

FIVE TIPS TO MITIGATE STRESS

April is Stress Awareness Month. Even the most resilient and prepared Marines deal with stress - no one is immune. Just as we continuously invest in exercise to improve our physical readiness, we must continuously monitor how we deal with stress to ensure our mental readiness. Learning to mitigate stress in healthy ways will go a long way in helping live a healthy and positive life.

SLEEP

Most people require a minimum of six to eight hours of sleep each day to replenish the chemicals in their brains and bodies needed for clear-headed thinking, steady emotions, optimal immune system functioning, and resilience to stress. Make sleep a priority by powering down your cell phone or video games an hour before bed, limiting caffeine four hours prior to trying to sleep, and try keeping a consistent bedtime. Contact Semper Fit for assistance in developing a healthy sleep plan.

Get the “feel good” hormones flowing by working out. Physically fit Marines tend to have lower heart rates and lower risk for stress injury than those less fit. Marines who are physically fit are better able to sustain mental focus and cognitive readiness in challenging technical roles. Research shows that physically fit individuals are more resilient to various stressors due to the benefits of increased self-confidence and self-esteem. Physical fitness can also increase levels of naturally occurring antidepressant and anti-anxiety hormones in the body. Lace up those shoes and go for a run! Your body and mind will thank you.

FITNESS

NUTRITION

Prolonged hunger raises baseline stress levels and causes higher pulse rates and blood pressure, even at rest. This places food-deprived Marines at greater risk for deterioration of mental performance and possible stress injury. Food is a resilient resource that should be treated with the same respect as all other resources for health and well-being. Learn more about ways to fuel the body and mind with healthy nutrition from **Semper Fit's Health Promotion**.

FINANCES

Learning how to use financial resources to solve problems or neutralize threats to your well-being is an important skill. Contact your local **MCCS Personal Financial Management Program** to learn more about financial readiness.

PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT

It's no surprise that research shows Marines prefer talking to their friends when they need help. Checking in regularly with your fellow Marines boosts morale for both of you.

To learn more about these tips and other ways to mitigate stress, talk to your local **Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR)** Team Members who have been specially trained to know how to best support their fellow Marines.