

**ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY**

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**OBJECTIVES**

To successfully complete this module, you must study the text and master the following objectives:

- Be able to assess your predominant attitudes and/or thought patterns as they relate to safety.
  - Describe options to prevent thought patterns from affecting team performance.
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**THE NEED TO UNDERSTAND ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY**

Many Coast Guard operations do not go as planned. Their complexity and the ever-changing environment requires Coast Guard teams to be alert and to quickly respond to changes that can affect their mission. How effectively the team can respond to these situational demands often determine mission success and safety.

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**INFORMATION PROCESSING**

Our effectiveness in processing information (i.e. making sense out of it) and taking action is affected by our ability to adapt and be flexible under different levels of stress. By effectively processing information we can:

1. Better understand the present situation.
2. Quickly recognize changes in the situation that will affect the team.

AND

3. Trap errors to minimize decision based on bad information.

To effectively process information we must become more aware of how we respond to stimuli and how we often filter information or subconsciously choose not to act. Figure 4-1 shows the different levels that information must pass through to be transformed into action by a person.

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## STIMULUS THRESHOLDS

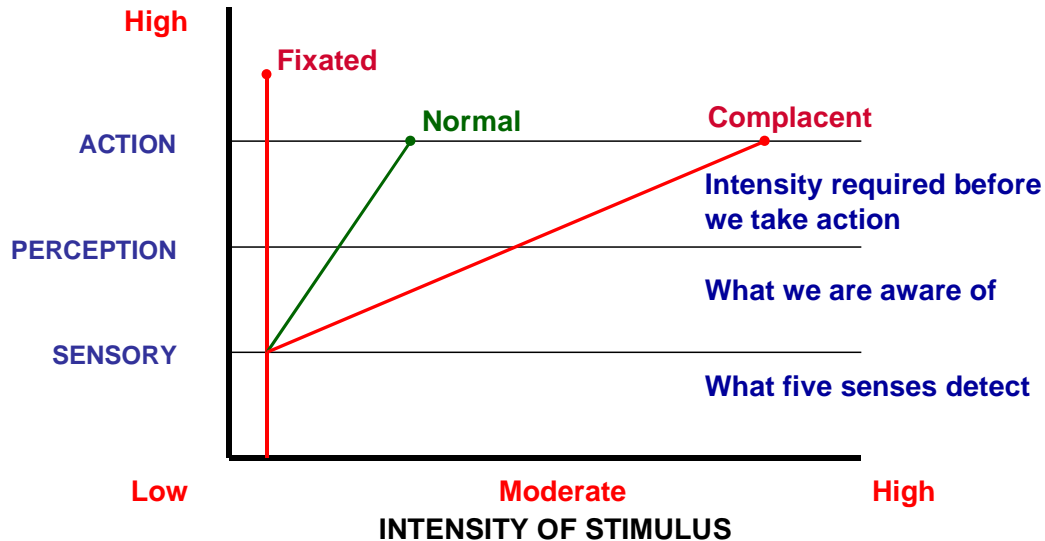


Figure 4-1

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### Sensory Threshold: Detection

The nervous system (our 5 senses) is designed to detect stimulus. To detect the stimulus the intensity must be high enough to break through a minimum level (threshold).

**Example:** Someone has to speak loud enough to be heard; light must be bright enough to be seen.

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### Perceptual Threshold: Awareness

How much information can we perceive or be aware of at one time? We are not conscious of all the things going on around us. A great deal of information is not important enough to get to the perceptual level. To reach the perceptual level information needs to be considered important or the stimulus intensity needs to be higher.

**Example:** Hearing is not listening for meaning; seeing a traffic "red" light may not be recognizing it as a warning.

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**Action  
Threshold:  
Assessment**

Just because we are aware, do we take action? It depends. Often we want a higher level of stimulus, or more information, before we act.

**Example:** Have you ever had a fire alarm go off and you did not leave the building? You probably looked for additional information to confirm that a fire existed.

**STRESS**

Stress is the effect that a stimulus has on the body. Stress is anything that thrills us, worries us, prods us, scares us, or threatens us. In doing our operational tasks, we routinely deal with stress and have learned to use it to our advantage. Stress can improve performance, but it can just as easily degrade it. In understanding the relationship between stress and performance, it is important to first consider the effects of stress on the body.

**Physical Affects  
of Stress**

When an individual experiences a stressful event, a natural physical response occurs, preparing the body to cope with the event. There are three stages associated with this response: Alarm, Resistance, and Exhaustion. These three stages are shown in Figure 4-2

**GENERAL ADAPTATION SYNDROME**

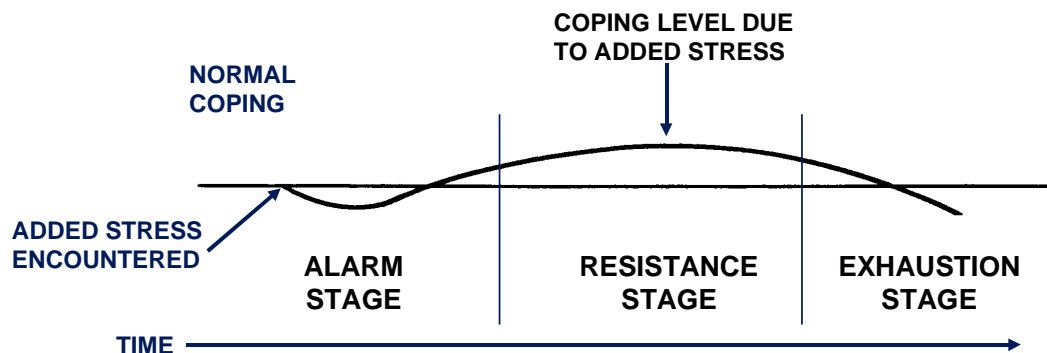


Figure 4-2

**Alarm Stage:  
Fight-or-Flight**

When a stressful event is first encountered, the body is not prepared to handle it and our ability to cope with stress is reduced. Very quickly we produce hormones that help us cope with the added stress and our ability to cope increases greatly. Body functions change to help us conserve energy to fight the stress. The Alarm Stage allows us to cope on a temporary basis; as long as the body can produce hormones to deal with the stress. Symptoms of this stage include headaches, fatigue, sore muscles, rapid heart rate, shortness of breath, and loss of energy.

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**Resistance  
Stage:  
Adaptation, But  
At A Cost**

As the body fights the original source of the stress, the symptoms gradually disappear. The Resistance Stage begins. The body pays a price for this outwardly normal appearance. We adapt to the higher level of stress, but our ability to cope with other stressors is diminished. Eventually our ability to cope with stress begins to fade and we move to the next stage.

**Example:** An individual who is placed in a very cold environment becomes resistant to the cold, but more susceptible to infection.

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**Exhaustion  
Stage:  
Health Depleted**

This occurs when the body's resources (stress hormones) are depleted. Unless a way is found to alleviate stress, serious loss of health or complete collapse occurs.

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**AROUSAL**

Arousal is the alertness of an individual, and directly affects the way we process information.

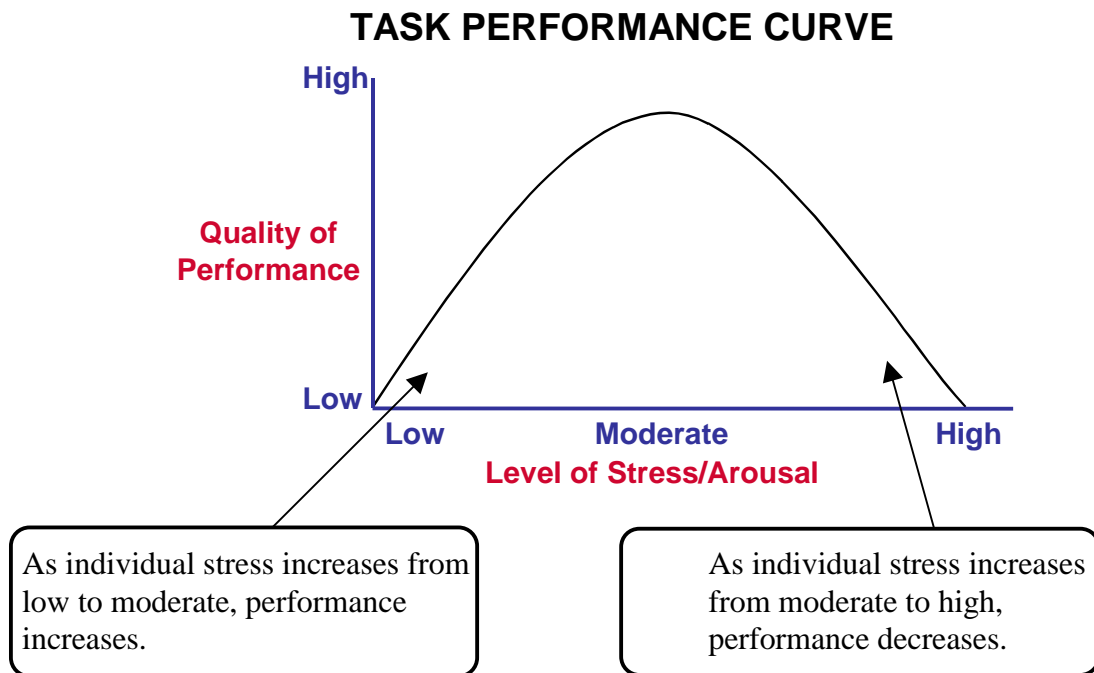
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**STRESS  
versus  
PERFORMANCE**

Arousal of the nervous system is a consequence of stress. Stress has two affects on us:

- Energizing → Increases Performance
- Interfering → Detracts from Performance

Each person has his or her own optimal level of stress that dictates his or her peak performance as shown in figure 4-2.



We each have our own curve defining what is low, moderate and high. Experience, level of proficiency and training all play an important part in this. What is low for one person may be high for another.

**Too Little  
Stress**

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This can occur when the mission requires *infrequent activities*. Individuals and teams may:

- **Become bored or complacent.** Team members become inattentive or less aware of the information around them. *Low workload can degrade performance in 20-30 minutes.*
  - **Fail to take action.** They react rather than anticipate the need for action
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**Too Much  
Stress**

Very high stress greatly affects the performance of individuals and teams.

- **Attention or focus narrows** and tunnel vision occurs. Ability to infer what is happening around him/her is diminished causing a reduction of situational awareness.
  - **Doesn't remain open to discussion** of alternatives to control the situation. Often implements one of the first alternatives considered.
  - **Relies on past experiences** and knowledge for a solution. Will apply an alternative that closely resembles a solution found for a similar problem in the past. The superficial search for alternatives may result in the best alternative being overlooked.
  - **Fails to see things** that individuals under less stress would see.
  - **Becomes hypervigilant.** Hypervigilance, which is a form of panic, may occur during emergencies when a lot of conflicting information is being received. It diffuses attention and limits concentration. Hypervigilant individuals also become more compulsive.
  - **The group becomes susceptible to group think.** This is when the team shifts its goal from solving problems to achieving consensus in its decisions
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**Optimal Stress**

The operational tempo is such that team members are engaged in activities over which they have control. The workload provides time to plan. Individuals are:

- **Monitoring the situation.**
  - **Anticipating** potential problems, and developing contingency plans. We are *vigilant!*
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**STRESS AND PERFORMANCE**

Operational teams under stress show behavior that affects overall performance. The effective and ineffective behaviors described below will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

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**Ineffective Teams**

- Have increased error frequency.
  - Communicate poorly among team members.
  - Share less information among team members.
  - Become more reliant on a leader to pull them through the situation. They see themselves as unimportant players in the leader's decision-making process.
  - Group think takes over; cooperation falls apart. The total decisions of the team, if any, are not as good as a decision by the most competent person in the group if he/she acted alone.
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**Effective Teams**

- Adapt to changing conditions.
  - Coordinate their actions as one. Team members anticipate other member's needs to minimize requests for information. Expectations are shared.
  - Optimize team resources. They routinely check for errors, double checking each other. They compensate for changes in workload and capabilities, ensuring balance is maintained within the team.
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**VIGILANCE**

It is the mental processes that take place in the absence of stimulus (i.e. *alert when nothing is happening*, maintaining a “proper lookout”. Optimal Stress provides the greatest opportunity to be vigilant.

**STRESS vs. TASKING**

In understanding this relationship better, Figure 4-3 shows the level of stress and performance as it relates to task complexity.

- *Simple* tasks are performed better under *higher* stress.
- *Complex* tasks are performed better under *lower* stress.

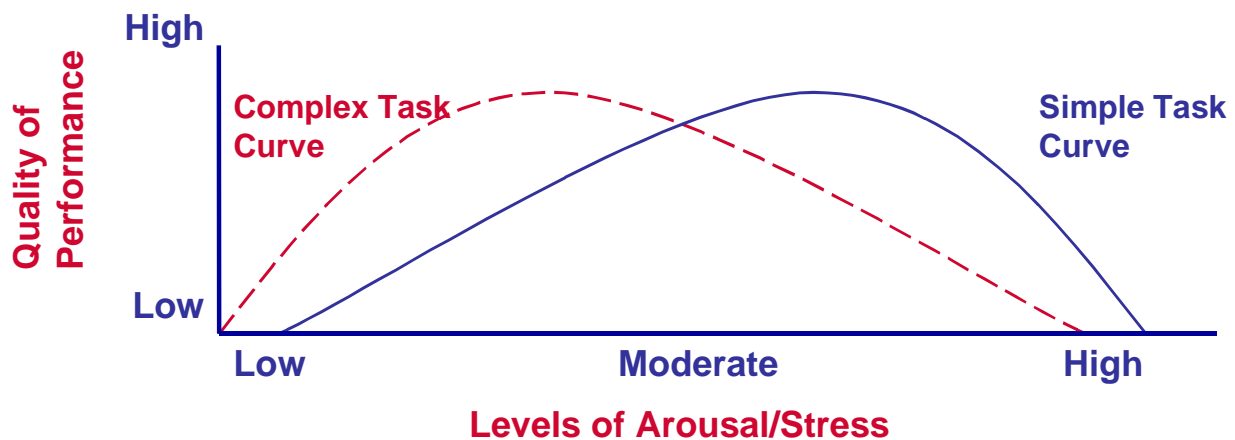
**TASK CURVES**

Figure 4-4

**Example:** To ensure safe night time operations you need to keep the team’s stress level lower than during daytime operations to achieve the same safe level of performance.



**TASK LOAD  
versus  
PERFORMANCE**

The work performed by individuals can be mentally and/or physically fatiguing. How much work an individual can safely perform is a function of the task, the environment, and the skill, habits and attitude of the individual. There are four levels of work loading.

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**Underload;  
Marginal Safe  
Performance**

Infrequent activities can quickly lead to boredom, complacency, and poor information processing. Procedures may be shortcut. Within 20-30 minutes performance has decreased. Individuals are caught by situational changes and must react. *Vigilance is lost.*

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**Moderate  
Workload;  
Optimal Safe  
Performance**

During periods of low task demands, team members are inclined to perform tasks ahead of schedule. They monitor their situation, anticipate potential problems, and develop contingency plans. This elevates current workload to reduce their workload later. They are proactive and *most vigilant.*

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**High Workload;  
Marginal Safe  
Performance**

Most people can do no more than 4 thought-provoking tasks at one time. When the operational tempo is high or unplanned events occur, team members tend to respond to each task demand in turn as it occurs. The team may fall behind schedule. Planning, monitoring, prioritizing tasks, and anticipating requires added commitment.

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**Overload;  
High Potential  
For Loss**

As task demands continue to increase, team members defer less critical tasks, off-load tasks to others, or decide not to perform a task at all. Fixation may also occur. The overall performance and safety of the mission depends on which tasks are accomplished and in what priority.

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**FATIGUE**

Fatigue is defined as the state of feeling tired, weary, or sleepy that results from prolonged mental or physical work, extended periods of anxiety, exposure to harsh environments, or loss of sleep. Boring or monotonous tasks will increase feelings of fatigue. Generally, fatigue interrupts attention and causes slow and inaccurate performance. *Fatigue affects individual vigilance and performance.* Fatigue induced human error, inattentiveness, and failures of cognitive reasoning cause 80% of all transportation accidents. Unfortunately, our 24-hour society is habitually sleep deprived. Eight (8) hours of sleep is normally required to avoid creating a sleep debt, but few of us ever obtain this amount.

## ***FATIGUE: Causes and Consequences***

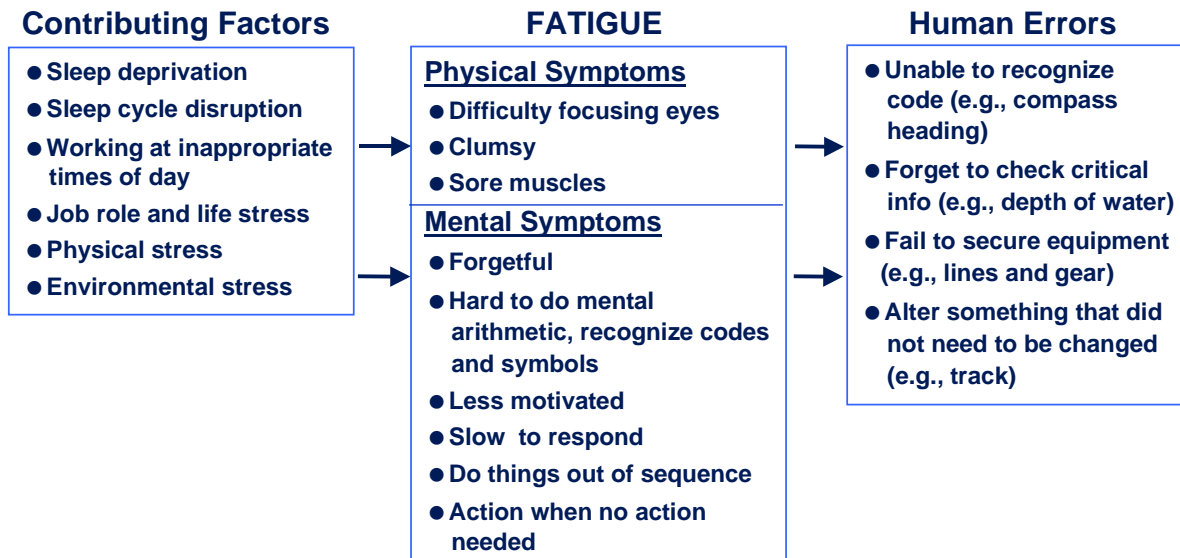


Figure 4-5

**Affects On The Body**

Fatigue slows several mental processes, including:

- Visual perception (e.g., maintaining a proper lookout)
  - Decision-making and memory tasks (e.g., applying Rules of the Road)
  - Mental arithmetic (e.g., shipping and navigation solutions)
  - Reaction times slow for both simple and complex tasks.
  - Alertness is difficult to sustain. *Between 0300 and 0700 we are biologically at our lowest level of alertness.* Tasks performed during this period have a higher probability for error.
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**Impairment Is Undetected.**

*Fatigued individuals are at high risk* because they are unable to determine how badly affected they are or when they started being affected by fatigue.

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**Potential Outcomes Caused By Fatigue**

Substandard performance by fatigued team members can include:

- Errors of omission. Many fatigued people forget to do something.
  - Slower task performance or lower productivity.
  - Decreased morale and motivation. Fatigued individuals often become moody.
  - Poor communications. They talk less.
  - Sleeping on duty. This can also take the form of microsleep. Sleeping with the eyes open. Stimulus still is perceived, but reaction time is greatly slowed.
  - Difficulty concentrating and thinking clearly.
  - Inattention to minor, but potentially important, details.
  - Complaints of headaches and stomachaches.
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**Control of Fatigue**

Several strategies are available to temporarily reduce the effects of fatigue on job performance. However, there is no substitute for adequate sleep, rest, and time off. For short-term solutions, individuals can:

- Work at a moderate pace on physically demanding tasks.
- Take periodic rest breaks to permit physiological and/or mental recovery.
- Engage in diverting physical activities (e.g., working alternately between heavy and light duty tasks).
- Maintain high standards of physical fitness.
- Ensure you are adequately rested before the work shift.
- Adjust the complexity of duties and make changes in assignments to prevent boredom.
- Eat nutritional food before, after, and/or during work.

**Prediction of Fatigue**

Individuals can frequently predict the development of fatigue by anticipating the level of stress (both physical and mental) likely to result from planned activities. Predicting levels of stress and fatigue may allow implementation of controls before the risk becomes unacceptable.

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**SLEEP-WAKE CYCLE;  
Maintaining Alertness**

Our sleep-wake cycle is regulated by a 24± hour biological clock. This clock is day oriented and controls specific patterns of hormones, alertness, and core body temperature. The word *circadian* (Latin: circa = about; dies = day) is used to describe biological and behavioral rhythms regulated by the body clock. This internal clock is reset daily by sunlight striking the retina in our eyes. (Our clock cannot be reset by most types of artificial light.) This clock times our potential for alertness, performance, hormonal secretions, and body temperature. Sleep and our biological rhythm shown in Figure 4-6, help us sustain a 16-hour level of alertness that permits us to be productive, social, thinking animals. Sleep is the very important starting energy for our alertness.

**TIME OF DAY vs. ALERTNESS**

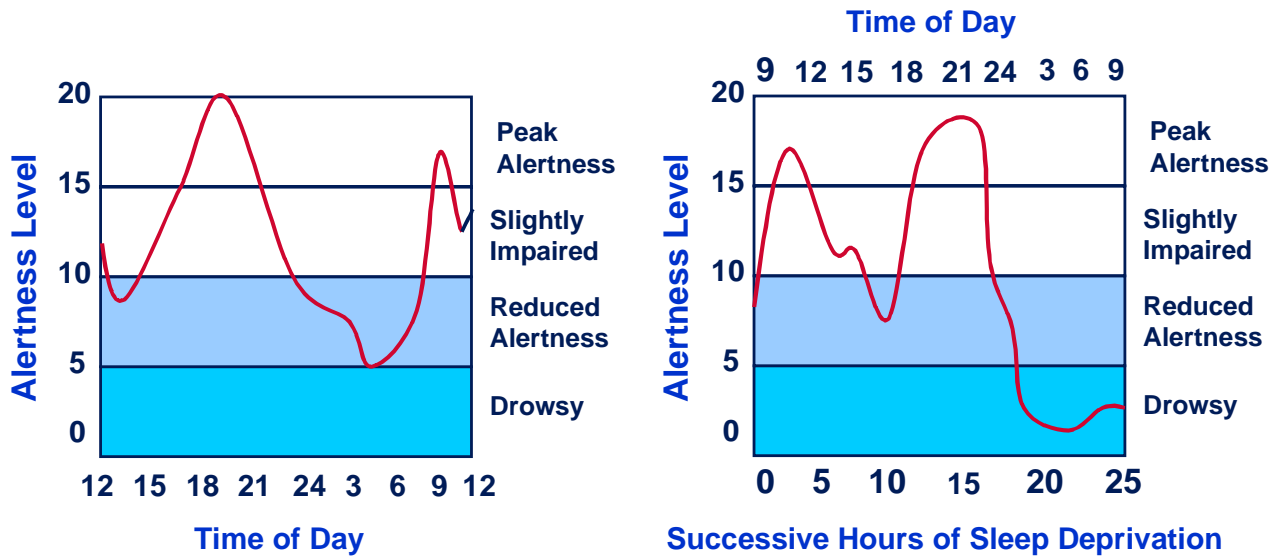


Figure 4-6

**FIGHTING  
FATIGUE**

It is often difficult because our biological needs and work environment, especially when underway, tend to induce a sleep deficit and encourage sleep. Countermeasures for fatigue include:

- Get adequate sleep.
  - Lifestyle and well-being.
  - Strategic use of caffeine.
  - Operational strategies.
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**Get Adequate Sleep**

Several strategies are available to temporarily reduce the effects of fatigue on job performance. However, there is no substitute for adequate sleep and rest. Consider the following techniques to enhance the quality of your sleep:

- Develop good sleep habits. Try to sleep at the same time every day, including weekends. If possible, go to bed at the same time and get up at the same time each day.
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**Get Adequate Sleep  
(Cont.)**

- When trying to sleep outside the usual sleep period (e.g., during the day), prepare as if it is the normal sleep period. Wear normal sleep clothes, darken the room as much as possible, keep noise to a minimum, and use a white-noise generator, such as a fan, if possible.
  - Alcohol should never be used as a sleep aid. Although sleep onset may come more quickly, it is more disrupted and less restful after the first 1 to 2 hours of sleep.
  - If you cannot sleep within 30 minutes, get up and do something else.
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**Lifestyle and Well-being**

- Exercise regularly.
  - Eat a well balanced diet and stay hydrated.
  - Trust your body and nap when possible.
  - Learn to relax and do not take work or problems to bed.
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**Strategic use of Caffeine**

- Avoid eating or drinking substances that contain caffeine (coffee, tea, and chocolate) 4 to 5 hours before bedtime.
  - Use for acute increase in alertness. Avoid heavy use because you will build up a tolerance for its effects. Use in small doses immediately prior to the performance period.
  - Caffeine is a diuretic, so stay hydrated.
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**Operational Strategies**

- Schedule work to coincide with peak alertness.
  - Coordinate critical operations with most rested people.
  - Schedule rest breaks to provide relief for long periods of continuous work and extreme environmental stressors.
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**Biological Factors**

Biological factors that affect sleepiness include:

- **Time of work** with regard to our biological clock (e.g., circadian rhythms).
- **Cumulative sleep loss**, which can include long (over 18) waking hours and lack of sleep over several days.
- **Quality of last sleep**, which is a function of both duration and timing in the sleep-wake cycle. Sleeping when the body wants to be alert reduces the benefit of sleeping.
- **Use of alcohol and drugs.** Alertness studies have clearly documented the effects of caffeine in improving alertness and of alcohol in decreasing alertness. Sleeping pills, while increasing the duration of sleep, may result in deteriorated alertness the subsequent day.
- **Medical conditions.** Certain medical conditions can affect both the quality and duration of sleep. Some medical conditions cause the individual to feel sleepy even after a lengthy sleep period.

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**Other Factors Affecting Sleepiness**

Factors that increase sleepiness include:

- Limited exposure to sunlight.
  - Background “white” noise and vibration.
  - Warm environment.
  - Lack of interaction with other team members.
  - Watch schedules.
-



**ALTERNATE  
WATCH STANDING  
SCHEDULES**

Standing watches influences the amount of sleep acquired and the number of opportunities needed to obtain that sleep. Therefore, teams should be aware of the potential benefits for alternate watch scheduling. To facilitate the possibilities of alternate watch scheduling, team members should be better educated on the need for recovery sleep. Recovery sleep is quality rest between work cycles during traditional (night sleep) and non-traditional (afternoon naps) rest periods. For example, 24 hours recovery between night work periods helps keep the human circadian rhythm aligned with the day-night cycle. This helps prevent the general feeling of malaise and other jet-lag like symptoms, including an increased risk of errors, experienced by watchstanders. Encouraging mid-afternoon naps for night workers instead of late sleeping is also a good strategy to help maintain a constant day-night cycle.

Factors to consider in examining alternate watch schedules include:

1. Minimize the exposure to night work between 24-hour rest periods;
2. Start each sequence of watch periods at noon, when team members are relatively rested;
3. End each sequence at midnight, allowing adequate recovery sleep to be acquired at night; and
4. Maximize the balance between the number of people available and time spent off from watchstanding.

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An example of an alternate to the traditional 1 in 4 schedule is shown on the following page. It is important to note that this alternative ***does not represent official Coast Guard policy***. However, it does help to illustrate the factors discussed above.

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**4-PERSON, 4-HOUR 3:1 ROTATION  
An Alternative to the 1 in 4 Schedule**

Sequence of Watch Periods	Suggested Sleep Period
12-16:00	Evening nap
00-04:00	Late sleep
16-20:00	Early sleep
04-08:00	Afternoon nap
20-00:00	Night sleep
08-12:00	Night sleep
24 h off	Night sleep

**MONITORING  
PERFORMANCE**

Monitoring performance of others is the responsibility of all team members. Team members may look well and appear to be fully conscious, when they may not be aware of, or capable of rationally evaluating a problem. Recognizing this condition is difficult because we commonly assume that affected individuals have a purpose for everything they do, even if they do nothing.

Early recognition of individual performance problems is essential for the conduct of vessel operations. The best way to identify a problem is to look for deviations from normal behavior or standard performance.

**MONITORING  
PERFORMANCE  
(Cont.)**

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Some symptoms to look for include:

- Deviations from established procedures.
- Low standards for the required tasks.
- Lack of discipline, greater tolerance for error.
- No monitoring or cross-checking.
- No response to inquiries by others.
- Frequent minor errors by team members.
- Extreme tiredness.
- Unusual irritability.
- Obvious physical problems.
- Increased lapses of attention.
- Overall reduction in performance.

**CREW  
ENDURANCE  
PLANNING**

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Fatigue countermeasures focus on alleviating the negative effects of fatigue. Crew Endurance Planning is a leadership technique for planning and coordinating work activities to ensure that personnel get adequate rest and prevents fatigue from becoming a safety issue. It is a “systems approach” to fatigue prevention based on mission requirements.

Mission demands directly determine personnel schedules, etc., and are frequently impossible to control. However, once mission requirements have been determined, leaders are often able to implement specific strategies to reduce fatigue at the following three levels:

- Individual Level.
  - Unit Level.
  - Material Level.
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**INDIVIDUAL  
LEVEL**

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This level includes plans and strategies for fatigue management and quality sleep enhancement that are created by leaders and implemented by individuals. Strategies and plans developed at this level include:

- Managing Sleep Periods.
  - Managing Exposure to Light.
  - Managing the Environment.
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**Managing Sleep  
Periods**

Sleep management should include development of a Sleep Management Plan designed to allow a continuous sleep period of up to 8 hours. After considering mission requirements, activities and schedules should be arranged in a manner that supports the Sleep Management Plan. In addition, personnel should be encouraged to get adequate rest when not on duty.

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**Managing  
Exposure to  
Light**

The Light Management Plan provides specific instructions regarding when to avoid or seek exposure to daylight. This is particularly important for individuals engaged in shift work. Strategies that can be implemented at this level include:

- Sleep must always take place in darkness. Individuals standing watch or on shifts should be encouraged to wear sleep masks while sleeping.
  - Blacking out windows to exclude light and using sleep masks should be used whenever possible.
  - Individuals shifting to day-oriented works schedules should seek as much daylight exposure as possible
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**Managing the environment**

Noise and daylight intrusion into sleeping quarters must be controlled as much as possible.

- Reduce disruptive environmental noise during the sleep period by using good sound masking. Good sources of masking sound are fans, generators, or commercially available devices that produce a rushing sound.
  - Use sleep masks during the day if sleeping quarters cannot be blacked out.
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**UNIT LEVEL**

Strategies developed at the unit level include coordination of scheduled activities that involve individuals and teams. These elements must be scheduled after considering the individual level schedules (e.g., meal schedules should be developed after the sleep management plan is completed). Elements are:

- Briefing schedules.
  - Meal schedules.
  - Training schedules.
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**Briefing Schedules**

Schedule briefings to occur outside of the designated sleep period.

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**Meal Schedules**

Meals should be provided so that scheduled sleep periods are not disturbed and should be shifted to match the sleep/wake cycle. That is, the first meal upon awakening should be breakfast, regardless of when that meal occurs.

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**Training Schedules**

Training schedules can disrupt a well-planned crew endurance strategy. Allowances can be made to allow night operations personnel to participate in training activities outside the designated sleep period.

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**MATERIAL  
LEVEL**

Strategies developed at this level involve work schedules and activities associated with the equipment used to accomplish mission objectives. In the Coast Guard vessel community, elements at the material level are primarily concerned with the operation and maintenance of vessels and associated equipment. Material level elements include activities such as:

- Maintenance.
  - Operational Considerations.
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**Maintenance**

- Coordinate an effective maintenance network to provide support for individuals and teams who must retire before mandatory maintenance has been completed in order to comply with crew endurance guidelines.
  - Schedule critical maintenance activities during daylight when personnel are alert and less error prone.
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**Operational  
Considerations**

The Coast Guard mission demands 24-hour operations. To the greatest extent possible, schedule *routine* operational activities outside designated sleep periods.

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**DESIGNING  
THE CREW  
ENDURANCE  
PLAN**

Sleep management implies the identification of bedtimes and wake-up times that are likely to provide sufficient rest and return personnel to duty with maximum alertness.

**Leader Strategy:** Formulating the Crew Endurance Plan requires an understanding of mission objectives and schedules supporting the accomplishment of each objective. Other critical unit activities must also be identified, such as maintenance schedules, watch schedules, training schedules, etc. Then taking into account all elements of the process, a sleep and daylight exposure management plan can be designed.

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**OTHER  
FACTORS  
AFFECTING  
INDIVIDUAL  
PERFORMANCE**

Why some individuals adapt to changing situations more effectively than others involves many different factors. Some of these factors are:

- Evaluation.
  - Distraction.
  - Self-Awareness.
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**Evaluation**

Knowing that your performance might be evaluated by others increases your motivation to do well. Likewise the fear of criticism of failure can interfere with performance. For simple tasks, evaluation normally facilitates performance. For complex tasks, it can lead to impaired performance.

**Leader Strategy:** Emphasize the positive and encourage individuals to describe what lessons they learned from their performance.

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**Distraction**

Having non-team members present is a distraction. The distraction could cause information to be missed that may lead to an error. Individual team members may react by narrowing their attention to a smaller range of task inputs. For tasks that have few relevant inputs, the narrowing can improve performance. In tasks with many relevant inputs, narrowing impairs performance.

**Leader Strategy:** Control distractions generated from outside the team or outside standard procedures. If need be, isolate essential tasks from unplanned/unwanted distractions (e.g. confine conversation on the bridge during critical evolutions to matters relating to the task at hand).

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**Self-Awareness**

Focusing too much attention on your performance interferes with the smooth execution of complicated, well-learned, or highly skilled tasks.

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**Self-Awareness  
(Cont.)**

When people believed that others expected superior performance on a complex task, their performance was often poorer than when they perceived that others were indifferent or expected just satisfactory task completion.

**Leader Strategy:** Allow for human error and intervene when safety dictates. Discuss expected performance based on equivalent grades, knowledge, skill, and ability.

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**OTHER  
FACTORS  
AFFECTING  
TEAM  
PERFORMANCE**

Three factors have been identified that affect performance of the team. These factors are:

- Size.
  - Structure.
  - Cohesion.
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**Size**

As team size increases, coordination among members becomes more difficult. Increasing the number of member interactions increases the opportunity for communications errors and may slow the tempo of the team functions.

**Leader Strategy:** Ensure changes made to a team's size are clearly understood by all team members. Changes in how each member contributes to the mission should be understood by all members. How each member of the team interacts with other members should be defined.

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**Structure**

Reluctance to question superiors or assume a leadership role is caused by rank structure barriers. Likewise, perceived roles or status of interdependent teams can determine how well they work together (e.g. the relationship between primary and secondary navigation teams).

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**Structure  
(Cont.)**

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**Leader Strategy:** Advocate assertive communications beginning in the planning stage. Ensure everyone understands that they are a stakeholder in the success of the mission, that it is desirable behavior to express concern, and how to do it. Provide positive feedback when subordinates are assertive.

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**Cohesion**

Teams that effectively coordinate their internal tasks tend to have members who are motivated to interact in a positive way and are not inhibited to communicate. They consistently trap errors and aid in decision-making.

Team cohesion is a building process requiring time and practice. Personnel actions (e.g. transfers, TAD, leave) routinely disrupt the cohesiveness of a team. Established teams that are missing members can often adapt to a vacancy faster than integrating a new member into the team.

**Leader Strategy:** Plan personnel actions to minimize changes to a team immediately before and during mission execution. Actions that address the other factors affecting individual and team performance will enhance team cohesion.

**HAZARDOUS  
THOUGHT  
PATTERNS**

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There are five attitudes, or hazardous thought patterns, that affect our judgment in high stress situations and during the decision-making process. These attitudes also have a profound affect on our ability to adapt to changing situations. While some of these may sound similar, they are distinctly different. The way to tell which hazardous thought pattern is in operation is by looking at the rationale a person uses for his/her action.

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**HAZARDOUS  
THOUGHT  
PATTERNS  
(Cont.)**

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Each of the five hazardous thought patterns is listed with its rationale and an initial strategy to modify the pattern. The five hazardous thought patterns are:

- Anti-Authority.
- Impulsiveness.
- Invulnerability.
- Macho.
- Resignation.

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**Anti-Authority****Thought Pattern: *"No one tells me what to do."***

This is the thought pattern of people who resent being told what to do, either by other people or through rules and regulations. Their behavior is often contrary to their own better judgment because they do what they want, not what someone else wants. The objective of the Anti-Authority individual is to do the opposite of what someone in authority wants or what the rules and regulations say.

**Leader Strategy: *"Follow the rules.  
They are the best we have for now."***

Team members must be held accountable for adherence to established rules and procedures. Only the leader has limited authority to modify procedures. It is important that standards be applied "across the board" to everyone.

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**Impulsiveness****Thought Pattern: *"Do something quickly, anything."***

This is the thought pattern of people who frequently feel the need to do something, anything, immediately. They do not stop to think before they act. They do the first thing that comes to mind. The objective of the impulsive person is to do something. It does not usually matter what, just as long as it is something.

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**Impulsiveness  
(Cont.)****Leader Strategy: *"Not so fast. Think first."***

Ensure that they stop and look at the situation and check the alternatives available to them.

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**Invulnerability****Thought Pattern: *"It won't happen to me."***

Many people feel that accidents happen only to others. This hazardous thought pattern does not result from an overestimation of a person's capabilities, but more a denial of the risks involved. They never really believe they will be the one involved. The objective of the Invulnerable person is to deny the risk, not because they think they are skilled, they just do not think that it will happen to them.

**Leader Strategy: *"Consider the possibility that It could happen to you."***

Have them review their personal experiences and they can be shown that they are not invulnerable. An effective safety training program can help show individuals that they are not invulnerable.

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**Macho****Thought Pattern: *"I can do it."***

People who are always trying to prove that they are better than anyone else think, "I can do it!" They prove themselves by taking risks and by trying to impress others. This is different than invulnerability because the person may overestimate their personal capabilities and those of their equipment. To prove themselves, they push outside the "envelope". The objective of the Macho person is to do things that prove to others that they are highly skilled and daring.

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**Macho (Cont.)****Team Strategy:** *"Safety first is smart."*

Maybe the person can do it, but why take unnecessary risks. Peer pressure and an effective safety training program are excellent ways to overcome this pattern. Regardless, every team member has the responsibility to prevent others from endangering themselves or equipment. Promote safety!

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**Resignation****Thought Pattern:** *"What's the use?"*

People who think, "What's the use", do not see themselves as making a great deal of difference in what happens to them. They leave the action to others - for better or worse. The objective of the person in Resignation is to deny responsibility. They feel others are responsible for their actions and in control of what they do.

**Leader Strategy:** *"You can make a difference."*

Counseling is appropriate. Like persons demonstrating Anti-authority, they must be aligned with the team and held accountable for compliance with standards.

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**PUTTING IT  
ALL  
TOGETHER**

Our ability to adapt to changing situations can often mean the difference between success and failure. Effective teams:

- Alter behavior to meet situational demands.
  - React to and comment on other's ideas in a positive manner.
  - Provide assistance to other team members as needed.
  - Alter tactical plans to meet evolving situational demands.
  - Do not allow personality conflicts to interfere with work.
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**SELF-QUIZ #3**

1. Match the three levels of stress in column A with their descriptions in column B.

Column A	Column B
_____ 1. Low	a. The operational tempo is such that team members are engaged in activities over which they have control. The workload provides time to plan.
_____ 2. Moderate	b. Team members become bored or complacent. They could become inattentive. They react rather than anticipate the need for action.
_____ 3. High	c. Attention of focus narrows. Team members don't remain open to discussion. They rely on past experiences, fail to see things. Becomes hypervigilant, and becomes susceptible to group think.

2. What is fatigue and how does it affect the body?

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3. List the five hazardous thought patterns.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

**SELF-QUIZ #3 (continued)**

4. List the leader strategy for each of the five hazardous thought patterns?
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_

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## ANSWERS TO SELF-QUIZ #3

Question	Answer	Reference
1	1. b	4-6
	2. a	4-7
	3. c	4-6
2.	Fatigue is defined as the state of feeling tired, weary, or sleepy that results from prolonged mental or physical work, extended periods of anxiety, exposure to harsh environments, or loss of sleep.	4-10
3.	a. Anti-Authority b. Impulsiveness c. Invulnerability d. Macho e. Resignation	4-25
4.	a. "Follow the rules. They are the best we have for now" b. "Not so fast. Think First". c. "Consider the possibility that it could happen to you". d. "Safety first is smart". e. "You can make a difference".	4-26 to 4-28



**Student Notes**

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