



Handout Contents

Stress Management Activity

Stress Action Plan

Deep Breathing

Guided Imagery

Mindfulness Meditation

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Stress Management during Deployment

Stress Management While Your Service Member is Away

Recommended Resiliency Resources

Stress Management Activity

Write down at least one area of your life where you are feeling stressed – one area of your life that is currently impacted by stress – and what small action or technique you will use to either reduce, avoid or eliminate that stress.

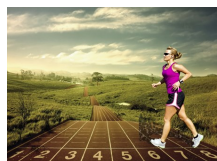
Area of Stress/Stressor	Action or Technique to Reduce Stress/Stressor
Example: I feel stressed by the end of the day when I come home.	Example: I will set a schedule for bedtime (2100 – 0530) to get 8 hours of sleep.

December 2019



Sleep:

- ◇ Schedule Healthy Sleep Habits Class
- ◇ Schedule Coaching Session
- ◇ Request Sleep Diary



Physical Activity:

- ◇ Schedule Exercise Testing and Prescription
- ◇ Schedule Coaching Session



Nutrition:

- ◇ Schedule Metabolic Testing
- ◇ Schedule Coaching Session
- ◇ Schedule Meals in Minutes Class



Stress Management:

- ◇ Schedule Individual Stress Session - emWave



Stress Management: Deep Breathing

Deep or diaphragmatic breathing can be done most anywhere. Recommended places and moments include: driving in congested traffic, running late for an appointment, during a meeting, engaging in other stress provoking situations, to begin a power nap or a restful night of sleep and any other time you have 5 to 10 minutes to become calm. It sends the message to your body and brain that functions can slow down now. It can take you out of the “alarm” or “reacting” stage of stress and into a more restful or calm state.

To Begin:

If possible, but not necessary:

- Place both feet on the ground if seated in a chair, or
- Lie on the floor with your feet up on the chair or out in front of you.
- Find a quiet space with minimal interruptions.
- Place one hand on your heart center.
- Place the other hand below or on your belly button.

By placing your hands in this manner, it allows you to note whether you are taking short, chest breaths (upper hand rises). If you are breathing deeply, your lower hand, the one on your belly button, will move out slightly as your lower lungs fill and your diaphragm moves downward.

First, sit with stillness for a few moments before trying to do anything. Notice your breathing. Notice your feet on the floor. Notice your heart beating. Take your first deep breath in through your nose, relaxing your abdomen to allow the breath to go deep into the lungs. Exhale completely and slowly through your nose. Inhale to the count of three. Exhale to the count of three. Do this several times to set a slow, smooth rhythm. This brings your mind into a focused place. Once you have a rhythm, relax into each exhale, starting with your forehead, jaw and shoulders until your whole body is relaxed.



Breathe2Relax app

After 5 to 10 minutes of diaphragmatic breathing, gently wiggle your toes and fingers. Be aware of the space you are in. Open your eyes if they were closed. Stretch and slowly move forward with your day in this relaxed, refreshed state.

Download the Breathe2Relax app, which includes practice exercises for diaphragmatic breathing.

Source: [Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center Relaxation Library](#)

Stress Management: Guided Imagery

Guided imagery is a simple process that uses your imagination to communicate with your body. Images and experiences created in your mind can be as real as actual events. Your body will react as though the experience is happening; for example, if your mind is picturing a relaxing experience in a relaxing place, your body will react by releasing the healthy hormones and biochemicals that help your body rest and restore itself.

Guided Imagery Steps:

A. Create your images

The imagery you use can be any scene where you feel relaxed. It can be a place you have been to or a relaxing scene you imagine. It can be indoors or out in nature. Choose something that is calming for you. Fill in as many details as possible. Think about the temperature in the air, the sounds, smells, the relaxing sights around you and any physical sensations you feel. Here are some sample visualizations:

- **Your raft.** It's a warm day. You are lying on your back on a raft, drifting in the shade of the trees along the shore. You trail your fingers in the cool water, relaxing completely. You are floating gently on the water, watching the clouds drift across the sky. It's very comfortable. You lie there as long as you want, just feeling relaxed.
- **Crackling fire.** You are sitting indoors by a warm fire, wrapped in blankets. Outside, a cold rain falls. You hear only the sound of crackling logs and see the flicker of the flames. You feel the warmth on your face and it relaxes and soothes all of your muscles. You are feeling comfortable, calm and relaxed.

These are just two examples of visualizations. Choose your own place of peace.

B. Give it a try

1. Position your body in a way that feels comfortable to you.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Take a few deep breaths; use techniques from the Deep Breathing handout if you have it nearby.
4. Take a moment to imagine yourself in your relaxing scene.

PLEASE NOTE: Visualization is best done with closed eyes. If you are uncomfortable with having your eyes closed, that is okay. Consider doing the exercise with your eyes half-closed or all the way open. Deep breathing or other relaxation techniques can still work with your eyes open.

Fit. Ready. Resilient.

- ### C. Give yourself permission

Once you have found an image that's a good fit, use the space below to jot down some notes about your scene. This is a place you can come back to whenever you need a moment to de-stress.

[illegible]

December 2019

Stress Management: Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness meditation increases awareness and helps you become more present by focusing on your breathing, body and thoughts. With continual practice, this technique trains the brain to stay in the present moment and can help you accept things for what they are, without judgment. By focusing on the present and not on stressful or anxiety-driven thoughts about the past, present or future, mindfulness meditation can help decrease tension and improve how you cope with psychological health concerns.

Mindfulness Meditation Steps:

- Sit upright on the floor or in a chair, keeping the spine straight and maintaining a relaxed, but erect posture to ensure you do not get drowsy. Depending on your comfort, you can keep your eyes open or closed during this practice.
- Now, focus on your breathing and on the sensations it triggers throughout your body. Notice how your abdomen (stomach) moves with each inhalation and exhalation.
- Pay attention to the feelings in the center of your chest, noticing the different sensations that arise with each breath.
- When you notice that you are distracted by unrelated thoughts or feelings, simply return your focus to your breathing.

Try this for 5 to 10 minutes, once or twice a day. As you feel more comfortable, you can increase the length of your practice session.

Three Ways to Make this Practice a Routine:

1. Download the Mindfulness Coach app to learn different types of mindfulness practices. The app shows nine forms, each with voice-guided sessions and instructions to try on your own.
2. Set a reminder using the calendar on your smart phone each day to make sure you carve out time.
3. Create a space that is quiet and free of distractions.



Mindfulness Coach app

Source: [*Human Performance Resource Center by CHAMP*](#)

December 2019

Stress Management: Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Tense muscles are a common reaction to stress. Many people experience some tension in the neck and shoulders in a normal workday. Progressive muscle relaxation can help with stress and tension. It involves tensing and relaxing the muscles in your body, one muscle group at a time, and can also reduce other reactions to stress, such as rapid breathing and heartbeat, stomach problems and headache.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Steps:

1. Find a quiet, comfortable place. You can do this exercise in a chair or lying down.
2. Close your eyes, if you are comfortable doing so. If not, feel free to keep them open. This can help you stay “grounded” in the “here and now.” Do what is most comfortable for you.
3. Take a few slow, deep breaths.
4. Inhale deeply through your nose with your mouth closed to a count of four.
5. Exhale through your mouth slowly, also to a count of four. On the exhale, imagine that the tension is leaving your body, flowing out with each count.
6. Repeat this three to four times. If at any point you feel dizzy or light-headed, return to your normal breathing.
7. Continue to breathe deeply as you move into the muscle tension and relaxation part of this exercise. As you inhale, tense and hold each muscle or muscle group for a count of four. Relax that muscle group as you breathe out. Take several breaths before you move to the next part of your body. Allow some time to feel the relaxation. Begin with your feet and work your way up.
8. Tense the muscles of your feet by pointing your toes and tightening your feet as you inhale. Hold this tension briefly, then relax your toes and feet as you breathe out. Imagine the tension flowing out with your breath. Notice the difference between the tension and relaxation.
9. Press the balls of your feet into the floor and raise your heels, allowing your calf muscles to contract. Feel the tension in your calves for a moment. Then release and notice your

PLEASE NOTE: Throughout this exercise, do not continue any movement if it causes you pain. Be cautious about stretching or tensing parts of your body that have caused you past problems (for example, if you have a bad back, neck, leg or arm). If you are not sure if it's safe to do any part of this exercise because of injuries, it's best not to try. Consult your doctor first.

muscles relax. Again, have the tension and relaxation match your breath. Tighten your knees and allow your legs to straighten. Feel the tightness in the front of your legs. Notice the sense of tension as you inhale and its release on the exhale, allowing your legs to bend and relax back onto the floor.

10. Squeeze the muscles of your buttocks. Notice the feeling of tension as you inhale. Hold this for just a moment and on your exhale, release and allow your muscles to relax, letting the tension melt away.
11. Continue up through your body. Concentrate now on your stomach. Contract your stomach by pulling your belly button in toward your spine and continue to breathe. Hold the tension for a count of four. Inhale deeply. As you exhale, let your stomach relax. Again, notice the difference between the feeling of tension and relaxation.
12. Move your attention now to your hands. Curl your fingers into a tight fist in each hand. Hold your fists tight and notice the sense of tension as you continue to breathe. As you release your fists, let your hands relax back to a natural position. Notice the difference between the feeling of tension and relaxation in your hands.
13. Now, bend both arms at the elbow. Flex both your arms by making fists and pulling your fists up tightly to your shoulders. Notice the feeling in the tensed muscles of your upper arms. Take another inhale and as you exhale, relax your arms down to your sides. Take notice of any change in what you feel as you go from a state of tension to relaxation.
14. Push your shoulders up to your ears. Hold this “shrugging” position for just a moment. Feel the tension in your neck and shoulder muscles. Feel the tension melt away as you relax your shoulders back down. Continue to breathe in and out.
15. Finish by tensing the muscles in your face. Scrunch your face as if you just bit into something sour. Feel your eyebrows pull together, your eyes pinch tightly shut and your lips purse together. Notice the sensation of tenseness in your face for just a moment, then allow your face to relax. Notice the release of tension from your forehead, eyes, cheeks, mouth and jaw.
16. See if you can find any other spot of tension in your body. Notice it and let it go.
17. Let yourself be still for a few moments. Just experience your relaxed muscles. Continue to breathe slowly and deeply. Feel any tension flow out. Your relaxation can get deeper with each breath.

When you are ready, bring your attention back to your breathing. Notice your body and how it feels. If you have had your eyes closed, imagine the room. When you are ready, open your eyes.

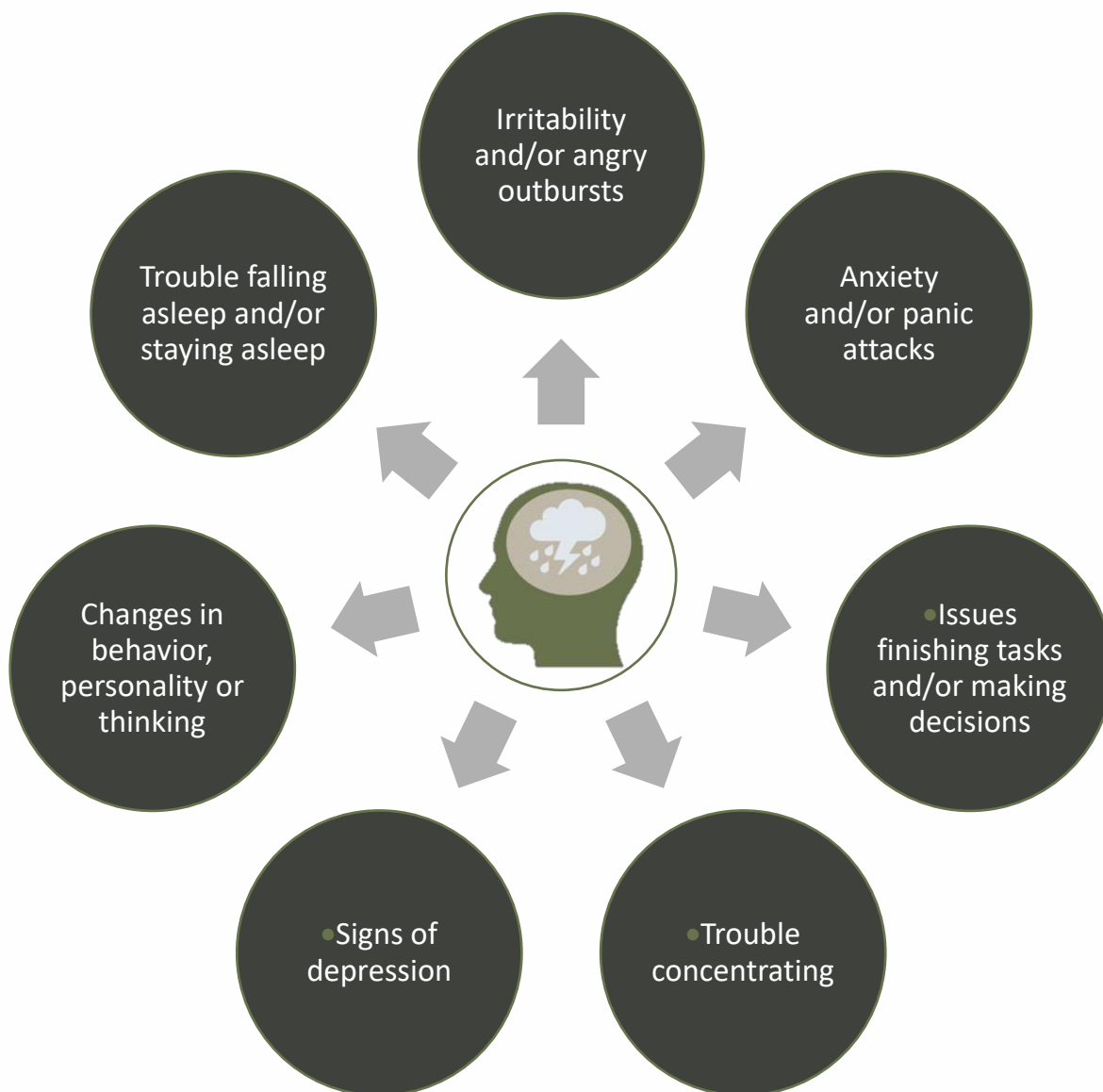
Source: [*U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*](#)
December 2019

Stress Management During Deployment

Stress is part of life and is especially common in the military. Your performance, safety and general well-being can be affected by too much stress. Knowing the symptoms and signs of stress and effective tips for managing stress can make all the difference, especially during a deployment.

Knowing the Signs of Stress

Being able to identify the signs of stress can help you manage the stress before it can endanger your performance or safety. Watch out for the following signs of stress:



Tips to Manage Stress

- Make eating healthy meals, drinking water, getting enough sleep and exercising part of your daily routine.
- Take a break and learn some relaxation techniques, especially after stressful events.
- Understand you are not alone. Talk to others and share your experiences.
- Work to build trust with your unit, at home and within your community.
- Don't take life too seriously. Laughing can be great for stress relief.
- Take care of your spiritual needs and reach to a chaplain to discuss any concerns.
- If you are worried about issues at home, find someone to manage things while you are away.

How to Find Help for Stress

Stress is not a sign of weakness, it is a physical reaction, and reaching out for help is a sign of strength. If you or someone you know is having trouble with stress, reach out for help. There are plenty of confidential resources to help you in your time of need:

- Military OneSource offers confidential sessions with licensed professionals at no cost to military members and their families. Find out more about Military OneSource's confidential, non-medical counseling [here](#), or call 800-342-9647.
- Military and family life counselors are also available through your installation's [Military and Family Support Center](#).
- Combat stress control teams are mental health professionals who support service members on site during deployment.
- Military chaplains can provide counseling, guidance and referral on many issues during deployment.

For Medical Help with Stress

You may be eligible for medical counseling services in your community through a military treatment facility or TRICARE. Talk to your primary care provider about a referral for counseling services or contact your local TRICARE office.

Do not let stress ruin your life. Reach out for help to take back control. If you or someone you know are in crisis, contact the Military Crisis Line at 800-273-8255, then press 1, or access their online chat by texting 838255.

Military OneSource. (2019). Stress management during deployment. Retrieved from:
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/military-life-cycle/deployment/during-deployment/stress-management-during-deployment>

December 2019

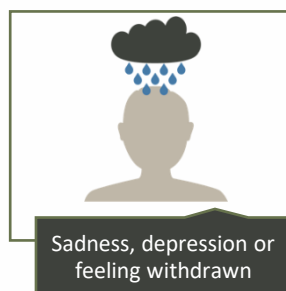
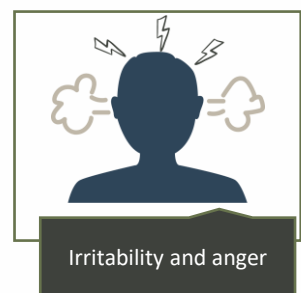
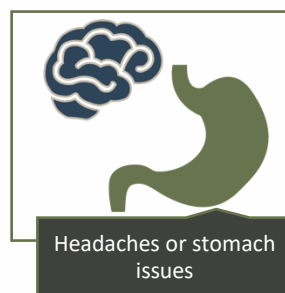
Stress Management While Your Service Member Is Away

Whether it's your child, sibling, significant other or someone else you care deeply for, you are likely proud of their service to our nation. However, the many aspects of military life, including events such as deployments and relocations, may also lead to feelings of stress.

While stress is normal in these situations, you should know that your service member is well trained to do their job. Showing support for your loved one while also taking care of yourself will not only improve your health but will help your service member focus on their job.

Identify the Signs of Stress

Knowing the signs of stress is the first step in maintaining your emotional health. If you notice one or more of the symptoms below, you may be experiencing stress.



Learn to Manage Stress

By taking the necessary steps to manage the symptom of stress, you can continue to improve your emotional well-being. Managing your stress will also ensure you are better prepared to support your loved ones while they are away. Try these tips to help manage your stress and anxiety:

- **Try using mindfulness techniques.**
 - Find a way to focus on the moment and accept your feelings. Take up a hobby that promotes mindfulness, such as yoga or meditation, or do something relaxing, such as going for a walk or coloring.
- **Take care of your physical health.**
 - Oftentimes, stress can lead us to forget about our physical health. Make sure you are getting enough sleep, drinking plenty of water and staying active.
- **Ask for help and reach out in your community.**
 - How can you be the support system for your service member if you do not have your own support at home? Share your feelings and worries with family and friends and ask them for help when you need it. Additionally, reaching out to your local faith community is a great option if you are spiritual. There is also a large community of people in the exact position supporting their service members as you are; do not be afraid to join support groups either in-person or on social media. If you find that you are not getting the support you need, you can show your strength by reaching out to a professional.
- **Build a better understanding of military life.**
 - Stay connected to your service member by learning more about military life. If your service member is allowed to share information, find out more about their branch of the military, unit or job. You can also subscribe to newsletters or updates for friends and family. However, don't let negative news or social media rumors increase your feelings of stress and anxiety. Even learning acronyms or military traditions can help you feel closer to your loved ones.
- **Be a role model.**
 - Make sure you are taking care of your emotional and physical health so that your service member not only knows you are healthy, but also sees you as a role model for their own well-being.
- **Support your service member.**
 - Know the resources you can provide service members if they are feeling stressed. There are a lot of options for support such as Military OneSource or medical professionals to help your service member in their time of need.

Military OneSource. (2019). Handling the stress you have about your service member. Retrieved from <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/military-life-cycle/friends-extended-family/handling-the-stress-you-have-about-your-service-member>

December 2019

DoD Resources

Military OneSource

800-342-9647 Online Chat <https://militaryonesource.mil>

Defense Suicide Prevention Office

<https://www.dspo.mil/>

PHCoE Psychological Health Resource Center

866-966-1020 <https://www.pdhealth.mil/resources/call-centers/psychological-health-resource-center>

Defense Health Agency (DHA) Mobile Apps

<https://health.mil/About-MHS/OASDHA/Defense-Health-Agency/Operations/Clinical-Support-Division/Connected-Health/mHealth-Clinical-Integration>

DoD Safe Helpline

877-995-5247 <https://www.safehelpline.org/live-chat>

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office

<https://www.sapr.mil/>

Non-DoD Resources

Military/Veterans Crisis Line

800-273-8255 [https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/TEXT to 838255](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/TEXT%20to%20838255)

Give an Hour

<https://giveanhour.org/>

Alcoholics Anonymous

<https://www.aa.org/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

877-726-4727 <https://www.samhsa.gov/>

Consortium for Health and Military Performance

301-295-3020 (Director) <https://www.usuhs.edu/champ>

American Association of Suicidology

202-237-2280 <https://www.suicidology.org/>

Service Branch Resources

Army:

<https://www.armyresilience.army.mil>

Marine Corps:

https://www.marpower.usmc.mil/webcenter/portal/BehavioralProgramsBranch/pages_behavioralprogramsbranch/suicidepreventioncapability

Navy:

<https://www.suicide.navy.mil>

Air Force:

<https://www.resilience.af.mil>

Local Resources

RWBAHC Behavioral Health Line

Phone: 520-533-5161

Arizona Complete Health Behavioral Health 24/7 Crisis Line

Phone: 866-495-6735

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Phone: 520-538-1284

Fort Huachuca 24 Hour On-Call Chaplain

Phone: 520-508-8042

Military and Family Life Counselor (MFLC)

Phone: 520-255-4273

Soldier Family Readiness Center

Phone: 520-533-2330

Studies show that using mobile mental health apps can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety!

- **Breathe2Relax** is a hands-on diaphragmatic breathing exercise tool that helps stabilize your mood and control your anger.
- **Mindfulness Coach** is an app developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a slow-paced, self-guided training program designed to help people understand and adopt a simple mindfulness practice.
- **T2 Mood Tracker** is a mobile application that allows users to monitor their emotional to see how it affects their life. It enables you to track your mood and behavior over time and graph them to identify trends and triggers.
- **Virtual Hope Box (VHB)** is a mobile application designed for use by patients and their behavioral health providers as an accessory to treatment. The VHB contains simple tools to help Service members with coping, relaxation, distraction, and positive thinking. Service members and providers can work together to personalize the VHB content on the patient's own smartphone then continue to use the VHB app outside of the clinic, as needed.

- **LifeArmor** is a mobile learning and self-management tool to assist Service members with common mental health concerns. Users can view information and videos on 17 topics, including sleep, depression, relationship issues, and post-traumatic stress. There are brief self-assessments help measure and track symptoms; and tools to assist with managing specific problems.

**All can be downloaded for FREE from iOS App Store or Google Play Store*

