

PREVENTION IN ACTION

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

START LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE TODAY

Everyone has experienced tremendous changes throughout the past year, so it's normal to feel stressed, anxious, or burned out. Applying three simple tips can help you live your best life.

1. Take Time for Self-Reflection

Taking time to reflect on your circumstances can give you a chance to work through both immediate challenges and longer term goals.

Self-reflection may give you another perspective that you may not have thought about.

Methods you can try include journaling, meditation, visualization, talking with others, and positive self-talk. Counter every negative thought with two positive thoughts.

2. Make Physical Activity and Nutrition a Priority

It's no secret that exercising and healthy eating make you feel good. When you feel good, your mental health improves. Take time—even in as little as 10-minute increments—to boost



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your mood with a quick walk. Too cold? Find a fitness class online or do exercises (jumping jacks, crunches, lunges, squats, jump roping, etc.) in your home.

Making time to take care of your body improves your physical health and quality of life. Healthy eating increases your body's ability to fight off illness, and it helps fuel your body to take on the day's challenges. Visit your local

[Semper Fit Health Promotion Program](#) to talk with a health coach and get the support you need.

3. Take a Class

If you want a good place to begin, [Marine Corps Family Team Building \(MCFTB\)](#) is offering a three-class workshop on "Living Your Best Life."

Bridging the Generation Gap: Participants will learn the unique characteristics of each

generation to provide a foundation to enable improved communication across the generations by increasing knowledge of their influences, characteristics, and priorities.

Power of Time: Participants will be equipped with tools to stay organized and manage priorities to make the best of their limited time and support a more productive lifestyle. This class is coming in 2021.

Attitude and Actions: A modern-day exploration of concepts and philosophies that will help participants maintain a positive focus and engage as leaders in their homes, at work, and within their communities. This class is coming in 2021.

Living your best life can be easy when you know where to start. Contact your local [MCFTB](#) office for available classes and visit your local [Semper Fit Health Promotion](#) office and start living your best life today.

Use MCCS E-Library resources to help improve yourself and your family

Are you looking for a new hobby or trying to take your current hobby to the next level? The Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) E-Library is the perfect place to start with its thousands of offerings for kids and adults.

If you're interested in reading more for fun, you can check out eBooks and audiobooks. You will also find more than 3,500 digital magazines, and the library also offers free access to the Wall Street Journal.

Looking to learn a new language in 2021? Check out Mango Languages, which makes learning a new language exciting. Learn more than 70 languages from around the world and immerse yourself in a new culture. You

can also check out international movies to help you practice your language studies and learn about the culture behind the language.

For information on hobbies you want to do around the house, there's the EBSCO Home Improvement Reference Center for "how to" information on maintenance, electrical work, gardening, plumbing, and more.

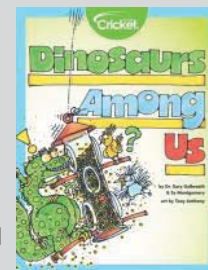
Want to be more creative? The Hobbies and Crafts Reference Center is full of ideas and instruction for collecting, needlepoint, papercrafts, model building, and more. There's also a large "Kids' Crafts" section.

Kids can check out books for Pre-k – 8th grade through the Cricket Media eBook Collection. The books are designed to engage

children in a variety of topics and disciplines. The library also has Scholastic books on science, social studies, and history. Learning from home? You can find printable lessons,

puzzles, and resources to encourage learning and growing for all ages. There's also a test prep section for elementary school through college-level academics.

In order to live your best life, you need to find something you enjoy. For inspiration, visit the MCCS [E-Library](#).



BOOST YOUR CHILDREN'S SELF-ESTEEM

Building self-esteem is one of the most important things that parents can do for their children, even when we aren't faced with social distancing, school closures, and virtual learning. How exactly do we build our children into confident little (or big) people?

Self-esteem grows when children feel accepted and when they feel successful. Follow these strategies and watch your children become more confident in themselves.

Model confidence: Kids learn a lot by watching others. Model the behaviors you want your children to have. Make positive comments about yourself in front of your children and build yourself up.

Give specific praise: Yes, saying "Great job!" is praise, but try to be more detailed. If your children do an exceptional job at cleaning up their room, tell them "Look at your room. You put all of the toys in the toy basket, and put away all of your laundry. It looks really nice. Keep up the good work."

Create a wall of fame: Let your children know their schoolwork, artwork, and portraits are valued by displaying them for all to see.



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Allow kids to fail: As parents, we want our kids to succeed in everything they do, but allowing kids to fail builds perseverance. Life isn't always easy, so letting your children struggle and fail at a task will teach them to try harder and keep at it until they succeed.

Ask for advice/opinions: Asking your kids for their advice or opinions on a topic will show them that you listen to them and that their thoughts matter.

Maintain social connections: This is a tough one, considering the pandemic, but with today's technology and yesterday's pen and paper, it can be done. Arrange for times to video chat

with family and friends. Write and mail letters to loved ones. Use age-appropriate social media messaging apps. Staying connected helps kids feel loved and supported.

Spend time together: You are probably asking yourself, "How can we spend more time together? My kids are at home with me 24/7."

While kids are spending a lot of time at home, this is usually centered around education, chores, and meals. Set aside time to let your children choose what activities they want to do. Children can choose games and teach parents how to play. For

older kids, this might include playing an Xbox game together or a phone app game, or even going outside and playing sports. This will let your kids know that you are interested in what they like.

Express feelings: Teach your children to be self-aware and understand their feelings. An easy technique to use is **HALT**. If your child is starting to feel upset, encourage them to use HALT by asking these questions:

- Am I **hungry**?
- Am I **angry**?
- Am I **lonely**?
- Am I **tired**?

This helps teach them to be aware of what they are feeling and understanding where those feelings are coming from and how to alleviate negative feelings.

These are just a few strategies for building your children's confidence. Figure out what will work for them. Give your kids a hug and let them know that they are growing into the best person they can be and you will be there every step of the way.

For more resources, contact [Military OneSource](#) or your local Marine Corps [School Liaison Program](#).

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

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

The contents are for informational purposes only and not intended to be a substitute for professional financial advice, medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. April's topic will be real relationships, and May's will be change.

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

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

PRACTICE SELF-CARE

The Practice Self-care feature focuses on self-care techniques that Service members, civilians, veterans, and Families find helpful. Stress is a regular part of everyday life. All of us can benefit from learning techniques to manage it, while including time in our schedules for self-care.

Robert Raines, Program Manager, Opportunity, Diversity, and Inclusion Management Branch, HQMC

What: Listening to jazz music and laughing

How It Helps: Listening to jazz music helps me relax my mind after a long day. Also, I enjoy anything that makes me laugh. I am a true believer that laughter is good for the soul.

Lori Rogan, Child Care Health Consultant, Family Care Branch, HQMC

What: Having a monthly challenge with my sister focused on fitness and nutrition

How It Helps: The monthly challenge lets me work on my goals while having competition and accountability. We focus on the positive (i.e., making healthy food choices, drinking more water, exercising at least 30 minutes/day), and that helps us sustain our efforts and keep a positive attitude. It also helps that the monthly winner gets a prize!

SET YOUR BRAIN FOR PRODUCTIVE THINKING

Mindset matters. Adopt an optimistic mindset and you can improve your performance and build resilience for those times when you're navigating through change and uncertainty.

Optimistic thinkers are skilled in their **ABCs**— understanding *activating* events, their *beliefs*, and *consequences*. Optimistic thinkers have a heightened awareness of how they respond to positive *and* negative events.

In understanding they have a choice about how to think about events, optimistic thinkers are able to influence how they feel and behave. When optimistic thinkers find themselves stuck on a broken record of unproductive thinking, they reframe their thoughts to drive more productive emotions and reactions.

Reframing is not just about turning negative thinking into positive, but rather about becoming more accurate and productive in our thinking. Try these steps to shift into productive thinking:

Tune in. To become aware of how you think, you need to listen to how you talk to yourself. A good time to tune in is when your thoughts are generating feelings or behaviors you know aren't productive in that moment. Use "**what**" **questions** to gain clarity on what might be driving your emotions.

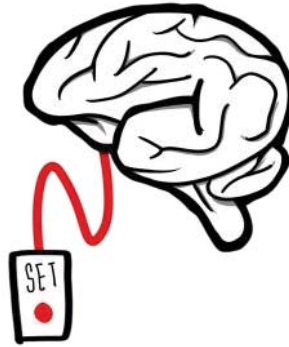
Take a tactical pause. Sometimes distancing yourself from your thoughts is all you need to examine them more objectively. Take a **deep**

breath and write down what you're thinking. Then ask yourself, "What are these thoughts leading me to feel and do (or not do)?"

Reflect and re-engage. Just noticing and naming how you're thinking and feeling is enough. If your thinking isn't working for you, try to generate some alternative thoughts. Here are some reframes you can try:

- **Hunt for opportunities in the face of threats.** Ask yourself: What are some of the good things I might learn about myself or others through this challenge? How is this providing me with new pathways to do or experience things I wasn't able to before?

- **Refocus obligations into privileges.** If you take a moment and reflect on all the obligations in your life, you can probably see most of them are things you can be **grateful** for also. Try shifting "I have to" to "I get to." Try changing "I have to sit in meetings all day" to "I get to exchange ideas with colleagues," or "I have to clean the gutters" to "I get to take care of my home." How do these subtle shifts change



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your motivation or mood?

- **Grab control amid the chaos.** In volatile and uncertain circumstances, focusing on things you *can* control can help bring your heart rate back to normal after it's been high. What if you focused on one productive action instead of repeatedly thinking about all the unknowns? What's one small thing you have control or influence over right now?

- **Look outward instead of inward.** In the midst of challenging times, it's easy to get stuck in a victim mentality and focus on your losses— or how circumstances might negatively impact you. Take a breath and look outward. Make the shift from "me" to "we." How are others struggling? Ask yourself, "What can I do to help? What can we do to overcome these adversities together?"

Do an after-action review. If you tried to reframe your thinking, what changes did you notice? Did it help you feel different emotions, calm you down, or lead to more productive behaviors? Did it help you feel less stuck?

There are many benefits to thinking more optimistically. Try reframing to help you to **better handle stress**, improve **your quality of life**, and build **motivation**. If you need help learning to reframe things in your life, contact your local **Community Counseling Program**.

—Consortium for Health and Military Performance

Taking Stock of Food Can Help You Improve Your Diet

Spring cleaning usually means getting rid of junk we don't need, and there is junk food in our kitchen that our bodies don't need. Healthy items you should keep handy in your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry:

Fridge: Fruits, vegetables, ready-to-go snacks (cut fruits, cut vegetables, individual servings of yogurt, cheese sticks), healthier condiments (mustard, hot sauce, oil and vinegar based dressings), and hummus

Freezer: Fruit, vegetables, salmon, chicken, shrimp, ground lean meat (chicken, turkey, beef)

Pantry: Canned vegetables, canned salmon or tuna, nuts, legumes (dried

or canned), whole grains, and low sodium stock

Want a great, healthy snack? Mix yogurt, cucumber, lemon, garlic, and dill for a quick tzatziki sauce that's perfect for dipping veggies or as a dressing for a delicious Greek salad. For a quick and healthy dinner, put chicken breasts and vegetables (such as broccoli, zucchini, green beans) on a sheet pan, toss with olive oil, garlic salt, and pepper and bake until the chicken is done. Serve with a salad and tzatziki sauce.

Ditching processed foods mean you'll be less likely to binge on unhealthy items. It's the first step to

STOPLIGHT COLOR CODING SYSTEM FOR FOOD

GREEN	YELLOW	RED
Engage at will	Well-aimed shots	Check fire
Least-processed Wholesome Nutrient dense High fiber Low in added sugar Healthy fats	Moderately-processed Lower in fiber Added sugars or artificial sweeteners Lower quality fats	Most-processed Lowest-quality nutrients Added sugar Excess fats and/or trans fats Fried foods

SEMPER FIT HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM

making a lifestyle change that your heart will love. It's never too early to help children make healthy choices. Encourage them to **eat the rainbow**.

For more tips on clean eating and living a healthier lifestyle, visit your local **Health Promotion** Office.

EFMP PARTNERS WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS ON YOUNG ATHLETES PROGRAM

[Special Olympics](#) is a global movement that unleashes the human spirit every day around the world through the transformative power and joy of sport.

In 2018, the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) partnered with Special Olympics to implement Young Athletes—an inclusive pre-sport and play program for children, ages 3 to 7.

The program offers children with and without disabilities the opportunity to play and learn together. It's also a great way for families to develop a fun fitness routine.

During the 2018 pilot, 24 families from three installations took part in their local program. At the conclusion of the multi-week program, participating families completed a survey, and here is what they said:

Ninety-one percent of participants would recommend Young Athletes to a friend and 81 percent would participate again, if offered.

Some comments included:

"It was a phenomenal experience. I have tried other activities for my son and none have been as successful and inclusive as this! It was great to see other families out with their siblings who are not special needs getting involved with everyone. Great program, great experience, GREAT organization, GREAT LEADERSHIP!!!"



Young Athletes at Home

PLAYING AT HOME

Spend **20 MINUTES** a minimum of **4 TIMES PER WEEK** playing with structured Young Athletes activities to support growth and development

QUICK TIPS

ROUTINE
Build Young Athletes into your daily schedule to provide consistency.

ACTIVITIES
Adapt to your child's needs. Focus on a new skill area each week. Invite siblings to join in for family fun!

TAKE CARE
Remember to take care of yourself too. Stay active and connected, get enough sleep, eat healthy and practice deep breathing.

PLANNING YOUR ACTIVITIES

WARM UP (5 MINS)
Pick two activities, like:
- Children's Songs
- Musical Markers
- Follow the Leader
- Balance Beam

SKILL ACTIVITIES (10 MINS)
Pick three activities, like:
- Run and Carry
- Goalie Drill
- Target Practice
- Obstacle Course

COOL DOWN (5 MINS)
Pick two activities, like:
- Animal Games
- I Spy
- Children's Songs
- Dynamic Stretching

View Activities at: [Resources.specialolympics.org/YAFamilies](https://resources.specialolympics.org/YAFamilies)

"Our EFMP team who coordinated our program did an amazing job! My children (ages 4 and 5) were excited to go each session. My 5 yr. old had no interest in sports and now he wants to get a basketball hoop to practice. Seeing his peers try things and that everyone has different abilities has changed his outlook and I'm so grateful!"

While the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the ability to deliver the program in 2020, EFMP is excited for a new year and the chance to deliver the Young Athlete program again. Check with your local [EFMP](#) office to see if they will deliver Young Athletes in 2021.

Special Olympics also offers some [online](#) resources for families to use at home.

MAKE EVERY DAY A REAL GOOD DAY

The Navy invites everyone to check out the offerings of its Real Good Day campaign. This is an excerpt from a post the Navy wrote about the campaign on the Medium website.

We think each day is a chance to take care of yourself, your family and your community better than ever before.

We recognize that having a real good day looks different for everyone, but we're here to help you figure out what it means for you—whenever, wherever.

The Real Good Day campaign wants to build a community focused on sharing health and wellness strategies that work (and tweak those that don't work), how to navigate the good times and the bad times, and how to get through all the other crazy stuff life throws our way. Here's just some of the ways we plan to help. We will:

- Share ideas, tools, and resources to aid in your personal growth.
- Provide tips and tricks to help you get enough sleep, eat right,

exercise, manage stress, drink responsibly (if you choose to drink!), and properly use and dispose of prescription drugs.

- Help you recognize the connection between yourself and something bigger and the importance of your daily actions.
- Normalize expressing emotions and remind you that no matter the type, investing in relationships helps improve wellness.

We're excited to find new ways to make your day and look forward to getting to know you better.



REAL GOOD DAY CAMPAIGN

This is a recent post from the Navy's Real Good Day campaign.

Follow us on Instagram, Twitter (and of course, Medium)—just for the health of it.

Search for RGDcampaign on Twitter and Instagram. Find the campaign's Medium page at rdgcampaign.medium.com.