

COVID-19

RESOURCES FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

This information is also available online at hprc.online.org/total-force-fitness/tff-strategies/resources-healthcare-workers.

In fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, frontline healthcare workers—medical and hospital staff—and emergency responders are working beyond the call of duty to care for the ill and protect the health of others, while still trying to care for their families. The Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP) at the Uniformed Services University initially created the resources here for Military Service Members. We salute your dedication and courage, and we hope these resources can now help you navigate through the challenges while you serve on the frontlines of the battle against COVID-19.

SLEEP

Sleep is a scarce commodity for those working around the clock to remedy a crisis. These tips can help you to get the best rest when you can sleep and provide options to recover your energy when you can't, so you can deploy when you're needed most.

- **Strategic napping.** When regular sleep is in short supply, naps are a critical recovery tool you can leverage to help you be at your best mentally, physically, and emotionally.
- **How sleep impacts your performance.** Explore strategies to help combat sleep debt.
- **Why prioritize sleep?** Learn how sleep impacts your performance and how to get better sleep on the frontline.
- **Manage your sleep with shiftwork.** Explore how to get better sleep when you work irregular schedules.

NUTRITION

Fueling properly can be a challenge, especially now. These tips can help you make better decisions about your current nutrition needs, so you can bring your best self to the fight.

- **Nutrient timing for night shifts.** Learn how to fuel your body during irregular work schedules.
- **Caffeine for performance.** Learn how to leverage caffeine for your physical and mental performance. Also, get [caffeine facts](#) about sources and amounts of caffeine in different beverages.
- **High-performance foods.** Use this guide to make healthy, high-energy food choices (and avoid low-performance foods) to keep you fueled for long shifts.
- **Nutrition to boost mental performance.** Learn what and how to eat to support your mental performance—crucial during demanding situations.
- **Refuel, rehydrate, recover.** Refuel with the right nutrients to help your body repair and replace nutrients lost through physical exertion and the stress of caring for others.

DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

- **Nutrition and supplement suggestions for immunity.** Operation Supplement Safety (OPSS) suggests what might help boost your immunity on the COVID-19 frontline.
- **Avoid “quick fixes” for COVID-19.** There are no FDA-approved treatments to treat, prevent, or cure COVID-19. Learn how to watch out for fraudulent product claims.

HOPE for those on the COVID-19 frontline

HONESTY | OPTIMISM | PROFESSIONALISM | EMPATHY

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical fitness might end up on the back burner when you're overworked and stressed out. When you can, being active for 15–20 minutes at a time can help maintain your resilience e making it easier to cope with high work and stress loads.

- **Physical activity for your mind.** Regular physical activity helps build and maintain physical and mental resilience, so you can deal with everyday stressors and reduce the impact of extreme stressors.
- **Keep moving, with little to no equipment or space.** The Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling System (NOFFS) has workouts you can do in small spaces, with little to no equipment. HPRC also has tips on [limited-equipment resistance training](#).
- **Breathe to relax and de-stress.** When your time is limited, you can practice this breathing exercise anywhere in just 2 minutes to reduce your stress level.
- **Breathe to control your feelings.** Explore breathing exercises further, including through videos, to gain control over how you feel physically and emotionally.
- **Regular physical activity for health and performance.** Learn what counts as the moderate- to vigorous-intensity exercise you need to keep going.

STRESS MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE

With rapidly changing and volatile circumstances, persistent stress and anxiety, and depleted reserves, the psychological toll of COVID-19 on healthcare workers is far-reaching. These stress-management resources might help bolster your psychological health and resilience through this crisis.

- **Escape the downward spiral of anxiety.** When anxiety gets in the way of purposeful action, this skill can help you break out of catastrophic thinking.
- **Cultivating hope: Avoid “always” and “everything” traps.** Get unstuck when you're caught in a negative spiral of hopelessness and helplessness.
- **Grab control of your feelings.** Learn how to manage and regulate your emotions, now more than ever.
- **Relaxation strategies to deal with stress.** Read about several relaxation techniques and resources you can use to pump the brakes on your stress.

- **Mindfulness on the frontline.** Practicing mindfulness can help you relax, lower your blood pressure, sleep better, become more focused and alert, “tune in” to your body, and improve your relationships.
- **More resources to cope with anxiety and depression.** Learn more about where to get help with anxiety and depression.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

For frontline workers, managing family dynamics can be extra challenging. Learn how to maintain strong connections with those you care about the most.

- **How to deal with separations.** Understand some of the basic challenges of temporary separations, and learn strategies to overcome them as a family.
- **How to discipline your kids while you're away.** Get some simple tips to stay involved with your children, set boundaries, and keep them headed down the right path while you're physically separated.
- **Parenting alone during your partner's absence.** This resource is for the parent whose partner is away from home on the COVID-19 frontline.
- **Keep in touch during a crisis.** These tips can help you address the challenges of communicating with your partner and family while you're apart.

SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Spiritual fitness can help you maintain and apply your core beliefs, values, and spiritual practices to help you navigate the current challenges facing healthcare workers.

- **Grow your gratitude.** Learn how to cultivate a sense of appreciation that can help you and your family through these tough times.
- **Grow through trauma.** Others like you who experienced trauma report how they grew mentally, emotionally, and spiritually after difficult experiences.
- **Does everything happen for a reason?** Learn how your beliefs about the world affect how you can make sense of problems and address them—including what you notice and what you might miss.
- **Optimizing spiritual fitness during challenging times.** Read 3 spirit-strengthening messages for healthcare workers during this crisis.

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