

PREVENTION IN ACTION

RESET AND REBOOT

All of us experienced varying degrees of hardship and loss in 2020. We also realized our capacity for resilience, kindness, generosity, and perseverance.

Needless to say, 2020 was not the year we expected. As the Prevention Manager for the Marine & Family Programs Division, I often thought about prevention across my life.

We know one of the keys to prevention is building skills to promote positive behaviors, so what was I trying to prevent in my own life? Are we healthy? Are we keeping up with our work requirements and virtual school? Is everyone thriving? Are we putting one foot in front of the other? It gave me much needed

perspective to celebrate the big wins and the small wins.

We just made it through an unforgettable year. Most of us found ourselves wearing multiple hats at once, adjusting to a new normal, and doing our best to focus on self-care. Now it is time to venture into 2021 with a focus on hope and what we can do to promote overall wellness.

Put in the extra effort. Manage your time. Be a team player. Establish a good work-life balance. Be a problem solver. Gain new knowledge. Be open-minded. Check in with friends and family—frequently. Learn a new skill. Improve your physical, mental, and

spiritual well-being. We all have room for improvement. Be more forgiving. Express gratitude and communicate issues early and often. Do the activities you enjoy. Be present. Exercise compassion.

We have all proven we can encounter adversity and overcome it. Stress is a normal part of everyday life and there are resources available if wanted/needed. In 2020, we were in it together. In 2021, let's continue that trend. We have much to be hopeful for, and sometimes we just need a little reminder.

Christine Heit

Prevention Manager

Marine & Family Programs Division

CONSIDER A REBOOT TO IMPROVE PARTS OF YOUR LIFE

When our computer locks up, the simplest solution is to reboot. When we find ourselves stuck in some way, it can be harder to reset. Here are some rebooting strategies:

PRODUCTIVE THINKING

Your thoughts affect how you perform, especially during stressful situations. Luckily, you can reframe your thoughts to help make them accurate and productive. This can boost your focus and help you through the stress.

SPIRITUAL FITNESS

[Spiritual fitness](#) is an important part of your total health. How spiritually fit are you?

STRESS MINDSET

Stress can enable us to perform, grow, learn, and be healthy. Sometimes we need to change our mindset and remember the ways in which stress strengthens us.

All of us encounter stress; it is a normal part of life. When we consider only the negatives of stress, it can really take a toll.

Knowing you can make it through a stressful situation builds confidence and resilience for when you encounter similar situations in the future. Check out [Marine](#)



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[Corps Family Team Building's](#) Inner Balance course or the [Family Advocacy Program's](#) stress management course.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Ready to step up your physical training? Want to focus on building endurance, building muscle, or preventing injury?

Visit a [Semper Fit](#) fitness center for self-directed physical training, group exercise classes, nutrition education, personal

training, unit PT, and mobile fitness.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Are you satisfied with your quality of life? Are you achieving personal goals and making what you value most a priority? Take time to look at your daily tasks and figure out how to prioritize what you value. This will improve your quality of life.

For more information on many of these rebooting strategies, visit the [Consortium for Health and Military Performance website](#).

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS TO RELAX, RESET, AND RECHARGE

Mindfulness is a type of meditation that trains your brain to stay in the present moment.

Practicing mindfulness can help you relax. It can even help lower your blood pressure. Mindfulness can help you become more focused, alert, and tuned in to your body.

Mindfulness training can enhance your ability to perform at your best in garrison, during training, and in real world operations.

Practicing mindfulness can also reduce pain and stress. It can improve impulse control. Mindfulness can also assist in the recovering process for PTSD.

Ever miss your turn because you were thinking about something else? Forget what you were going to say right before you said it?

We all have difficulties



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sometimes staying present. So how do we get ourselves to be present in the moment?

One way is to practice mindfulness for at least 10 minutes a day.

Practicing mindfulness regularly helps you feel calmer and more relaxed, which can lead to better quality sleep.

Try the technique below to get started.

Deep Breathing

- Sit comfortably with your spine as straight as possible.
- Breathe in slowly until you feel it in your stomach.
- Hold the breath for a second.
- Exhale slowly.

- Rest for a few seconds.
- Repeat.

More Benefits of Mindfulness

- Effective leaders are mindful leaders.
- Mindfulness helps you better understand others.
- Mindfulness helps you be more present with family. It helps you communicate in the best way and get back on track.

Start Building Your Skills

Mindfulness is a skill. Like any skill, the more you practice the better you'll be. [Semper Fit & Recreation](#) offers group yoga classes, another opportunity to practice mindfulness.

PRACTICE SELF-CARE

The Practice Self-care feature focuses on self-care techniques that Service members, civilians, veterans, and Families find helpful. Stress is a part of everyday life, and all of us can benefit from learning techniques to manage it. Practicing self-care is a great way to reset and reboot.

Marie Balocki, Director,
Marine & Family Programs Division

What: Spending time with family

How it Helps: Things are moving so fast around us, and I often need to be reminded to slow down and rest from all the busyness in my life. Spending time with my children, grandchildren, and extended family helps center me and remind me of what is truly important in life. It doesn't matter what we are doing when we are together but it's really special when we can spend the time together at the beach!

SgtMaj Stephen Lutz
Marine & Family Programs Division

What: Unplugging from electronics; spending time with and talking to friends and taking my dogs on a walk with my wife.

How it Helps: A large portion of my stress comes from social media posts that are controversial. I find that it is easiest to just remove that source of stress from my life. Spending time with and talking to friends is a good way to recharge and have fun. My wife and I take our dogs on a walk everyday. It allows us to spend quality time together and catch up, talk about our day, and enjoy being outside.

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

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

The contents are for informational purposes only. The content is not intended to be a substitute for

professional financial advice, medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

Email hqmcprevention@usmc.mil to suggest topics or ask questions.

To access hot links in newsletter: right click on link, copy link location, and paste link into a new browser window.

RESET WHEN YOU GET ANGRY

“Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.” —Mark Twain

We have all felt anger, whether as a fleeting annoyance or full-blown rage. It is a normal human emotion. When it gets out of control and becomes destructive, it can lead to problems at work, in your personal relationships, and your overall quality of life.

What Is Anger?

Anger is an emotion that ranges in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury, and is accompanied by responses in your body, like increases in heart rate, blood pressure, and energy hormones. Anger is a reaction to stressful events such as traffic, a canceled flight, a disagreement with a coworker, or concern over personal finances. Anger can be triggered by memories of traumatic events.

Anger is also a natural, adaptive response to perceived threats. In certain situations, such as one that implies danger, anger is necessary for survival. In other situations, physically or verbally lashing out at someone or something that annoys us is not effective.

Strategies to Keep Anger at Bay

Relaxation. Relaxation tools, like deep breathing and guided imagery, can calm angry feelings. It is important to breathe deeply from your diaphragm; breathing from your chest will not help you relax.

This diaphragmatic breathing technique is commonly referred to as “belly breathing.” Visualize



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a relaxing or positive experience, by using a memory or your imagination.

You can also find many online resources that demonstrate relaxation techniques.

Cognitive Restructuring. When you feel angry, your thinking can get unreasonable and overly intense.

Try reframing your thoughts with more rational ones. For example, instead of thinking “this is terrible, everything is ruined,” tell yourself, “this is frustrating and I’m upset about it, but I will get through it.” Over time, you will train yourself to develop a more balanced perspective.

Problem-solving. Instead of focusing on an immediate solution, it is helpful to take a step back and focus on how you will handle the problem.

Problems cannot always be solved right away, but you can make a plan and check your progress along the way.

Better Communication. Listen to the message presented to you, rather than immediately jumping to conclusions. Then pause and

do not react immediately. Think through your response and take your time before responding.

This helps to prevent the situation—and your anger—from getting out of control.

Using Humor. Silly, inoffensive humor helps to reduce any tension or rage you might be feeling. It also helps you realize how insignificant the things you are angry about really are.

Changing Your Environment. Give yourself a break and step away from the stress of everyday life. Take time during the day for “personal time,” even if for 15 minutes, to relax and focus on yourself.

Seeking Help

If you feel your anger is having a negative impact on your relationships, work, and/or quality of life, you may benefit from counseling and support services to learn how to effectively manage your reactions to stress.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON YOUR INSTALLATION

Non-medical Counseling – [Community Counseling Program](#)

The CCP provides short-term non-medical counseling to Marines and families to address common concerns and general life issues such as stress and relationships.

Anger Management Course – [Family Advocacy Program](#)

The Anger Management Course will help you learn to identify what provokes you, and learn healthy, constructive ways in which to express frustrations by responding instead of reacting.

Inner Balance Course – [Marine Corps Family Team Building](#)

The Inner Balance Course teaches helpful strategies and tools, to include basic stress, anger, and conflict management, to become more emotionally resilient in personal and professional relationships.

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Recommended Wellness Apps](#)

Breathe2Relax teaches some deep-breathing techniques.

[Military Health Podcasts](#)

The Military Meditation Coach podcast will help you strengthen your mind with a variety of meditation, mindfulness, and relaxation exercises.

[Chill Drills](#)

By doing these drills regularly, you can lower your baseline stress level and be better prepared to deal with stress in the future.

[Controlling Anger Webinar](#)

This webinar introduces different aspects of anger and ways to improve its management.



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RESET YOUR EATING HABITS

Start the year by resetting your eating habits.

Think Ahead

Planning meals does not mean you figure out everything. Make a simple list of breakfast, lunch, or dinner ideas and things you like to eat. The Navy has some great meal planning [examples](#) to help you meet your health goals.

Consider Convenience

Ready-made foods like chopped veggies or fruits can cost a bit more, but if buying chopped onions, rotisserie chicken, or meal kits help you meet your nutrition goals, go for it. Setting up to make the [healthy choice](#) the easy choice helps you attain your goals.

Be Wary of Quick Fixes

You might think dietary supplements are a quick fix to help reach your goals. Buyer, beware! Many dietary supplements are not inspected for safety or effectiveness. What is in the bottle may not match up with what is on the ingredients list. This can put you at risk of taking illegal ingredients.

For more information, check out the [high-risk](#) and [prohibited](#) lists or use the [supplement](#)

[screener](#) from the Department of Defense's Operation Supplement Safety Team.

Choose Fruits and Veggies

Incorporating more whole fruits and vegetables helps you save on calories, increase your fiber intake to make you feel fuller, and get a ton of vitamins and minerals.

Craving a sweet? Choose a piece of fruit. Want something crunchy? Try apples with nut butter or fresh cucumber with lemon. The [Semper Fit Health Promotion Program](#) offers more nutrition information.

Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate

Thirst often gets confused with hunger. Drink fluids before reaching for seconds.

To figure out how much water to drink per day, divide your body weight in half. For example, if you weigh 170 pounds, drink about 85 ounces of water per day. Coffee and tea are OK in moderation. Limit your [caffeine](#) intake.

Online Resources

- www.fitness.marines.mil (fitness tab)
- [Semper Fit Health Promotion Program](#)

REBOOT YOUR GOALS

While setting goals is easy, sticking to them is another matter. Need some ideas for 2021 goals?

Get Healthy

Healthy eating, exercise, and outdoor recreation are all good ways to get started. You can find all of these at your installation. Additionally, professionally trained [Semper Fit Health Promotion](#) staff are available at fitness centers on installations to help you achieve your fitness goals or create nutrition plans.

Get Organized

January is a great time to set yourself up for success in the new year. [LifeSkills Training and Education](#) offers courses covering topics such as emergency preparedness, home safety, and developing a family care plan.

Save More

Begin saving today for education expenses, holiday gifts, birthday celebrations, anniversaries, and travel. Your installation [Personal Financial Management Program](#) has a new workshop to help you recognize things that may be sabotage your financial goals. "Your Money Personality" is a fun and interactive workshop that will help you identify patterns in your spending habits.

Give Back

Volunteering benefits you and your unit because it helps build camaraderie and encourages social responsibility. Community service also provides opportunities to lead and reflects positively on the unit.

To learn about the volunteer opportunities in your area, contact



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your installation's [Volunteer Coordinator](#).

Learn Something New

A variety of do-it-yourself services, instructional classes, resources, and services are available to Marines and families via community centers and Child and Youth Programs. Other classes available to Marines and families include [LifeSkills Training and Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation](#).

Quit Smoking

Tobacco use is the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the U.S., increasing your risks of lung disease, cancer, and heart attacks. Ready to quit? Contact your local Semper Fit Health Promotion office to register for the [Operation Tobacco-Free Marine](#) tobacco cessation workshop.

Spend more time with family

The Marine Corps offers several resources for dealing with stress and conflicts. LifeSkills offers classes in conflict management, communication, building healthy relationships and more. Find a course near you.

If your family needs to resolve some issues, contact your local [Community Counseling Program](#).