



Health & Wellness

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Balance means being healthy in *all* areas of your life — the physical, emotional, and spiritual parts. In this section, you will learn to consider all areas of your life and to decide which are the most important to create a balanced life.



Balance
does not mean
dedicating
equal time to
each person
or activity.

1.1.1 What is Balance?

Balance means living your life consistent with your values and your beliefs. Your neighbor might enjoy working on his bike alone in his garage for hours or an entire day on the weekends, while you might think it's boring to spend that much time alone on such a complicated hobby. You might find balance by ending your day with a family activity, while someone else might need an hour alone for some "unwind time." Balance means *determining your priorities* and spending time on the most important things. For some, spending time with children is more important than keeping the house spotlessly clean.

After returning from deployment, you may find it difficult to jump back in to "normal" life. To achieve balance, you may need to spend less time with family members and more time alone. Later on, maintaining balance may mean spending more time with family and less time alone. Balance changes along with major *and* minor life events. If your life feels a bit "off," it may be time to re-evaluate your balance.

Balance may involve doing more with your life. This could mean it's time to take up a hobby, spend more time with friends, or join a club. Balance can also mean cutting back. You may feel stretched too thin at times, with too many activities going on at once. In those times, it may be best to give up some of your less important responsibilities.

Balance doesn't operate on a standard equation. For example, spending an hour alone for every hour spent at work is not a reasonable goal. Balance doesn't mean dedicating equal amounts of time to each friend and family member. Balance means spending time in activities that suit *your* needs.

To achieve balance, you may need help from an expert. Many health care providers, behavioral health professionals, and chaplains are trained to identify imbalance and assist with restoring balance.

1.2 THE MIND

Your mind and how you go about processing daily activities is an important factor in balancing your life. In this section, you will learn helpful tips to simplify your life in the areas of time management, hobbies, and finances. You will also learn how to say “No” using assertive communication skills and practice positive self-talk and meditation.



1.2.1 Time Management

Finding time for new activities or staying in touch with old enjoyable activities can be difficult. It might seem nearly impossible to find time for yourself. You might wake up feeling tired and go to bed feeling the same way. While you can't add hours to your day, you can change *how* you spend your time.

Everyone has times in the day when they feel especially alert. Schedule the most challenging tasks during those alert times. Write down important appointments and meetings so you don't forget them. Schedule enjoyable activities as well and learn to protect that time. Research shows it takes about a month to establish a new habit and make it part of a daily routine. Regularly scheduling important—and enjoyable—activities will help them become healthy new habits in your balanced life.

1.2.2 Positive Self-Talk

Self-talk is the inner conversation that guides your daily activities. It is the voice that reminds you to stop at the post office or finish the project at work. Self-talk is normal and natural. Self-talk is often on “autopilot,” so you probably don't notice it very much.

Your self-talk also shapes the way you view the world and how you balance your life. **Positive self-talk** means intentionally giving yourself positive reinforcement, motivation, and recognition. For example, say, “I did a good job on that project even though I was given limited time to work on it,” rather than, “I should've done my work more thoroughly. I didn't live up to my potential on this project.”

Self-talk can have a profound impact on your self-image, self-esteem, and performance. Research indicates that a positive attitude can benefit many areas, including:

- Social relationships
- Recovery from surgery
- Reduced pain
- Healthy immune response in women with breast cancer
- Reduced stress
- Less depression
- Use of healthy coping
- Survival from lung cancer treatment
- Reduced suicidal thoughts
- Lower risk of cardiovascular death
- Healthy aging
- Satisfaction with life
- Healthy habits

LISTENING
TO YOUR
self-talk IS
CRUCIAL TO
UNDERSTANDING
YOUR
CORE BELIEFS.

1.2.3 Communication Types

Creating balance in life means protecting your personal time and energy, and sometimes this means saying “No” to certain things.

You may need to say “No” to new opportunities, responsibilities, or activities. Saying “No” can be tough, especially when saying “Yes” in the military often becomes an automatic response. But over time, setting life boundaries by saying “No” gets easier, while others will appreciate your honesty and directness. Don’t feel like you have to explain your “No.” When saying “No,” less is more!

Finding Balance Through Assertive Communication

There are three common types of communication:

1. **Passive** - Passive communication means sacrificing personal needs so other people will get their needs met. A person who communicates passively will go along to avoid conflict or to avoid displeasing others. People often take advantage of passive communicators, because they don’t stand up for themselves.
2. **Aggressive** - People who communicate aggressively make sure their needs are met without considering the needs of others. Aggressive communicators express their feelings and opinions without tact or respect. Aggressive people often view the actions and comments of others as personal attacks. In turn, they respond defensively. Aggression often stems from anger and results in conflict.
3. **Assertive** - Those who communicate assertively also share feelings and opinions openly, honestly, and directly. But assertive people maintain respect for others. The assertive communicator does not have a “people are out to get me” attitude. Instead, assertive communicators remain objective and keep the best interest of both parties as a priority.

Assertive communication lies between the extremes of **Passive** and **Aggressive** communication. The key ingredients to assertiveness are honesty and appropriateness. Some people may be honest about their feelings and opinions, but they express their feelings inappropriately. In order to communicate assertively, you must be honest and appropriate.

THE BENEFITS OF BEING ASSERTIVE

- Respects personal thoughts and feelings and the thoughts and feelings of others
- Causes people to respect your openness and honesty
- Fosters stronger personal and professional relationships

You can also be assertive using non-verbal communication, such as body language. Body language is a powerful form of communication. For example, crossing your arms tightly over your chest may give the impression that you’re shutting yourself off from the speaker’s message.

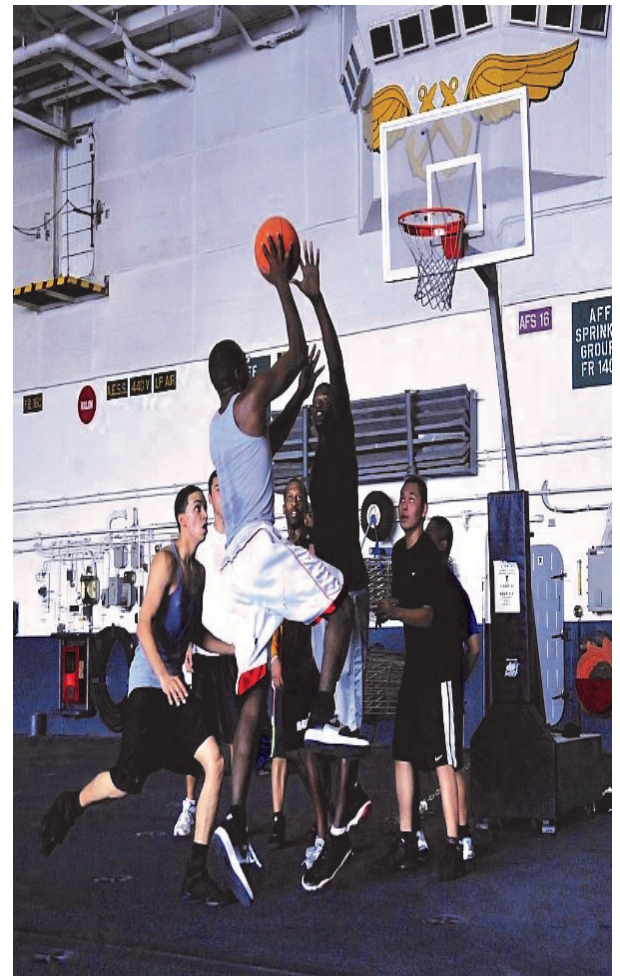
1.2.4 Hobbies

Hobbies create balance by providing:

- Outlets for creativity
- Methods to exercise the body and the mind
- Opportunities to explore new interests
- Chances to reconnect with something we once loved to do
- Breaks from stress
- Ways to meet new people
- Time alone
- Increased self-esteem

Can't think of a hobby? Answer these questions:

- What activities did you enjoy as a child?
- What activity have you always wanted to try?
- Do you like to be physically active?
- Do you like to be challenged in thought?
- What kinds of books/ magazines do you like?
- Do you like to spend time indoors or outdoors?
- Are you a social person?
- Do you prefer to spend time alone?
- Do you like animals?
- Do you like art?
- If you already have a hobby, do you need to try something new?
- If you like to read, could you try a new genre (a new category of reading material)?
- If you enjoy sports, might you enjoy playing in a league?
- If you like cooking, have you tried a cooking class?



In one survey, 62% of all DoD active duty personnel said they use a hobby to cope with stress.

1.2.5 Meditation and Mindfulness

Meditation and **mindfulness** are not new concepts. Meditation is a state of resting while remaining awake and alert. Your body has an instinctive ability to meditate.



You don't have to be religious or spiritual to practice mindfulness. Research shows meditation and mindfulness have a positive impact on health including:

- Treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms
- Improved mental health
- Enhanced pain tolerance
- Reduction in depressive symptoms
- Reduction in stress

Meditation comes in a variety of forms. You can practice meditating by counting to ten while you practice deep breathing. Breathe in deeply, then count off each time you exhale. This will help you focus your thoughts and rid yourself of distractions. By focusing and living in the present moment, those who practice meditation begin to see life more clearly.

Mindfulness is an activity that can be done anytime. You focus on what is happening in the moment, while paying attention to your self-talk. It's possible to be mindful of the sensations in your feet while walking, of the sound of the wind in the trees, or the feeling of soapy water while doing dishes. Pay attention to your self-talk: "I wish I didn't have to walk any further, I like the sound of the leaves rustling, I wish washing dishes didn't dry out my skin," and so forth. Once you notice your self-talk, you can remove any judging thoughts that are a part of it. For example, "washing dishes: boring" may become "washing dishes: washing dishes."

Two things to remember:

- Any activity done mindfully is a form of meditation.
- Mindfulness can be done anytime.

Try practicing meditation or mindfulness for a few minutes each day. Pick a quiet place. It's usually necessary to practice for a few weeks before feeling the benefits.

Meditation
and **mindfulness**
are techniques in
which a person
becomes
intentionally aware
of their present
thoughts and actions.

1.2.6 Simplify Life

Simplifying your daily routines can be rewarding and can enhance balance. A few suggestions:

- Give up the activities that are not rewarding or useful.

OR

- Get back to basics. Many time-saving gadgets actually use more time and energy. For example, cell phones and Blackberries® are a great way to communicate. But they can also be a distraction that wastes time and interrupts face-to-face conversations.



1.2.7 Finances

When they return from deployment, service members must look over their finances. If you're concerned about your finances, try writing down all your expenses. Write down everything—every coffee, lunch, magazine, and article of clothing you bought. Tracking expenses helps you see how much money you're spending. Then you can decide whether you need to reduce your spending. Reducing needless spending can balance your budget, reduce debt, free up money for a "rainy day," and remove a major source of stress.

1.2.8 Journaling/Drawing

Sometimes it's difficult to talk about the things you saw and heard while deployed. Writing down your personal experiences can help you heal. People who can put their feelings into words tend to reduce the intensity of those emotions (anger, fear, and so forth). Many find writing quiets their emotions and helps them to better identify their feelings. Some people have a hard time putting those feelings into words. You may find drawing pictures about experiences or using words and pictures in a collage works better than writing.

1.2.9 Pets

Pets often sense emotions and provide comfort and companionship. Research shows owning a pet can reduce your heart rate and blood pressure.



1.2.10 Get Organized

If your living space or workspace is cluttered, your life may feel cluttered. Getting organized or creating a filing system can save hours of frustration. It may help to organize a little at a time. Once you get everything organized, keep it organized!

1.2.11 Roles

Your life may be filled by many roles. What roles on this list apply to you?

- Parent
- Aunt/ Uncle
- Mentor
- Cub Scout Leader
- Children’s Chauffeur
- Student
- Military Member
- Spouse
- Teacher
- Co-worker
- Supervisor
- Athlete
- Friend



Spend more time on a few of your important roles—the roles that bring the most joy and pleasure. Then think about spending less time on the roles that are the most draining. For example, parenting is likely a demanding yet rewarding job. Moms and dads spend much of their time away from work in their parenting role. But being a good parent doesn’t mean spending a lot of time as your child’s “chauffeur!”

Reconnecting may take time and effort, but it’s important to re-establish or energize your relationships.

1.2.12 Reconnecting Relationships

After returning from deployment, service members need to reconnect with important people in their lives. Create a list of the most supportive people in your life, such as family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. You’ll need their support as you reconnect your relationships.



Connections can be established in many ways. Connect with family and friends by talking about their lives—their thoughts, feelings, hopes, and fears. Don’t just talk about day-to-day activities. Like you, your friends and family are constantly growing and changing. Your personal connections get deeper when you take time to get to know and be known by others. You can also reconnect with nature. Many people find that walking or hiking helps them feel refreshed or restored. If it’s difficult to visit a park, walk around your neighborhood. Focus on the nature around you—the trees swaying, the birds singing, the flowers blooming. It’s easy to miss these small opportunities for pleasure in the hustle and bustle of everyday life.





1.2.13 Career

A fulfilling work life can contribute to a balanced life. Some people do not enjoy their work. To find fulfilling work, some people consider a career change. If this is not an option for you, then think about how to make your current job more fulfilling. Here are some suggestions:

- Focus on the enjoyable aspects of the job.

For example, Ted may not love his job, but he has great co-workers and flexibility to adjust his schedule as needed. It would be helpful for Ted to concentrate on these positive aspects of his job.

- Think about ways to improve the job. Ask yourself these questions:
 - Does my job have too much (or too little) responsibility?
 - Is my job boring?
 - Can my job involve more creativity?
- Schedule time to share your concerns with your supervisor.

1.2.14 Volunteer

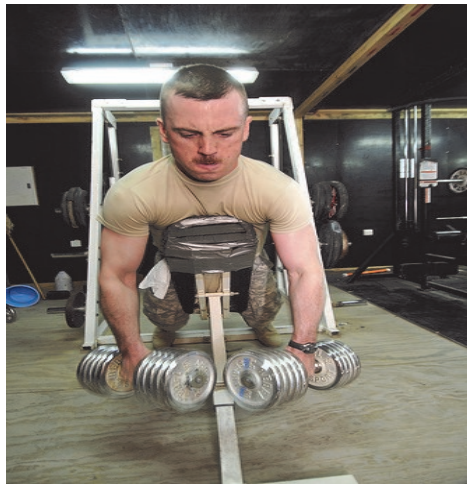
Sharing your time with others will leave you with a great sense of pride and accomplishment. There are many ways to volunteer. Volunteering can be combined with physical fitness including walkathons, or serving as a youth activity instructor or hiking guide.

Visit www.volunteermatch.org for local volunteer opportunities.



1.2.15 Mind Resources

- Behavioral health professionals (psychologists, social workers, counselors)
- Chaplains
- Counseling centers
- Local library
- Books:
 - Andrews, Cecile. *Circle of Simplicity: Return to the Good Life*. New York: Harper Collins, 1997.
 - Brooks, Robert and Sam Goldstein. *The Power of Resilience: Achieving Balance, Confidence, and Personal Strength in Your Life*. Chicago: Contemporary Books, 2003.
 - Byers, Mary. *How to Say No—And Live to Tell About It*. Eugene, Or.: Harvest House Publishers, 2006.
 - Breen Pierce, Linda. *Simplicity Lessons: A 12-Step Guide to Living Simply*. Carmel, CA: Gallagher, 2003.
 - Dyer, Wayne W. *Being in Balance: 9 Principles for Creating Habits to Match Your Desires*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2006.
 - Felton, Sandra. *Smart Organizing: Simple Strategies for Bringing Order to Your Home*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2005.
 - Harvard Business Essentials. *Time Management: Increase Your Personal Productivity and Effectiveness*. Boston: Harvard Business School, 2005.
 - Johnson-Cook, Suzan. *Live Like You're Blessed: Simple Steps for Making Balance, Love, Energy, Spirit, Encouragement, and Devotion Part of Your Life*. New York: Doubleday, 2006.
 - Luhrs, Janet. *The Simple Living Guide*. New York: Broadway Books, 1997.
 - Merrill, Roger, A. and Rebecca R. Merrill. *Life Matters: Creating a Dynamic Balance of Work, Family, Time, and Money*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2003.
 - Morgenstern, Julie. *Time Management from the Inside Out: The Foolproof System for Taking Control of Your Schedule--and Your Life*. New York: Henry Holt/Owl, 2004.
 - Parrott, Les and Leslie Parrott. *Your Time-starved Marriage: How to Stay Connected at the Speed of Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.
 - Seixas, Abby. *Finding the Deep River Within : A Woman's Guide to Recovering Balance and Meaning in Everyday Life*. San Francisco: Josey-Boss, 2006.
 - Stanley, Debbie. *Organize Your Personal Finances in No Time*. Indianapolis: Que, 2005.
 - Wasmer Andrews, Linda. *Meditation*. New York: Watts, 2004.
- CDs
 - Rossman, Martin L. Anxiety relief: Guided imagery exercises to soothe, relax & restore balance. Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 2004. – A CD with scripted guided imagery that is effective and easy to follow.
- DVDs
 - Landon, Ted. Energy Balance, Yoga. *Gaiam*, 2004. These poses were filmed in Hawaii, so the scenery is relaxing even before the yoga series begins. The series of poses can be used together or separately to meet individual needs. For example, the Awakening poses might be best for waking the body.
- Websites
 - <http://www.militaryonesource.com> - This website provides a variety of resources available to all military members, including guardsmen and reservists, and their families. Information related to finances, deployment, and continuing education is available. Services include a toll free number to call in a time of personal emotional crisis. All calls are answered by trained professionals with a minimum Masters degree in counseling.
 - <https://www.myhealth.va.gov> – This website contains information on healthy eating, exercise, and smoking cessation.
 - <http://www.simpleliving.net> – This website provides lists of books related to simple living. In addition, the organization also provides local resources and community meetings for people who are striving to live a more simple life.



1.3 THE BODY

Your body is an important factor to living a balanced life. In this section, you will learn how to taking care of your body for the long haul. You will learn about nutrition, diet, exercise, as well as the importance of sleep to your body. You might be surprised to learn that taking breaks from work can help you increase your focus and yoga helps in stress management. You will also find a list of resources you can use to learn more.

1.3.1 Nutrition

Fast-paced schedules often result in quick (and poor) food choices. Even when you're busy, it's important to choose your food carefully.

Whole food:

Whole food is food in its natural form: fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, grains, beans, oils, and fish. Whole food does not come from a can, package, or box. Whole food supplies the purest form of nutrients to your body and mind. For quick and easy recipes made with whole foods, visit the World's Healthiest Foods website at <http://www.whfoods.com>.



Diet inventory (self-monitoring):

Serving size is another problem in modern diets. To make sure you're eating the correct portions for someone your height/weight, visit the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute's web site (<http://hp2010.nhlbi.nih.net/portion/>).

"Self-monitoring" means keeping track of the foods that you eat. Self-monitoring is a great way to lose weight. It also allows you to see the nutritional content of your food. You can monitor your food intake in a notebook, Blackberry, computer spreadsheet, or index cards. Or you can use a web site like <http://www.fitday.com>.

TIPS FOR GOOD NUTRITION

- **Don't skip breakfast.** Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. The body needs energy after 8-12 hours without food. Eating in the morning provides energy for your day. Skipping breakfast can lead to overeating later in the day. It can also cause headaches and fatigue.
- **Drink water.** Water is vital to well-being. Lack of water can make you feel tired, achy, hungry, and grouchy. Try to drink at least 8 glasses of water every day.
- **Beware of simple sugar.** Simple sugars are found in most baked goods, white bread, and pasta. Simple sugar provides a quick energy boost that quickly disappears when your blood sugar plummets. You wind up feeling shaky, tired, and irritable.
- **Eat regularly, throughout the day.** You maintain your metabolism when you eat several small meals throughout the day. Eating protein, healthy fat, and complex carbohydrates at each meal increases energy and concentration.

1.3.2 Fitness

A fit body helps your mind function better. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 provide the following exercise recommendations:

- To reduce the risk of chronic disease, exercise at least thirty minutes a day.
- For greater health benefits, exercise daily for more than thirty minutes.
- To control your weight, exercise vigorously at least 60 minutes a day.
- To keep weight off, exercise vigorously for 60-90 minutes every day.



**A fit body helps
your mind function better.**

1.3.3 Weight

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), over 66 percent of U.S. adults are overweight, and 32 percent of U.S. adults are obese. Being overweight or obese can create psychological and physical stress on the body. A DoD study of active personnel found that 26 percent blamed part of their weight gain on their return from deployment.

What does it mean to be overweight or obese? “Overweight” and “obesity” are classifications based on an individual’s body mass index (BMI). BMI is calculated using a mathematical formula that includes weight and height. A BMI calculator can be found at www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/.

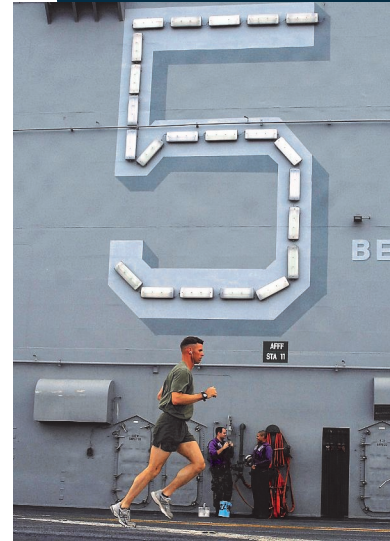
- BMI for service members is different than BMI for civilians. The 2002 DoD standards use age and gender to determine BMI scores.
 - Men less than 20 years old: overweight = BMI greater than or equal to 25.8
 - Men 20 years or older: overweight = BMI greater than or equal to 27.8
 - Women less than 20 years old: overweight = BMI greater than or equal to 25.7
 - Women 20 years or older: overweight = BMI greater than or equal to 27.3
- According to the 2005 DoD Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Active Duty Military Personnel (Reference #29), 59.8 percent of DoD active personnel were overweight and 12.4 percent were obese.
- The standard BMI classification does not use age and gender in the definition of overweight and obese.
 - Overweight = BMI between 25 and 29.9
 - Obese = BMI greater than 30. This means roughly 30 pounds or more overweight.
 - Normal weight = BMI between 18.5 and 24.9.

1.3.3 Weight (cont.)

- Overweight and obesity are associated with many problems including:
 - Premature death
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Cancer
 - Breathing problems
 - Arthritis
 - Reproductive complications
 - Stroke
 - Depression

Losing weight

- Reducing the number of unhealthy calories consumed and exercising are effective ways to lose weight.
- Fad diets help people lose weight temporarily by restricting calories and the types of food that are eaten. But fad diets are not long-term solutions to a healthy body. The word “diet” usually implies a temporary eating plan that people follow to lose weight. After ending a diet, most people return to their old eating habits and regain weight.
- A balanced approach involves learning about nutrition, fitness, and ways to change behavior. Balance means starting with small, sustainable changes.
- Getting fit and staying fit creates more energy and improves mood. Much research has been conducted on the positive effects of exercise. Some findings:
 - Exercising moderately for 30 minutes a day produces significant health benefits (for example, 30 minutes of brisk walking).
 - Exercising can be broken into smaller increments of time.
 - Exercising moderately can also reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. For more information, visit The President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports at <http://www.fitness.gov/>

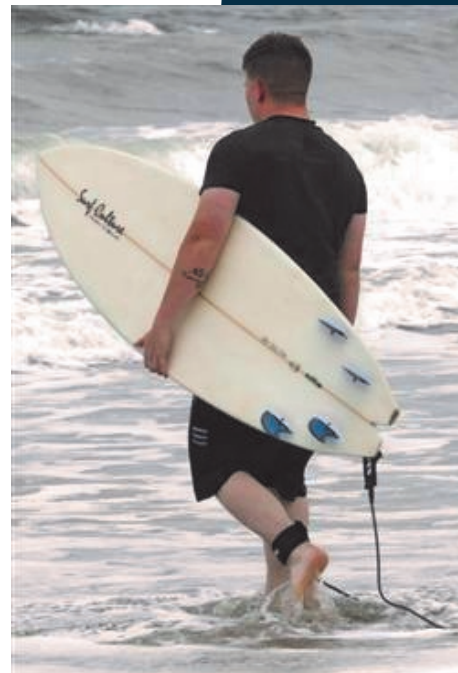


1.3.4 Sports

Participating in sports is a great way to get regular exercise. Joining a sports team is a great way to make new friends, stay active, and explore new interests. Neighborhood teams for adults are available for all types of sports including softball, kickball, volleyball, and Frisbee-golf. Visit a local community recreation center for more information.

Informal exercise can also enhance fitness:

- Cleaning
- Dancing (alone or with a partner)
- Using the stairs rather than taking the elevator
- Parking farther from a destination
- Gardening



1.3.4 Sports (cont.)

Stretching is an important component of any fitness plan. It takes very little time out of your schedule. Benefits of stretching include:

- Increased flexibility
- Enhanced concentration
- Better posture
- Injury prevention
- Greater range of motion

The Mayo Clinic provides information on proper stretching techniques for major muscle groups.

Visit: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stretching/SM00043>

TAKING A BREAK WILL HELP...

1. Your body recover from the un-natural postures caused by sitting at a computer
2. Develop relationships with co-workers.
3. You focus on work better.
4. Increase your creativity
5. Make you feel better at the end of the work day with energy for activities you enjoy.

1.3.5 Breaks

The key to staying productive is to take breaks to increase focus. Workplace schedules used to have built-in mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks. The ability to be “in touch” at all times has increased with technology (e-mail, TiVo, BlackBerries, bluetooth, and cell phones). But technology has also reduced the amount of time we spend away from work relaxing or having fun.

Workday breaks can be as simple as walking around your office, standing up and stretching (arms, neck, shoulders), or chatting with a co-worker in the fresh air. Work breaks can be effective with as little as three minutes away from the job every ninety minutes to two hours.

1.3.6 Sleep

Sleep is a vital part of feeling healthy and balanced. Good sleep helps you cope with stress, solve problems, and recover from illness or injury. Sleep gives your body a chance to recharge. During sleep, the body **restores** tissue, **builds** bone and muscle, and **strengthens** your immune system. Sleep also helps your brain function at its peak! Lack of sleep causes drowsiness, irritability, physical ailments, and concentration and memory problems.



1.3.7 Yoga

Many different types of yoga exist. Some types are tied to a particular religious belief. But most westernized yoga focuses on physical improvements. You don't have to be very flexible to enjoy yoga or its benefits. Some people attend classes to learn basic poses (called *asanas*). Others learn yoga from DVDs or books. Most yoga techniques also include lessons in breathing and mindfulness. Yoga can bring balance to your life by improving your physical health and enhancing your mental focus. To find a certified yoga instructor visit www.yogaalliance.org/.



Research indicates that yoga:

- Reduces chronic low back pain
- Reduces depressive symptoms
- Enhances management of Type 2 Diabetes
- Aids in stress management
- Improves quality of life
- Reduces pain and disability from osteoarthritis of the knee

1.3.8 Body Resources

- Weigh to Stay Community at the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) site www.army.mil/ako. The Weigh to Stay Program is a free program offering individuals four free online sessions with dietitians, psychologists, and other health professionals. In addition, participants have access to contact information for many others in the program, which can be a great form of social support.
- www.fitday.com. This website provides an easy way to self-monitor food intake activity level. Registration for this website is free. This website has a huge number of foods listed in its library.
- www.heart.org – This website is sponsored by the American Heart association. It has many useful nutrition and shopping tips including a recipe finder that provides recipes based on foods selected from the pantry.
- www.whfoods.com. This website is sponsored by the George Mateljan Foundation. The purpose of the website is to provide scientifically-supported information on the benefits of eating whole foods.
- <http://www.hathayogalesson.com> – This website contains animated instruction of yoga postures for general health and for specific issues (stress). It is great to use at work or in other situations in which DVD access is unavailable and time is limited.



1.4 ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING BALANCE (RELAPSE PREVENTION)

The goal is to not only achieve balance in life but to maintain that balance throughout your life. Your priorities will change throughout your life that will prompt you to balance your life differently. In this section, you will be reminded of some basic principles and steps to help you evaluate changes and how to address those changes for your life balance.

Remember, a good plan changes and grows with you.

1.4.1 Trial And Error

Never change a winning game plan and **always** change a losing one.

- Maintaining behavior that doesn't work won't change your circumstances, feelings, or attitudes.
- You don't have to be 100% committed to change. As long as your desire to change outweighs your desire to keep things the same, you can cause change in your life.

There is no single correct solution, and flexibility is important.

- Priorities change.
- A good plan is one that changes and grows with your circumstances and priorities.

1.4.2 Problem Solving

1. Define the problem.

Example:

NOT: "This traffic is driving me crazy!"

BUT: "I get more upset than is good for me."

2. Think of potential solutions.

- Test different solutions to find which are most effective and reasonable.
- Carry out the solution that makes the most sense.

3. Make one change at a time.

- People often overdo it when it comes to change. Pace yourself to make sure you can achieve your goals.
- Focusing on one goal allows you to devote your time, attention and energy to that goal.

4. Choose small goals.

- Begin with small goals you can achieve (like walking ten minutes, three times/ week).
- Work up to bigger goals slowly.

5. Start today.

- Don't wait for the "perfect" time to change. The perfect time is NOW.
- Expect and prepare for obstacles to change and barriers to growth.



1.4.3 Maintenance and Relapse Prevention

There are three goals for maintenance and relapse prevention:

Goal 1: Maintain the behavior change

Goal 2: Reduce the risk of relapse with increased confidence to deal with high risk situations.

Goal 3: Reduce the harmful effects of a lapse or relapse



To help you meet these goals you will need to do the following:

Assess relapse by:

- Self monitoring.
- Keep a diary for eating, exercise, and other positive habits.
- Beware of negative emotions as they cause relapse when we return to our old coping methods to feel better.
- Don't allow yourself to get depressed or discouraged. We tend to overeat, drink, and smoke when we are depressed.

Resist social pressure.

Some people feel pressure from family, friends, and co-workers to return to old habits.

Know conditions of relapse.

When planning to prevent relapse, it helps to answer these questions:

- Under what circumstances are you most likely to relapse?
- Where would you be?
- Who would you be with?
- How would you feel at the time?
- What things would push you to the point of relapse?

Preventing relapse requires planning for relapse.

- Planning for lapses can help prevent sliding down the “slippery slope” from lapse to relapse to collapse.
- The specifics of your plan aren't as important as having a plan.

Assertiveness training.

- Decide about what to do *before* the situation arises (for example, plan for exercise, healthy snacks, and so forth).
- Plan what to say to those who are not supportive.

Stress management.

- Stress is one of the most common reasons people return to old habits.
- Now is the time to find new, healthy coping skills.

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