

PREVENTION IN ACTION

READINESS

BUILD HEALTHY EATING AND EXERCISE HABITS TO IMPROVE READINESS

- 1** Eat a variety of foods that are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Limit fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars (in food and beverages). The Nutrition Facts label will help.
- 2** Stay hydrated. Limit caffeine (especially energy drinks). Caffeine can alter moods and make stress reactions worse.
- 3** Be aware of what is in dietary [supplements](#) and how they can impact you before using them.
- 4** Eat regular meals at consistent times to help you maintain energy.
- 5** Choose lean, low-fat, or fat-free foods. Bake, roast, or poach instead of frying. Choose higher fat options sparingly.



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Stocking up on healthy foods can help you improve your diet

You will make healthier food choices if you purge processed and junk foods from your diet. Healthy items you should keep handy in your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry:

Fridge: Fruits, vegetables, ready-to-go snacks (cut fruits, cut vegetables, individual servings of yogurt, cheese sticks), healthier condiments (mustard, hot sauce, oil and vinegar based dressings), and hummus

Freezer: Fruit, vegetables, salmon, chicken, shrimp, ground lean meat (chicken, turkey, beef)

Pantry: Canned vegetables, canned salmon or tuna, nuts,

legumes (dried or canned), whole grains, and low sodium stock
In the **chow hall**, you will find foods labeled according to the Stoplight Color Coding System (see chart) to help you make informed choices.

For a **quick and healthy dinner**, put chicken breasts and vegetables (such as broccoli, zucchini, green beans) on a sheet pan, toss with olive oil, garlic salt, and pepper and bake until the chicken is done. Serve with a salad and tzatziki sauce.

Ditching processed foods means you'll be less likely to binge on unhealthy items. It's the first step

STOPLIGHT COLOR CODING SYSTEM FOR FOOD

| GREEN | YELLOW | RED |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Engage at will | Well-aimed shots | Check fire |
| Least-processed | Moderately-processed | Most-processed |
| Wholesome | Lower in fiber | Lowest-quality nutrients |
| Nutrient dense | Added sugars or artificial sweeteners | Added sugar |
| High fiber | Lower quality fats | Excess fats and/or trans fats |
| Low in added sugar | | Fried foods |
| Healthy fats | | |

SEMPER FIT HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM

to making a lifestyle change that your heart will love.

It's never too early to help kids make healthy choices. Encourage them to [eat the rainbow](#).

For more tips on clean eating and living a healthier lifestyle, visit your local [Health Promotion](#) Office.

Get active to build physical strength and readiness

Regular exercise helps you maintain good health and get back a sense of routine in a time of transition. Practice good form and safe habits, especially if you exercise frequently at a high intensity level.

- Creating relevant goals aligned with a combined program of weight training, cardio, and nutrition provides the best results.
- Before exercise, warm up for about 10 minutes to reduce chances of injury from

overusing cold muscles.

- Adults should do at least two hours and 30 minutes a week of moderate-intensity, or one hour and 15 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination.
- For more extensive health benefits, adults should increase their aerobic physical activity to five hours a week of moderate intensity, or two hours and 30 minutes a week of vigorous intensity, or an equivalent combo. More health benefits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond this amount.

- Gain additional benefits by doing strengthening activities that are moderate or high intensity and involve all major muscle groups two or more days a week.
 - After exercise, stretch while muscles are warm. This will lengthen muscles to help avoid injury.
 - Build social connections by working out with family, friends, and groups.
- For information on fitness programs, including [High Intensity Tactical Training](#), contact your [Semper Fit](#) program.

PREVENTION IN ACTION

with Amy Solomon

School Liaison, Marine Corps Base Hawaii



Q Your role with the [School Liaison Program](#) is important for our Marine Corps families. How do you help children (and their families) stay ready to achieve their educational goals?

Helping families dealing with frequent change means being a compassionate and reliable source of information. My goal is to empower families by helping them understand the actions they can take prior to their arrival/departure in order to have the smoothest transition possible.

With preparation, children can join their new school quickly to minimize educational gaps. When families come to me with certain goals in mind, we determine what assistance may be needed. I provide information and connect families with resources to help them achieve their goals.

Q What collaborative work do you do to ensure families have access to positive activities to build skills? Do you have any partnerships aboard MCB Hawaii or outside the gates?

Knowing what resources are available and knowing the people that provide those resources and how they support families is key. School liaisons recognize the importance of developing relationships with organizations on and off the installation. Having these relationships means that community partners are also familiar with the role I play and also refer families to me. An example of such a partnership is with the [Exceptional Family Member Program](#) (EFMP). When families come to me with questions about special education services for their children, I

connect them with EFMP. Professionals there specialize in mentoring and supporting parents in becoming their child's best advocate. When EFMP has families with questions about school transitions, or communicating with school staff, they refer families to me. Together, we provide families with a circle of support.

Q We all know that dealing with change can be difficult for children but preparedness can help. What suggestions do you have as families return to in-person school or attend new schools all together?

Contact a school liaison! Seriously. Relocations are tough. So are pandemics, switching schools, starting over, and making new friends. School liaisons are here to answer questions, provide information, make connections, and listen.

Don't be afraid to talk to your child's teacher or school counselor about your child's educational needs. It may be helpful to sit down with someone you trust to make a list of any concerns you have. That's one way I like to help families. Lists help organize your thoughts and they help you to remember everything you want to say. Sometimes knowing who to talk to is half the battle. School liaisons also help connect families with the right people.

Prevention in Action interviews individuals in prevention-related positions within Marine Corps Total Force to show how primary prevention is operationalized across the Marine Corps. Efforts to build skills, promote protective factors, and strengthen resilience are ongoing across the fleet.

Develop a Family Care Plan

A completed [Family Care Plan](#) (FCP) is a big step toward ensuring the well-being of your family when you are unable. All married and single Marines with dependents must complete a FCP.

Your FCP establishes a contingency plan should you need it by providing alternate caregivers with important details pertaining to child care, school, medical care, daily routines, caregiving arrangements, and more to assist in the care of dependents.

The FCP helps you plan for short-term care for your dependents. Do you have a trusted neighbor who can help? What if you are going to be unavailable for a longer period of time? [Marine Corps Family Team Building](#) (MCFTB) FCP training is designed to provide you with an understanding of the FCP and information on how to develop one for your family.

Check with your local MCFTB for the next training available. Remember, when everything is taken care of at home, Marines can concentrate on the mission and be ready.

For more information on Family Care Plans, read [MCO 1740.13C](#).

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The United States Marine Corps' Marine & Family Programs Division publishes Prevention in Action. **The contents of this newsletter are for informational purposes only** and not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

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SCAN ME

Increase readiness by improving financial fitness

Improving your financial fitness strengthens your overall readiness.

The [Personal Financial Managers](#) (PFM) aboard all installations and Command Financial Specialists (CFS) assigned in each unit can assist Marines and families with creating budgets, understanding credit reports, and prioritizing their current bills (critical to the household

financial infrastructure).

Take advantage of courses that can help you build skills.

Check your installation's [Marine Corps Community Services website](#) for dates and times these classes will next be offered:



- Budget
- Car Buying
- Developing a Spending Plan
- Credit and Debt
- Investing Basics
- Home Buying
- Thrift Savings Plan
- Retirement Planning/Survivor Benefit Plan

The Family Advocacy Program also offers a Married and Loving It course that features information on how finances can affect relationships.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS IMPROVE SOCIAL FITNESS AND READINESS

Building healthy relationships strengthens your social fitness. There is not a “one size fits all” when it comes to defining a healthy relationship. Your perspective, values, and deal breakers change as you age.

A relationship that made you happy in your 20s may not look anything like what you want in your 30s. People have different needs; what works for your best friend may not work for you. However, there are some characteristics that all healthy relationships have in common.

Equality. The relationship feels balanced to both people. One person’s wishes and preferences don’t dominate over the others. No one feels as though he or she is constantly giving in to the other. Compromises are made when desires don’t align.

Trust. Each person gives the other the benefit of the doubt. Each

person believes the other is invested in the relationship and would not do something to purposefully damage it. Trust is frequently based on mutual respect, common values, and a shared vision of the future.

Communication. Each person feels safe to express thoughts and feelings without fear of retribution. Topics are discussed openly and honestly to ensure each person is on the same page. Conflict is resolved without expressing contempt for one another.

Physical intimacy. Physical intimacy is more than sex. It

involves being close to each other; holding hands, hugging, kissing, and physically connecting. Every relationship has physical intimacy, including friendships and romantic and work relationships. Respecting physical boundaries is critical to physical intimacy. People with healthy physical intimacy feel safe to discuss their needs and desires, to initiate intimacy, and to say no when it’s unwanted.

Fun. When people enjoy spending time together, they have fun, laugh, and can be themselves. Relationships have ups and downs, but healthy relationships definitely

have more ups than downs. The relationship brings each person joy and happiness and feels easy.

Time spent apart. Spending time together is typically prioritized in relationships. Spending time apart is equally important and is also prioritized in healthy relationships. It allows space to explore personal hobbies, spend time with friends and family, and maintain individual identities.

There is no perfect relationship; there is always room to improve.

Your [Family Advocacy Program](#) offers relationship classes. “Within My Reach” is for individuals looking to improve their relationship skills. “Married and Loving It” is a relationship class for couples.

[Marine Corps Family Team Building](#) offers a class for improving relationship skills called “Real Relationships.”



Be ready to take the next step in your career

You should be thinking of transitioning out long before you actually do. Finding a job can take a lot of time and effort, especially if your chosen field requires further study.

If you’re interested in pursuing a bachelor’s degree, the [Leadership Scholar Program](#) assists transitioning Marines with college applications and has connections at over 200 universities across the country.

Don’t get lost in translation

One of the biggest challenges for Marines who are transitioning back to civilian life is translating military experience into language that civilian recruiters understand.

The first step is to use the same words found in the job description to describe your experience. You can draw even more parallels for employers by obtaining civilian credentials that are relevant to your military occupational specialties (MOS).

Credentials allow employers to directly compare your experience to that of civilians applying for the same jobs. [Marine Corps Credentialing Opportunities On-line](#)

[\(COOL\)](#) allows you to search by MOS, find credentials and licenses, and learn how you can obtain these credentials.

Up your game

Looking to improve your job skills in a certain area? [The United Services Military Apprenticeship Program \(USMAP\)](#) is a military training program that provides active duty Marines with the opportunity to improve their job skills and to complete civilian apprenticeship requirements while they are on active duty. Not only is USMAP free, but it also requires no off-duty hours.

Upon completion of your apprenticeship you will be registered as a Department of Labor apprentice and have documented proof of your work experience.

Emphasize your Marine values

Employers like hiring Marines not just for the technical skills they bring to the table but for the intangible values the Marine Corps instills in you.

Throughout the job search and interview process, make sure to emphasize qualities such



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as teamwork, loyalty, discipline, adaptability, leadership, problem solving, and your ability to work under pressure.

Build your network

The majority of civilian jobs are found not through online applications but through networking. Being in the Corps has allowed you to develop a large network and form strong bonds with your fellow Marines. You do not lose this network when you transition.

The [Marine for Life Network](#) is a great resource for connecting with other veterans, and getting tips on how to succeed in your civilian job search.

Want more transition tips? [Click here](#) for more information.

OSCAR TEAMS CAN IMPROVE READINESS

Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) teams can help improve readiness and build a prevention culture by promoting skill-building and encouraging help-seeking behavior in Marines.

Marines who know about their network of support may be more likely to seek help when they need it, trust their fellow Marines, and believe their peers will always have their backs.

[OSCAR team members](#) cultivate strong working relationships with command, installation, and community resources.

OSCAR training equips a team of selected Marines, medical professionals, and religious ministry teams with tools and resources to help Marines prevent, identify, and manage stress issues early before medical problems arise.

The most effective OSCAR teams maintain strong ties with Behavioral Health, Semper Fit (including the Single Marine Program), the Martial Arts Program, Force Fitness, Family Team Building, and many others.

Headquarters Marine Corps released OSCAR Gen III training in January 2020, and the course offers more strategies for prevention and helping Marines build skills.

OSCAR Team members



**COMBAT FITNESS TEST (CFT)
READINESS CHECK**



PRACTICE & PLAN

- Maintain a level of fitness so that your training is not as stressful
- Implement a phased training plan
- Have an active recovery day



CHOOSE EXERCISES THAT ENHANCE CFT PERFORMANCE

- Intervals and sprint drills
- Agility drills
- Mobility drills
- Muscular endurance exercises



MAKE SLEEP A PRIORITY

- Getting enough sleep (7-10 hours) can:
- Improve physical performance
 - Enhance cognitive function
 - Increase pain tolerance
 - Reduce the likelihood of injury
 - Bolster immune function & recovery



STAY HYDRATED

- Being hydrated improves your performance
- Maintain hydration levels before you feel thirsty
- Fluids containing electrolytes may be recommended in addition to water
- Continue to hydrate throughout the day



MAKE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

- Avoid heavy meals late at night
- Understand your caloric intake relative to your expenditure
- Choose nutrient rich foods like fruits, vegetables, and protein over high-fat, high-sugar, or processed foods

If you aren't sure how to develop a program or need a program for your unit, reach out to your installation Semper Fit HITT Coordinator.



PHYSICAL FITNESS: Another part of readiness is being physically fit. This graphic offers strategies for Marines who are preparing for the CFT.

can lead small group discussions on the Stress Continuum, self-care, mindfulness, stress management, mental agility, sleep habits, and

building positive behaviors. For more information, contact a member of your unit's OSCAR team, your local Combat and

Operational Stress Control representative, or your regional training coordinator.