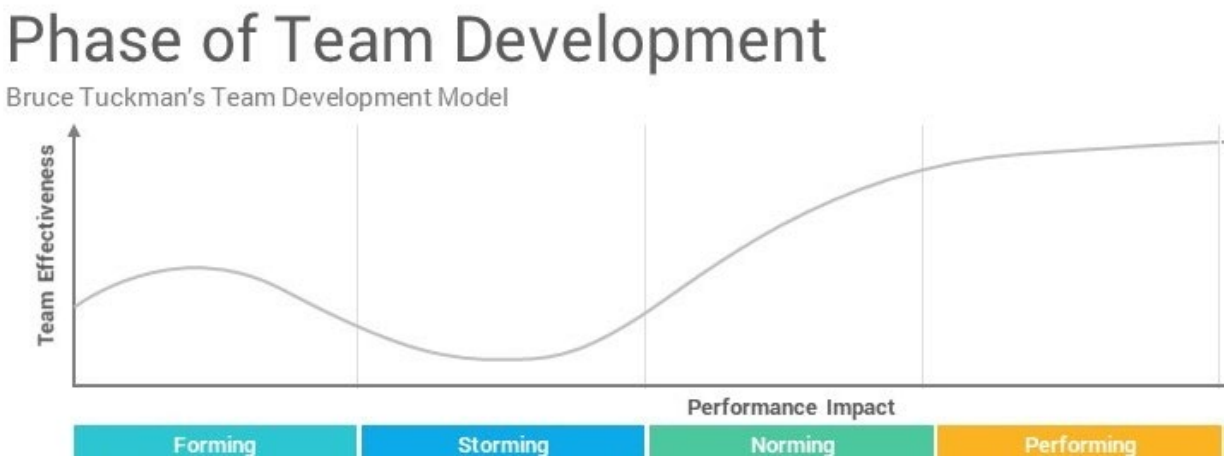
300 m	CoVM		
200 m	-1/4 LOW		
100 m	-1/4 LOW		

MANAGING AND DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TEAMS

"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." -Henry Ford

When you think about an effective team, what comes to mind? Can you think of an example of a highly effective sport, business, or military team? Why do you think this team was effective? What do you think allowed them to be effective as a team? Have you ever been part of an effective team? If so, what was the leadership, communication, and team cohesion like?

Reflection upon these questions can give us clues to what an effective team is, and how we can create an effective team. While there has been much research conducted on the nature and creation of effective teams, there are a few major models and theories that have long been demonstrated by research to be consistently facilitative for team efficiency. For the sake of simplicity, this chapter will go over a notoriously helpful team efficiency model, "*Stages of Group Development: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing"* (Tuckman, 1965).



Before explaining these phases in greater detail, it is important to note that not all teams experience these phases sequentially, or equally. For example, some teams that are in a norming phase may regress into a storming phase. Additionally, some teams may experience a short norming phase before moving on to the performing phase. However, in general, teams will go through each phase during their development for some time. The goal is to quickly, yet effectively move into the performing phase. Teams suffer when they become stuck within a phase or experience habitual regressions.

Forming

The forming phase of team development typically occurs from the initial group meeting (i.e., a new drill sergeant or X.O. enters the company). This is the “meet and greet” phase. During this time, individuals are cordial and socially pleasant. Most people will strive to “put on their best face” or behave in a way that matches what they want others to perceive them as.

According to the graphic above, performance (indicated by the gray line) is slightly sub-par. The team has not yet acquired a working cohesion but is not currently experiencing any significant sources of conflict either.

To better understand these phases, consider the movie, “*Remember the Titans*.” The first team meeting is an example of the forming phase. Petey, who aspires to be *the* running back, comes into the meeting smiling and high fiving. This part of the film serves as an introduction to the characters, as many of the main players introduce their name and their position. The tone of the moment is light and playful until the coach introduces himself to the players in a manner that is strict and cold. While there are no inner-group conflicts yet, the team’s performance would likely be sub-par, as they have not yet practiced together.

Storming

The storming phase of group development typically occurs after the “put on your best face” phase has passed. At this moment, the shared understanding of the team's goals and processes is likely low, and due to the individuals no longer striving to be socially cordial, disagreements and conflicts are likely to arise.

You have probably experienced this within your team. Often, two cadres may disagree on how to handle a situation. This disagreement may arise from varying interpretations of policy or how they have handled similar past situations.

It is important to note that not all conflict is bad. Conflict simply means that there is a disagreement. Conflict is necessary for growth. As high-performing team members disagree, they find solutions and consequentially improve themselves during the process. For example, it would be more beneficial for all the cadre members to have a shared understanding of what trainees can and cannot buy from the troop store, than for the cadre to send different messages to trainees. If there were multiple interpretations of this policy, the team's performance would be enhanced by discussing this conflict and coming to a single solution.

While conflicts will inevitably arise, it is important to not let conflicts become contention. Performance is enhanced when members of a team disagree and then grow together. Performance is hindered when members of a team disagree and then fall apart.

Returning to our example from, *Remember the Titans,* we can observe this phase during a scene where the two team captains debate their differences. Gary (pictured on the right) confronts Julius (on the left) about his lackluster playing. Julius then confronts Gary about his lackluster leadership. While this is an obvious moment of storming and conflict, it allows them both to create a better understanding of the entire situation.

Norming

The norming phase occurs after major conflict resolution and the shared understanding of the team's goals and processes is clearer. The term "shared understanding" is important. A norm is a social rule, process, or occurrence that is understood by all the members of the group. The team may not be very skillful at executing these mutually understood processes yet, but they at least have a mental model of how they should be accomplished and what the main goals are.

An example of this from *Remember the Titans* is the notorious "left side, strong side" moment. In this scene, Gary and Julius (the same two players from the last example) take each other's advice and put more effort into their playing intensity and leadership. Consequentially, both of them are happy about their performance and give each other

praise by saying, “left side strong side”, a saying that becomes a team norm throughout the movie.

While their performance at this point was still not elite, it had drastically improved. They now had an enhanced shared understanding and agreement of their roles, goals, and processes.

Performing

The performing phase occurs when the shared understanding of goals and processes is executed at a high level with low levels of conflict, resulting in peak performance. Here, teams seem to be on the same “wavelength.” There is a mental model of how the team works, who fulfills what role, and when certain tasks need to occur. The communication between teammates may even become less verbal, due to the mutual understanding of the team’s processes. Think of an elite NBA team who seem to predict where each other are going to be on the court without having to communicate it. For example, in the mid-90's, the Utah Jazz’s John Stockton and Karl Malone had mastered a “pick and roll”, where John seemed to magically know where Karl would be on the

court and could pass the ball to that location before Karl would even be there. We call this “team chemistry.”

In, *Remember the Titans*, the performance stage is the grande-finale. This is when the team has finally regulated their differences and is now in the pursuit of a common goal with a shared understanding of the team’s processes. In the movie (spoiler alert) this leads to them winning the state championship.

How to apply Tuckman’s Stages of Group Development Model

The goal is to push your team towards the performance phase and to maintain its position within that phase. Where do you think your team is within these phases? Where do the members of your team think the group is? What are the behavioral indicators? Where would you rank your team's performance on a 0-10 scale? If your team performance is low, you may be in a storming phase. If your team’s performance is in the middle, you may be in the forming or norming phase. If your team’s performance is high, you may be in the performing phase.

Once you have an idea of what phase your team is in, you can now strategize how to move forward. If you believe you are in the performing phase, you can strategize how to maintain your position.

It is important to note, once again, the flexibility of this model. Somedays you may feel that your once-performing team is now storming, and back to performing the next day. Due to the nature of working within a basic training company, you will likely have new additional team members at the start of every cycle. This may cause frequent visits back to the forming phase.

Here are *some* practical tips for each phase:

Tips for Progressing out of Forming

Hail and Farewell: The forming phase will pass quicker if your team can efficiently welcome new faces and bid adieu to departing faces. You may consider doing an off-post meet-up at a local eatery as a “welcome party” for new faces, or simply hold a traditional “welcome to the team” meeting in your company footprint.

Team Bonding: Similar to the last suggestion, creating opportunities for your team to get to know each other will facilitate the forming process. During team bonding events, focus on creating an atmosphere that involves a lot of acquainting and conversing.

Establish Expectations Early: Part of the forming process is not just being introduced to the new cadre member(s), but also to the team’s goals and processes. Seek to quickly familiarize new cadre members with your team’s expectations for each individual’s role responsibility, chain of command, manning shifts, team traditions, goals, and processes.

Establish Communication Early: Quickly establishing a communication process will allow for new cadre members to more efficiently acclimate to your team. Inevitably, new members may have questions. Consider establishing a chain of command for communication or creating a group chat where questions can be asked, and important information can be delivered.

Capabilities Brief: Use the forming phase to gain important information about your team members. One way of doing this is via a capabilities brief, where the team members present information about their personal experiences, strengths, weaknesses, what they like about their job, and what they dislike about their job. This information will facilitate the forming process and serve your team in future phases.

Tips for Progressing out of Storming

Establish a Process for Conflicts: Does your team know what to do when disagreements arise? Do they know where to seek important information (rules, regulations, policy, etc.)? If there is a nuanced disagreement (not involving an objective rule), how are these problems resolved? Who leads on conflict resolution? Having an established process for conflicts will help your team members avoid contention and more efficiently solve any disagreement.

Seek Conflicts and Avoid Contention: Once again, conflicts are not innately bad. They are a necessary friction for forward progress. As your team solves conflicts, they will enhance their shared understanding of the team's goals and processes. As a leader, you are the lead example of how to handle conflicts. If you turn every conflict into an emotional battle, so will your team. If you approach conflicts with poise, your team will be more likely to do so as well.

Think like a scientist: If you are in a conflict, strive to be curious, rather than contentious. *Do not be concerned about being right— be concerned about getting it right*. A scientist who observes a phenomenon, such as a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, does not immediately form one hypothesis and attach their emotional well-being to it. In contrast, they formulate several hypotheses and seek to find the best one without emotional bias. Next time you disagree with a co-worker, ask yourself, "Am I emotionally biased, seeking to be right? Or am I calm and rational, seeking to get it right?"

Cultivate Psychological Safety: Psychological safety refers to a group climate where each member feels that they can ask questions, make errors, and learn without consequence or harsh judgment. To proceed out of the storming phase, questions must be asked, and discussions should be held. This will likely not happen if the group members feel they cannot speak their minds due to judgment or retribution.

Tips for Progressing out of Norming

Establish a Team Identity: In *Remember the Titans*, the team decides to start each of their games with their notorious "We are the Titans' dance. This phrase becomes the source of identity for their team— part of their group norm. Creating a team identity (e.g., team name, team values, slogan, culture, etc.) will enhance the intrinsic motivation of the group and facilitate buy-in to the group's goals and processes.

Seek Meaningful Reps: Practice does NOT make perfect. Practice makes permanent. Seek to understand what high performance is for your team. What do the behaviors of high performance look like? What does each person need to do for the group to perform at a high level? Once this is established, seek to gain as many reps of these behaviors and tasks as possible. As your team has the opportunity to get repetitions within their job, their performance will improve.

3-1 Feedback: Just like a gymnast who is learning a new skill would benefit from feedback, so would your team. You may evaluate and deliver feedback to your team via various methods. However, one specific feedback method, known as the "3-1 feedback" focuses on deliberate improvement based on the team's strengths. In this style of feedback, you list three things your team or team member is doing well, and one thing they can improve upon. High performance is not cultivated by focusing on weaknesses alone. If we only focus on weaknesses, we will be good at everything and great at nothing. Elite teams emphasize a focus on their strengths, while also seeking to improve their weaknesses. You may consider doing this within each staff synch meeting, or at the end of each week, by asking your team, "What are three things we are doing well, and one thing we can improve?"

Continuing Education: High-performing teams never stop learning. Using your resources (H2F, MRT, LPD, this guidebook, etc.) to improve your team will facilitate progression out of the norming phase and enhance your team's performance.

Tips for Maintaining Performing

Psychological Flexibility: Once you are in a performance phase, you need to ensure you are sustaining the various factors that are allowing your team to perform at a high level. However, as new challenges arise, and your team members change, you may need to be flexible with your approach. Avoid being too tightly connected to one process or one method. Be willing to try new approaches and remain poised during the setbacks in group development (e.g., returning to the storming phase).

Keep the Rock Rolling: All the prior tips for each phase are equally relevant in the performance phase. If your team is in this phase, it is likely because you are executing many of these tips, along with your own ideas, and team members' effort. Keep engaged in whatever is enhancing your team's performance and never stop learning (Tuckman 1965).

References

Alnawwar, Majd A., Merial I. Alraddadi, Rafaa A. Algethmi, Gufran A. Salem, Mohammed A. Salem, and Abeer A. Alharbi. "The Effect of Physical Activity on Sleep Quality and Sleep Disorder: A Systematic Review." *Cureus*, 2023.

Bandura, Albert. *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies.* Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Bernardi, Nicolo F, Matteo De Buglio, Pietro D Trimarchi, Alfonso Chielli, and Emanuela Bricolo. "Mental practice promotes motor anticipation: evidence from skilled music performance." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 2013: 1-14.

Cooper, Jeff. *Principles of Personal Defense.* Paladein Press, 1989.

Crispim, Cibele, Iona Zimberg, Bruno Gomes dos Reis, Rafael Diniz, Sergio Tufik, and Marco Tulio de Mello. "Relationship Between Food Intake and Sleep Pattern in Healthy Individuals." *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, 2011: 659-664.

Dattilo, Murilo, et al. "Effects of Sleep Deprivation on Acute Skeletal Muscle Recovery after Exercise." *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, 2019: 507-514.

Department of the Army. *FM 7-22 Holistic Health and Fitness.* Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2020.

Goleman, Daniel, Richard E Boyatzis, and Annie McKee. *Primal Leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence.* Boston: Hardvard Business School, 2002.

Haack, Monica, Norah Simpson, Navil Sethna, Satvinder Kaur, and Janet Mullington. "Sleep Deficiency and Chronic Pain: Potential Underlying Mechanisms and Clinical Implications." *Neuropsychopharmacology*, 2020: 205-216.

Hale, Bruce. *Imagery Training.* London: The National COaching Foundation, 1998.

Headquarters, Department of the Army. *TC 3-22.9 Rifle and Carbine.* Washington DC: Department of the Army, 2016.

HeartMath. *HeartMath.* n.d. https://www.heartmath.com/ (accessed September 23, 2024).

Hussain, Joy N, Ronda F Greaves, and Marc M Cohen. "A hot topic for health: Results of the Global Sauna Survey." *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 2019: 223-234.

Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow.* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2011.

Kennedy, Daniel R, and Andrea L Porter. "The Illusion of Urgency." *American Journal of Pharamaceutical Education*, 2021.

Khan, Mohammed A., and Hamdan Al-Jahdali. "The Consequences of Sleep Deprivation on Cognitive Performance." *Neurpsciences*, 2023: 91-99.

Leigh, Doug. "SWOT Analysis." In *Handbook of Improving Performance in the Workplace: Volume 2*, by Kenneth H Silber, Wellesley R Foshay, Ryan Watkins, Doug Leigh, James L Moseley, & Joan C Dessinger, 115-140. San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2010.

Lessler, Peter. *GunDigest Shooter's Guide to Rifle Marksmanship.* Appleton, WI: Gun Digest Books, 2023.

Lewin, Kurt, Ronald Lippitt, and Ralph K White. "Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created "Social Climates"." *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 1939: 269-299.

Oettingen, Gabriele, and Peter M Gollwitzer. "Health behavior change by self-regulation of goal pursuit: Mental contrasting with implementation intentions." In *The Routledge international handbook of self-control in health and well-being*, by Gabriele Oettingen, & Peter M Gollwitzer, 418-430. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.

Patrick, Rhonda P, and Teresa L Johnson. "Sauna use as a lifestyle practice to extend healthspan." *Experimental Gerontology*, 2021.

Patterson, Kerry, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler. *Crucial Conversations.* Maidenhead, England: McGraw-Hill Contemporary, 2002.

Platinum Therapy Lights. *PlatinumLED Therapy Lights.* 2024. https://platinumtherapylights.com/ (accessed August 2024).

Rivera, Joeel, and Natalie Rivera. "Emotional Intelligence: Master Anxiety, Fear, and Emotions." Udemy Inc., September 2024.

Stahl, Bob, and Elisha Goldstein. *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook.* New Harbinger Publications, 2019.

Suni, Eric, and David Rosen. *Sleep Foundation.* March 4, 2024. http://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleep-hygiene (accessed September 16, 2024).

Taheri, Shahrad, Ling Lin, Diane Austin, Terry Young, and Emmanuel Mignot. "Short Sleep Duration Is Associated with Reduce Leptin, Elevated Ghrelin, and Increased Body Mass Index." *PLOS Medicine*, 2004: 210-217.

Tuckman, Bruce W. "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups ." *Naval Medical Research Institute, Bethesda, Maryland*, 1965: Vol. 63, No. 6, 384-399.

Vgontzas, Alexandros N., and Edward O. Bixler. "Short Sleep and Obesity: Are Poor Sleep, Chronic Stress, and Unhealthy Behaviors the Link?" *SLEEP*, 2008: 1203.

Walker, Matthew. *Why we sleep: Unlocking the power of sleep and dreams.* Penguin Books, 2018.

Weinberg, Robert S, and Daniel Gould. "Goal Setting." In *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 461-485. Robert S. Weinberg and Daniel Gould, 2019.

Williams, Jean M, and Vikki Krane. "Cognitive Techniques for Building Confidence and Enhancing Performance." In *Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth to Peak Performance*, by Jean M Williams, Nate Zinsser, & Linda Bunker. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2015.

Williams, Jean M, and Vikki Krane. "Understanding and Using Imagery in Sport." In *Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth to Peak Performance*, by Robin S Vealey, & Samuel T Forlenza. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2015.

Workman, David. *Better Accuracy Through Correct Trigger Squeeze.* n.d. https://www.crossbreedholsters.com/blog/better-accuracy-through-correct-trigger-squeeze/ (accessed 09 27, 2024).

Zinsser, Nathaniel. *The Confident Mind: A battle-tested guide.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2022.

Zuraikat, Faris M., Rebecca A. Wood, Rocio Barragan, and Maire-Pierre St-Onge. "Sleep and Diet: Mounting Evidence of a Cyclical Relationship." *Annual Review of Nutrition*, 2021: 309-332.