

# Health Promotion & Wellness

July/August 2021

## July is Safety Month

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### Getting Back to Being Active Safely After COVID-19

The loss of organized physical training opportunities, sports seasons, decreased military physical readiness testing, increased virtual meetings and telework created by the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a de-training effect across our commands according to the [Military Health System](#). Exercising less, eating and drinking more, and sitting in front of a screen all day (e.g., computer, TV, phone) has led to weight gains and de-conditioning, which can have a lasting impact on your body as both increase your risk of injury.

As normal activities resume such as daily onsite performance work, school and community events, it is important that you gradually resume physical activities to stay safe. Typically, if your activity levels were lower for more than six weeks, you would need to slowly ramp back up to your previous level of exercise to avoid injuries and regain flexibility, aerobic fitness and muscular strength and endurance.

What can you do to reverse deconditioning and prevent injuries? Give yourself 3-4 months to build up to your previous activity level, including functional strength training and flexibility/movement preparation exercises at least 3-4 times a week.

#### Some recommendations to get started:

- Begin exercising regularly and slowly – not at the previous level you were at before COVID-19. Use the [Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling System \(NOFFS\)](#) app as a guide.
- Make a calendar of daily and weekly activity goals.
- Include time for rest and recovery after a hard workout.
- Eat healthy and appropriate portions as described in [NOFFS Fueling](#).
- Make sure you are getting enough sleep. If not, try sleep banking (the National Sleep Foundation recommends 7-9 hours).
- Avoid or decrease drinking alcoholic beverages.

Getting back to being active might be tough, but if you follow these tips and start gradually, you will get back to your previous conditioning level without the risk of getting injured.



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## August is Preventive Health Month

The pandemic proved two very important concerns about prevention:

1. “Chronic conditions can profoundly reduce quality of life for patients and for their families.” ([Study link](#))
2. Preventive screening rates for chronic conditions have declined since the pandemic. ([Study link](#))

If you have not stayed on top of the screenings recommended for your age group, please see your doctor and make an appointment to get caught up.

Recommendations for most common screenings:

What?	Who?	When?	Reference
Breast Cancer	Women 50-74 (personal choice over 40)	Every 2 years	<a href="#">USPSTF</a>
Cervical Cancer	Women 21 to 65 years	Every 3 years or every 5 years with HPV starting at age 30	<a href="#">USPSTF</a>
Colorectal Cancer	Adults 50-75 years	Fecal occult blood testing - annually Sigmoidoscopy - every 5 years Colonoscopy - every 10 years	<a href="#">USPSTF</a>
Diabetes	Overweight or obese adults 40-70 years	During annual cardiovascular risk assessment	<a href="#">USPSTF</a>
Lung Cancer	Adults 55-80 with 30 pack per year history, quit within 15 years	CT Scan once	<a href="#">USPSTF</a>
Hypertension	Adults age 18+ years	Blood Pressure taken every Primary Care Visit	<a href="#">USPSTF</a>
Osteoporosis	Women 65 years and over	DXA Scan once	<a href="#">USPSTF</a>

## Get Real About Your Health With Real Good Day

At Real Good Day, 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, and we are here to help you figure out what that means for you — whenever, wherever. Real Good Day focuses on:

- Health and wellness strategies that work.
- How to tweak strategies that don't work.
- How to navigate the good times and the bad times.
- How to get through all the other crazy stuff that happens.

As we dive into the heart of summer, we're encouraging you to clean up some of your health habits. Different aspects of your health are [more connected](#) than you might think. What you eat helps prep you for your next workout, how you sleep impacts your energy levels through the day, and how you [relax](#) could contribute to how you respond to updates from your friends or family.

With so many messages begging for your attention — from influencers on social media to endless ads between your favorite shows — it might feel overwhelming to know where to even look for ideas.

Check out our [“40 Resources to Get Real About Your Health”](#) blog on [medium.com](#) for links to vetted and helpful links on nutrition, movement, sleep and mental wellness.



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## NMCPHC Website Update

The NMCPHC website is moving to a new platform soon. In the meantime, you may experience broken links to many of the pages and documents. We apologize for the inconvenience, and be assured that we will be working to update the links as quickly as possible. For assistance with questions or any documents that may be lost in the process, please contact us at [usn.hampton-roads.navmcpubhlthcenpors.list.nmcpHC-contactHPW@mail.mil](mailto:usn.hampton-roads.navmcpubhlthcenpors.list.nmcpHC-contactHPW@mail.mil)

We appreciate your patience as we work to bring this new, improved website to you!

TIP: Hit “cancel” if a page asks you to sign in!

## Blue H Updates

Due to some challenges with the NMCPHC website upgrade, all documents will be placed on the Blue H submission site: <https://esportal.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcpHC/HPW/hpwdept/layouts/15/start.aspx#/SitePages/Blue%20H.aspx>

**2020:** The Surgeon General’s announcement was signed on June 16, 2020! A total of 441 commands have received the award—an increase from the last report. It has been placed on the Blue H website and submission site for you to download. Packages containing your award are on the way! Congratulations!

**2021:** The HRA 2.0 Commanding Officer Report is ready to go and can be downloaded from the above site. We will upload new reports every two weeks through September, and then weekly October through December. Key points:

1. The HRA 2.0 will expire on December 31, 2021, so don’t delay getting folks to complete this.
2. 2021 Criteria have been emailed via Blue H Updates and are available on the Blue H [Website](#).
3. Criteria Worksheets are still being updated to include a ‘cut and paste’ from the above CO report, so your input will be much easier than in the past. The criteria themselves will not change again. A video and classes will be available to show you how to do this once it is complete.
4. Reminder: the Blue H deadline is reverting back to **January 31** for the **2021** submission.
5. Due to Defense Health Administration’s changes to command websites, the criteria to have a health promotion webpage and contain specific links to helpful websites is being waived for 2021. No other waivers or allowances for other criteria are being considered at this time.
6. Reserve update: We are currently working on a request process to allow detachments to apply separate from the Naval Operational Support Unit if they are large enough. More to come!

**UPCOMING CLASSES:** Schedule will be finalized once criteria are all complete for 2021.

- Blue H Submission - How to
- Blue H Tips
- Reserve Submission Process



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## 6 Ways to Stress Less This Summer

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What are the first images that come to your mind when you think about summer? Is it the smell of fresh cut grass or the sun hitting your skin? What about spending time with friends at a park, swimming in the ocean, or getting some much needed R&R to recharge?

Whatever your summer ends up looking like, we want you to be confident you'll be able to navigate any stress you face this season. Keep these quick tips in mind to enjoy the extra daylight:

**Plan ahead.** Consider ways to be more proactive. Throw a water bottle and sunscreen in your backpack before your next long hike to stay hydrated and safe. At work, review your daily, weekly, monthly, or annual responsibilities to feel more confident about your schedule and what you can and can't add to your plate. This can also help you plan time away from work and really enjoy it without worry of forgetting something.

**Exercise frequently.** Breaking a sweat through physical activity is a helpful way to feel more mindful. Move in a way that works for you, and switch it up when you can to get even more health benefits. Fuel your workouts with what's in season at the grocery store to build nutritious and balanced meals.

**Drink responsibly.** With hotter temperatures and a potential increase in social time, make sure you're intentional about your alcohol consumption if you choose to drink. Alcohol is a depressant, and essentially slows down brain function. Try drinking slowly, keeping food nearby, and having a plan ready to get home safely so that you're best prepared.

**Connect with others.** Having a strong support system helps us navigate stress and stay resilient. The summer is often a time where a lot of people move, and it can be easy to feel disconnected. Check in on your friends and family, find new ways to connect with your community, and make plans with others to feel a sense of belonging.

**Take time for yourself.** The amount of time you're able to devote to self-care might change but make it a point to do something for yourself each day – even if it is a super small ACT. Write out your thoughts in a journal, learn something new by reading an interesting article, or do a 10-minute meditation.

**Reduce access to lethal means.** Lethal means safety is the process of ensuring that lethal means of suicide, like firearms and prescription drugs, are out of reach during times of increased stress. Keeping lethal means stored safely and securely helps protect you and those around you. Even in more positive times, knowing lethal means are secured will make you feel more at ease.

This article appears courtesy of our partners at Project 1 Small ACT, which empowers behavior change by providing Sailors and their families with suicide prevention and stress management resources, messaging and guidance. The project promotes ongoing and active engagement to enable early recognition of suicide risk, encourage proactive intervention and champion seeking help for psychological health-related challenges. Looking for more tips to navigate stress? Follow and like **Project 1 Small ACT** on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



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## Prevention is Key: The Impact of Sprains and Strains

Every day, on- and off-duty injuries put Service Members like you on the sidelines, affecting your work and threatening your fitness for duty. According to the 2019 U.S. Navy & Marine Corps Acute Annual Injury Surveillance, **the #1 reason for lost workdays in the military is due to sprains and strains.**

These two types of injuries are commonly confused. What are sprains and strains? **Sprains** are injuries that occur to ligaments, which attach bone to bone, when they are overstretched causing tearing. A **strain** is an injury to your muscles or tendons, which attach muscle to bone, caused by overusing or overstretching the muscle. These are commonly referred to as “pulled muscles.”

Think of a muscle, tendon or ligament as a rubber band. As you stretch the band past its normal limits, the band begins to tear a little and with continued stress causes further tearing. Tears from sprains and strains can be mild, moderate or severe, leading to complete tears of the ligament, muscle and/or tendon. If your body is not in good physical condition, any activity that places a sudden or unusual stress on your muscles or joints may cause a sprain or a strain.

### What can you do to prevent sprains and strains?

- Work out regularly to keep yourself in good shape.
- Warm up properly before an activity to increase blood flow to your muscles and your range of motion, which decreases injuries.
- Perform functional strength exercises. These use multiple muscle groups and emphasize core strength and flexibility through movements that are similar to the activities you do on a daily basis (e.g., squatting, lifting, reaching or carrying heavy objects). This will keep your muscles, tendons and ligaments strong.

Preventing sprains and strains is key in decreasing the #1 threat to physical readiness to keep you and other service members off the sidelines. For more information, visit [Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling System \(NOFFS\)](#).

## Follow NMCPHC on Social Media to Earn Blue H Award Points!

For more health and wellness monthly topics, new updates on programs and great resources, be sure to follow NMCPHC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#). When you share our posts to support your health promotion projects, you'll earn Blue H award points!



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## Microwave Series: Mixed Fresh Veggies and Cheese

Your local farmers market will be full of bright and fresh vegetables this time of year. This recipe features chayote squash, which is actually a fruit from the gourd family and has a potato-like texture. Chayote squash is high in potassium and delicious! You'll want to use a plate to cook the veggies in circles to maximize the oven's potential for even cooking. After the veggies are mostly cooked, they are sprinkled with some fresh tomato wedges (use only fresh here) then drizzled with an herb butter and cheese. Final cooking melts it all together - yum! Serves 4.

### Ingredients:

1 whole chayote (about 12 ounces)	1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1-2 cups broccoli, 1/4 inch pieces of stem, and florets	1 Tablespoon fresh thyme, cilantro, savory, or marjoram
1/2 medium size head cauliflower broken into florets	2 plum tomatoes, cut into wedges
2-3 carrots cut 1/4 inch on the diagonal	
3 tablespoons butter	

### Instructions:

1. Prick the chayote about halfway deep in a dozen places with a fork. Place on a paper towel. Cook on HIGH for 4 - 4.5 minutes, until firm-tender when pierced with a knife. Set aside.
2. Arrange the broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots in circles on the pie plate. Put the broccoli around the outside, the cauliflower the next ring in, and the carrots piled in the center. Partially cover with plastic wrap.
3. Cook on HIGH for 6-8 minutes, until crisp-tender when pierced with the tip of a knife. Let stand for 2 minutes.
4. In a small microwave-safe cup, cook the butter, onion powder, and herbs on HIGH for 1 minute to melt the butter and combine the flavors.
5. Cut the chayote in half, remove the pit with a spoon, and cut each half crosswise into 1/2 inch slices. Place these pieces and the tomato wedges on top of the vegetables on the plate. Drizzle the butter mixture over this and then sprinkle the cheese. Cook on HIGH for 60-90 seconds, just until heated and the cheese melts slightly. ENJOY!!

