

PREVENTION IN ACTION

RESET AND REBOOT

CONSIDER A REBOOT TO ENHANCE PARTS OF YOUR LIFE

When a computer freezes up, you wait a few minutes to see if it gets better on its own. If it stays frozen, you reboot. If you find yourself stuck in some part of your life, you might be tempted to wait for things to change on their own. Instead, be proactive by trying some of these strategies.

PRODUCTIVE THINKING

Thoughts affect performance, especially during stressful situations. When negative thoughts pop up, [reframe](#) them and look at the situation in a different way. Seeing the situation in a more positive way can help you move through the stress.

SPIRITUAL FITNESS

[Spiritual fitness](#) is an important part of total health. Identifying values and beliefs and exploring identity provide meaning and purpose in life. Spiritual health increases hope, assists with moral decisions, increases connection with others, helps build meaningful relationships, and allows for forgiveness of self and others. Engage in healthy coping strategies related to spiritual beliefs, such as prayer, meditation, connecting with nature, and/or talking with a chaplain.

STRESS MINDSET

Recognize the different types of stress. Positive stress or eustress can lead to improved performance, growth, learning, and a healthier state of mind. Negative stress or distress can impair our mindset and lead to mental or physical issues. An example of this may be repetitive negative thought patterns. Stress is a



MARINES.MIL

normal part of life. When considering only the negatives of stress, it can really take a toll.

Making it through a stressful situation builds confidence and resilience for encountering similar situations in the future. Check out [Marine Corps Family Team Building's](#) Inner Balance and other [LifeSkills](#) courses and the [Family Advocacy Program's](#) stress management course, or meet with a counselor from the [Community Counseling Program](#).

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Exercise can improve various body systems. For example, cardio helps to improve the circulatory and cardiovascular systems. 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, and mobile fitness.

SOCIAL FITNESS

Humans are social animals who need healthy social connections to thrive. Give and receive support in positive relationships with peers, family, and the community.

[Volunteering](#) is a great way to meet new people, connect with family or friends, connect with old friends, connect with someone at work, and engage in a new activity that involves social interaction

QUALITY OF LIFE

Reflect on your 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 most.

For more support, check out the [Single Marine Program \(SMP\)](#) or the [Community Counseling Program](#). Speak with a chaplain, friend, or family member.

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

Get started on hitting the reset button

January is the perfect time to conduct a self-assessment and reset. Life resets don't require buying anything, going on a diet, starting a fitness plan, or taking a class. Practice mindfulness instead.

Be in the moment. If last year's goals were not met, don't judge. Stuck in a negative spiral thinking about failures? Replace those thoughts with positive affirmations.

Have a destination. Accept things as they are now while still

wanting change. Create a vision board that shows where you want to be in the future, or write a future journal entry.

Revisit goals and update the game plan. Don't really feel connected to a goal anymore? It's OK to remove a goal and stop worrying about it. Don't be afraid to change directions!

Clear out what doesn't work. If something you're trying doesn't work, throw it away. Physical

clutter creates mental clutter, so clean and clear out physical space. Now is a good time to let go of anything that's no longer needed. Sell, donate, recycle, or throw away unneeded items. Do a deep clean of spaces that get neglected like the fridge/freezer, car, shower, garage, or closet.

Reassess and reset daily routines. Routines make the day go more smoothly. Look at daily activities and see if routines enable progress toward daily and long-term goals.

All of these steps add up over time to help you create a happier self. Any goals set are worth the time and effort.

Don't be afraid to step into the unknown. Don't be afraid to mess up sometimes. When doing a life reset, take charge and redirect priorities as needed.

Reach out to [Marine Corps Community Services](#) for assistance in achieving personal goals, from [getting healthy](#) and [gaining employment](#), to [going back to school](#), or [starting a new hobby](#).

PREVENTION IN ACTION

with LCDR Anna C. Keller, Medical Service Corps
United States Navy Force Psychologist, Marine Corps Forces Reserve



Q What is your role in primary prevention across the Marine Corps Forces Reserve (MARFORRES)?

As the Force Psychologist for more than 36,000 geographically dispersed Marines and Sailors, my primary role is to advise the MARFORRES Commanding General and Chief of Staff on all matters relating to resiliency, psychological health and suicide prevention. I am actively involved in outreach and routinely collaborate with other entities, such as the Veterans Administration, Marine Corps Community Services, chaplains, and the Psychological Health Outreach Program to satisfy the clinical and preventive needs of the Marines and Sailors within MARFORRES. Promotion of resiliency at every level has been my number one goal since my arrival. This includes pre- and post-deployment briefings and activities, trainings, Yellow Ribbon events, and other planning and development activities. Clinical intervention and triage are a very small part of my role, but I do work closely with the local branch health clinic to provide and/or coordinate psychological first aid during and after traumatic events (e.g., unit suicide).

Q The start of a new year can bring about hope and motivation as well as stress and pressure. What advice do you have as we all navigate 2022?

My Top 5 wellness tips for 2022:

- 1. Get some rest.** So many of us are grinding away at work and overwhelmed with personal and family responsibilities that we forget to rest. Sleep and rest are not the same (but it is important to prioritize both). Rest can be passive (taking 10 minutes to sit and engage in deep breathing) or active (going for a walk outside). Rest can reduce stress and help improve concentration and memory.
- 2. Be present.** Immerse yourself in the experience of the moment. Whether going for a walk outside or driving to work, observe what is going on internally and around you. Stay in the moment by fully participating with no distractions or barriers.
- 3. Increase physical activity.** Thirty minutes of physical activity per day is healthy for the

body and promotes emotional well-being (e.g., High Intensity Tactical Training, cardio, swimming, walking, jogging, strength training, stretching).

4. Accumulate positive events: Make a list of activities that you enjoy and intentionally incorporate them into your week. Don't believe everything you think. Your thoughts deserve to be challenged, particularly those tied to dysfunctional thinking patterns. We can influence the way we feel by evaluating the way we think.

Q Can you discuss a MARFORRES prevention initiative that can positively benefit the Marine Total Force?

What I love most about my role as Force Psychologist is the latitude and flexibility to be innovative. In 2019, I organized an Appreciative Inquiry workshop held at the Naval Post Graduate School to explore how to maintain healthy and resilient reservists. Reduced feelings of connection and belonging outside of drill weekends was the number one reported struggle for reservists. As a result, the MARFORRES resiliency team developed an enterprise wide mobile app, USMC Connect, to provide streamlined access to important resources and to empower reservists to stay connected to their individual units outside of drill weekends. Launched in October of 2020, this Reserve-centric app aims to increase feelings of connectedness and belonging through instantaneous access to personal, career and behavioral health resources. The social connection component of the application provides a one-stop information tool for unclassified, open, and public data; however, the true benefit and intent of the app is its impact on building stronger individual and unit resiliency. The app is available for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) users at no cost to Service members and their families.

Prevention in Action interviews individuals in prevention-related positions within Marine Corps Total Force to show how the Marine Corps operationalizes primary prevention.

Strengthen family bonds

Balancing work and family responsibilities can be challenging. Intentionally making time for family is key to strengthening bonds. Here are some ways to develop family routines that can help build resilience.

Cook and eat together as often as possible.

Cooking and sharing a meal improves connectedness, promotes healthier eating habits, and carves out time to talk.

Gather together for a weekly family activity night. Make time each week to share fun activities together. Some great family activities include board games, [movies](#), or [bowling](#). Shared time strengthens connections and creates lasting memories.

Get active together. Take a walk after dinner. Hold a spontaneous family dance party. Visit a local park. Take advantage of [youth sports](#) and Semper Fit [outdoor activities](#).

Hold regular family meetings. Let family members know that their perspectives matter. Be sure all contribute to important discussions.

Take some time to look through scrapbooks and family photo albums. Looking at scrapbooks and photo albums creates a sense of connection and history with immediate and extended family members.

Volunteer together. [Volunteering](#) connects your family to the community in which you live, work, and play.

The [Child and Youth](#), [Exceptional Family Member](#), [Family Advocacy Program](#), [Marine Corps Family Team Building](#), and [School Liaison](#) programs can partner with your family on your journey. The mission of these programs is to care for, strengthen, and inform all families.

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

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

Visit usmc-mccs.org/prevention or click on the QR code to sign up for our mailing list or view past issues. If you give us with your email address, we will use it solely to deliver the newsletter. You may opt out at any time by responding to the sender.



SCAN ME

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

To access hot links in the newsletter, right-click on link, copy link, and paste it into a browser window.

RESET YOUR MINDSET TO FIGHT FOR HOPE

BY LCDR MARK J. WON, CHAPLAIN
MARINE & FAMILY PROGRAMS

We are accustomed to the idea that the pursuit of happiness is our natural right.

The phrase, “whatever makes you happy,” is thrown around without any deeper consideration of what happiness really is or should be.

In other words, our practical understanding and use of the term has been reduced to what is easy, convenient, and often a life of least resistance.

I am not aware of any literature that makes a compelling argument in support of the easy or relatively convenient life as the path to happiness. In fact, most research shows the opposite. Studies highlight the importance of challenges, problem-solving, hardships, and even crises as galvanizing experiences in life that produce gratitude, resilience, humility, and hope.

Consider some New York Times



LCDR Won

bestsellers such as *The Road to Character*, *Drive*, and the *Happiness Advantage* that look at the internal mechanisms behind what makes people feel valued, meaningful, purposeful, and truly happy.

In the Academy Award-winning film, *Life is Beautiful*, we see a father taking his young son through some of the darkest moments of the Holocaust. He tells him that their time in a concentration camp is merely a game, and if he follows the rules, he could win the prize of riding on a real tank.

While the son doubts and questions the “game” at several points, the father persistently reminds him of the prize ahead and encourages him with reminders of his progress. The father knew that the only way for the son to survive the darkness around him was to give him something to hope for.

Even when the novelty of the tank ride wore off as his hunger and hardship set in, it was the dad’s enthusiasm and hope on his behalf that kept the son moving forward.

One of the most central



PIXABAY.COM

spiritual foods to life is hope. In an age where we no longer worry about food, clothing, or shelter, we forget that the plethora of comforts and conveniences do not replace the need for hope.

We are dancing on the peak of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and don’t know where to go next. What is left when all the historic temporal human needs for survival, entertainment, and adventure have been mostly solved?

Most of these things are necessary distractions. They keep us preoccupied but they do not fulfill one’s life. Hope is like food for the soul. A wrongfully imprisoned convict

with a life sentence (think *Shawshank Redemption*) can have more hope than a billionaire with multiple homes and jets.

It does not come with accomplishments or things but rather through a friend, a father, a mother, a child, or a mentor who believes in me. It is a light, a fire, but also a flower and fragile.

Hope is not something they give us with our college diploma or when graduating boot camp. It is something we pursue and acquire through beliefs, relationships, religion and sacred traditions, and by regularly asking ourselves the question, “do I want to be happy or hopeful today?”

Tips for tweaking your drinking habits

Most of us consider changing our drinking habits at some point in our lives.

We can all take small and simple steps to change our habits without impacting our enjoyment of activities.

Changing any habit is never a one-size-fits-all model.

We all need to test different techniques and find what works for us.

1. Decide how many days a week you want to drink and how many

drinks you’ll have on those days. Plan some alcohol-free days and don’t exceed the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism’s (NIAAA) low-risk drinking guidelines.

2. Set limits before going out and stick to them.

3. Keep alcohol out of your home.

4. It is OK to say “no” to drinks. It is OK to say “no, thank you.”

5. Drink slowly and on full stomach. Stay hydrated throughout the day.

6. Keep track of how much you drink.

7. Drink water or another non-alcoholic drink in between alcoholic drinks.

8. Find fun things to do that don’t involve alcohol.

9. Enlist family & friends to change their habits with you. Encourage each other along the way.

10. Agree to be the designated driver.

Don’t forget to do self-checks to track your progress in working toward your goals.

Learn how to protect what

you’ve earned by taking part in the Prime for Life 4.5 prevention program offered through your installation’s [Substance Abuse Counseling Center](#) (SACC).

Prime for Life 4.5 (PFL 4.5) is a half-day, evidence-based substance abuse prevention/education course designed for any Marine wanting to learn how to make low-risk choices.

Also visit your SACC for more information on setting limits and making low-risk choices.

HELP YOUR KIDS RESET THEIR ROUTINES TO MAKE EVERYONE HAPPIER

The start of a new year is a great time for families to reset together. Here are a few ideas to help families set their goals together. Best of all, they are simple, don't cost anything, and can help make happier families.

Develop healthier eating habits

All kids benefit from relaxed family mealtimes. Bonus: They're more likely to eat their veggies.

Track your servings. Studies show that calm, repeated daily exposure to a new food for up to 14 days is often effective in getting a child to overcome a food aversion. Don't give up on foods your child doesn't like. Instead, keep offering it and track your serving attempts on a calendar.

Involve the kids in meals. Kids are often more willing to eat something they make, so include them in meal preparation.

Adopt better sleep habits

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine found that one in three kids are sleep-deprived. Here are ways to help your child learn healthy habits to get a more restful night's sleep.

Create wind-down sleep routines. Create a bedtime ritual tailored to your child's sleep needs, and stick to it until it becomes a habit. Teach younger kids the bedtime Bs: bath, brush your teeth, and book before bed. Your child can draw each step and paste it on a chart as a reminder.

Teach mental relaxers. Many kids fall asleep, and then wake up unable to go back to sleep. Teach your children how to relax and encourage sleep with techniques such as breathing deeply while focusing on a different body part from head to toe, or recreating a peaceful place with their mind.

Tune out digital distraction

Electronics are wonderful, but digital devices can also dominate children's lives. Here are tips to



PEXELS.COM

help find a healthy digital balance.

Check your family's digital intake. An 8- to 17-year-old is plugged in around 7.5 hours per day on average, but don't assume that stat doesn't apply to your family. Have a family conversation around electronic usage. Discuss when there should be "unplugged

times," how much time they should spend on their devices, and what places should be digital-free. Stick to your plan.

Encourage meaningful family discussions. Once you set some "unplugged times," try to engage your family in conversations. Ask your kids to help you think of

questions to spark family talks.

Tune in to kindness

An NBC News State of Kindness poll found that 62 percent of survey participants believe kids are less kind today than in the past. Here are ways to strengthen children's kindness muscles.

Look for good news. Kindness is strengthened by seeing and hearing about it, so help your children find and cut out inspiring news about kind-hearted people. Discuss those uplifting stories at dinner or before your kids go to sleep to help remind them about the good in their world.

Start a charity box. Kindness is increased through practice, so make kindness an ongoing family routine. Ask your kids to decorate a cardboard box and place it by the door. Fill it with gently used toys, games, and books. Then deliver the charity box together.

Get homework back on track

Homework can be stressful for both kids and parents. Try these tips to reduce homework frustrations in the upcoming year.

Study in chunks. Take advantage of those in-between times (like waiting for a sibling to finish a music lesson) to complete simpler assignments. Kids can make flashcards for spelling words or math facts to review on the go.

Teach time management. Provide an oven timer, egg timer, or stopwatch and tell your child to set it for a specified time (like five minutes per task), and then try to "Beat the Clock." Gradually stretch the time length as your child's attention span increases.

For expert tips on these subjects to get your family reset for the New Year, contact your local [Semper Fit Health Promotion office](#), [School Liaison](#), or [Child and Youth Program office](#).

Adapted from the article "Starting over: 10 simple ways to reset family routines for the New Year" by Dr. Michele Borba.