To Your Health–Build Your Fitness

Military Health System Communications Toolkit

Monthly Topics January 2021

Topics and Resources For Communicators

To Your Health: Build Your Fitness in 2021

Military Health System
health.mil
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>New Year’s Navy Seal Birthday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>World Braille Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>World Day for War Orphans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Folic Acid Awareness Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Folic Acid Awareness Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>MLK Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>National Intravenous Nurses Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>National Spouses Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Vietnam Peace Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>World Leprosy Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**January 2021**

- Winter Sports TBI Awareness Month
- Cervical Health Awareness Month
- Blood Donor Month
- Glaucoma Awareness Month
- Birth Defect Prevention Month
- Thyroid Awareness Month
Overview

To Your Health – Build Fitness in 2021

The challenges we faced in 2020 took unprecedented effort and sacrifices from frontline health workers to protect and care for our people, maintain readiness, and support the national COVID-19 response. This new year is an opportunity to build on lessons learned in 2020 to ensure we are more resilient as individuals, as communities, as a military, and as a nation.

Even though the new year promises to continue many of the challenges of 2020, we can salute our health and envision ways to overcome those challenges by taking care of our entire body, mind, and spirit in 2021.

Reintroducing Total Force Fitness

Optimizing Total Force Fitness is the MHS entryway into the first line of effort in the National Defense Strategy – Build a More Lethal Force. The Total Force Fitness concept focuses on a Service Member’s entire health throughout their career, connecting eight dimensions of fitness to optimize health, performance, and readiness holistically.

Total Force Fitness in a Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic created many new stressors, and took away many of the stress relief activities we used to. The Total Force Fitness approach to wellness is particularly beneficial in the current climate, giving us ways to optimize fitness and resilience even when our access to traditional models is limited.

Winter Safety – Winter Sport TBI Awareness Month

Don’t let seasonal injuries affect your fitness and your readiness to complete your mission. Environmental fitness is a key component of Total Force Fitness. Make sure you are fit, prepared, and able to perform required duties even in subzero temperatures, snow, and wind. Many winter sports, especially high-speed activities like skiing, snowboarding, and skating, carry increased risk of serious Traumatic Brain Injury. Proper use of safety equipment minimizes the risk of serious brain injury.

January Monthly Theme Speakers Notes

This month we are offering a new product, talking points intended for MHS leaders, particularly at the MTF, to use during the month. Please consider incorporating some of these messages on Total Force Fitness and other January themes into internal or external speaking opportunities during January. These speaker notes are on Health.mil: https://health.mil/Reference-Center/Publications/2020/12/28/January-Speech-Talking-Points
Reintroducing Total Force Fitness

Key Messages
The eight Total Force Fitness domains are:

1. Physical Fitness: The ability to physically accomplish all aspects of your tasks while avoiding injury.
   - Military readiness requires training practices that maintain performance, prevent injury and illness, and support speedy recovery.
   - Physical fitness is more than your body mass index, PT run time, or how many push-ups you can do. To optimize your physical fitness you need strength, flexibility, balance, and endurance all working together.

2. Environmental Fitness: The ability to perform your tasks in any operational environment.
   - We all know instinctively that our environment affects our performance. Be aware of environmental challenges and make sure they do not pose a threat to your health.
   - We’ve all had to modify our environment during the COVID-19 pandemic, whether it’s wearing a mask, having kids home from school, or working remotely. Controlling our environment can improve fitness.

3. Medical and Dental Preventive Care Fitness: The ability to sustain your health and wellness and facilitate restoration to meet medical and dental standards for fitness for duty, return to duty, and medical readiness.
   - Proper preventive health care keeps Service Members ready for duty, minimizing impacts to the mission from injuries and illness.
   - Oral health is a critical but often forgotten part of overall wellness, and important to deployability.
   - Injury prevention is critical for Service Members who have physically demanding duties and exercise rigorously.

4. Nutritional Fitness: The ability to sustain your performance through foods, dietary supplements, and beverages in adequate quantities, quality, and proportions.
   - Food fuels performance and the right “fuel” helps you perform at your best.
   - A good diet isn't just healthy and nutritious, it must be sustainable.
   - Much of our self-image, self-worth, and mental health can be tied into our weight. Maintaining a healthy, balanced, and sustainable diet helps build wellness across many areas of health.

5. Ideological and Spiritual Fitness: The beliefs and practices that strengthen your connectedness with sources of hope, meaning, and purpose.
   - Spiritual fitness relates to our ability to develop core beliefs, highest principles, and ultimate values, and if we can live our life accordingly.
When our spiritual or ideological fitness is misaligned, it can impact our mental health, social interactions, and family relationships.

Spiritual and ideological fitness for Service Members also extends to commitment to service and sacrifice, our relationships with family, comrades, unit, community, the Nation, and society as a whole.

6. **Psychological Fitness:** The ability to integrate and improve cognitive, emotional, and behavioral practices.

   - Staying mission-ready means having a healthy, high functioning mind, which connects to every domain of Total Force Fitness.
   - Mental health and mental toughness are not binary options with an “on/off switch” – they exist on a spectrum, and you can train the mind and learn skills to improve.
   - Psychological health takes practice and training. Just like any other part of your body, the more you exercise it, the stronger and more resilient it gets.

7. **Social Fitness:** The ability to engage in productive personal and professional relationships, positively interact with unit and command networks, and use resources that promote overall well-being.

   - Military life, with frequent deployments, PCS moves, and training exercises, can stress family life and other important relationships.
   - It is important to invest in these relationships to sustain them through distance and other challenges.
   - Social fitness bolsters mental, spiritual, physical, and environmental fitness.

8. **Financial Fitness:** The combination of attitude, knowledge, and skills to make and exercise money management decisions that best support your life circumstances.

   - Financial fitness contributes to overall fitness in numerous ways, including reducing stress and access to nutritious foods, and a healthy environment.
   - Service Members often identify financial issues as one of their top concerns.
   - Financial stress can impact productivity, mood, and performance.

**Additional Resources for Total Force Fitness**

- Human Performance Resource Center – [Total Force Fitness as a Roadmap to Peak Performance](https://health.mil/)
- Health.mil page on mental wellness
- Nutrition information on [Choosemyplate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov)
- Military OneSource offers [free financial counseling](https://www.militaryonesource.mil)
- Human Performance Resource Center [resources for physical fitness](https://health.mil/)
- Health.mil page on preventive health
- Human Performance Resource Center [resources for family optimization](https://health.mil/)
- Human Performance Recourse Center [resources for spiritual fitness](https://health.mil/)**
Total Force Fitness in a Pandemic

Key Messages

COVID-19 changed all of our lives in unexpected ways and made sustaining fitness more challenging. The Total Force Fitness model addresses many additional stresses and challenges Service Members and the DoD workforce face during the pandemic.

- Traditional approaches to maintaining peak performance and mission readiness may not be enough in 2021. Focusing on overall wellness can give your fitness a boost when under stress.
- COVID-19 caused many changes to our lifestyle and circumstances that directly impact a fitness domain, or make it more difficult to sustain or build a fitness domain.

- Social isolation; job loss; difficult access to healthy food; and closed gyms, churches, schools, and recreation areas robbed us of many outlets to sustain wellness.

- Tips for building overall wellness during the pandemic:
  - Control what you can, and establish new routines to relieve stress.
  - Engage in self-care. It can be taking walks, engaging in a hobby, making art, or anything else that lets you take your mind off the stress in your life.
  - Don’t skip on preventive health. Many regular health appointments can be done virtually.
  - Stay active. Even if the gym is closed or doesn’t feel safe, exercise in the home or outside.
  - Create a healthy, sustainable work environment in your pandemic circumstances.
  - Get enough sleep, at least seven hours a night for adults.
  - Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, especially as stress release outlets.
  - Stay connected with friends and family, especially using virtual tools, and check in regularly for your good, and theirs.
  - Meditation, relaxation, quality time with family, and personal care of yourself promotes overall wellness.

Additional Resources for Total Force Fitness in a Pandemic

- Resource on food planning during the pandemic
- Health.mil article on wellness as armor against infection
- Human Performance Resource Center Hope for COVID-19
Winter Safety

Key Messages

Staying mission ready means avoiding preventable injury and illness. Winter weather poses a risk to health that can be minimized with proper winter safety actions.

- When wintry conditions make roads hazardous, slow down, leave more space between cars, and stay home if you don't need to be on the road.
  - Winterize your car – check tires and battery; replace wiper blades and fluid; ensure antifreeze levels are high; keep your gas tank half-full to prevent frozen lines; and keep extra batteries, flashlights, blankets and a first aid kit in your car.

- Exercising in cold weather has some different risks than warm or temperate weather.
  - Cold muscles can lead to injuries. Make sure you stretch before exercising in the cold.
  - Your endurance can change in cold weather. Make sure you know your winter limits before you push them.
  - Hypothermia and frostbite are real concerns in extreme cold. Wear appropriate gear, carry gloves and hats, and limit time outside in windy, wet, or extremely cold weather.

- Winter sports like skiing, hockey, and snowboarding are exhilarating, but high speeds carry a risk of injury, including brain injuries.
  - Never ski or snowboard alone. Have a buddy who can help in the case of injury.
  - Don't try to perform beyond your ability. Don't be stuck in the lodge tomorrow because you skied the black diamond today.
  - Use the proper safety equipment, especially a well-fitting helmet.
  - Dress for the top of the mountain. It's always colder than the bottom.

Additional resources for Winter Safety

- Health.mil page on Winter Safety
- Additional Health.mil Winter Safety graphics
- Head Check: Know Your Helmet, Winter Sports
- How to prevent cold weather injuries
Mentoring Month

Mentoring plays a vital role in the Military Health System, nurturing each successive generation of health providers. Strong mentoring relationships can also build or sustain social fitness and spiritual and ideological fitness.

- Starting a career in medicine can be challenging, especially in the military. Giving young military medical professionals support helps forge bonds and connections that build a strong professional network.
- Mentoring encourages professional development, building a stronger Military Health System.
- Mentoring can also be incredibly fulfilling and rewarding for both mentor and mentee.
  - This can enhance the ideological and spiritual fitness, psychological fitness, and social fitness domains.
  - Mentoring forges bonds, creates opportunities to share work anxieties, and offers fulfillment in lifting others up.
  - Mentoring is a great way live your principles and pass them on.
- Mentoring can focus on issues beyond professional or academic development. Military medical mentors can give guidance on military life and surviving in two extremely competitive fields – medicine and the military.

Additional Resources for Mentoring Month

- Uniformed Services University Rising Physicians Program
- DoD Mentoring Resource Portal
- Health.mil Article on Air Force doctor promoting women leaders in military medicine
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs veteran mentoring resources
- MilitaryOneSource Family Life and Mentoring resources
- MilitaryOneSource Military Spouse Mentoring Programs
Visit the Total Force Fitness Health.mil page to learn more about TFF and see January theme articles throughout the month.

Total Force Fitness

Winter Safety Month

To Your Health

To Your Health: Build Your Fitness in 2021
APPROVED GRAPHICS

Graphics to Use on Your Platforms

Use these graphics on your social media platforms in support of January themes and observances.

These graphics are in the January Toolkit on Health.mil: [www.health.mil/JanuaryToolkit](http://www.health.mil/JanuaryToolkit)

---

**Total Force Fitness**

*Suggested Social Media Message:* Total Force Fitness is a wholistic approach to warfighter health, across 8 domains of fitness. Health is more than how much you sweat and what you eat… your whole self is connected.

#TotalForceFitness  #BuildFitness2021

[https://health.mil/News/In-the-Spotlight/Total-Force-Fitness](https://health.mil/News/In-the-Spotlight/Total-Force-Fitness)

---

**Total Force Fitness — Psychological Fitness**

*Suggested Social Media Message:* There are so many aspects of our mental health that affect overall wellness. Anxiety, emotional stress, trauma, guilt and many others can impact your diet, your physical health, your financial health and more. Find resources to build your mental resilience.

#TotalForceFitness  #BuildFitness2021

Total Force Fitness — Nutritional Fitness

*Suggested Social Media Message:* Nutritional fitness is critical to wellness. A healthy, balanced is the foundation of every other good health habit, and critical to building fitness.

#TotalForceFitness  #BuildFitness2021


Total Force Fitness — Physical Fitness

*Suggested Social Media Message:* Service Members need to remain fit above and beyond passing a fitness test. Train smart, train safe and train for the mission.

#TotalForceFitness  #BuildFitness2021


Total Force Fitness — Environmental Fitness

*Suggested Social Media Message:* Your environment can play a huge impact on overall fitness. From exercising in extreme temperatures, to high noise jobs, to healthy office relationships, your environment affects performance in many ways.

#TotalForceFitness  #BuildFitness2021

[https://www.hprc-online.org/physical-fitness/environmental-extremes](https://www.hprc-online.org/physical-fitness/environmental-extremes)
Total Force Fitness — Ideological and Spiritual Fitness

*Suggested Social Media Message:* When your mission is aligned to your core beliefs, values, and spiritual practices, you are better equipped to navigate life’s challenges and optimize your performance. A positive attitude and job satisfaction aren’t just something you can turn on… like every aspect of fitness, the more you practice and tune your body and mind, the better you perform.

#TotalForceFitness  #BuildFitness2021

https://www.hprc-online.org/mental-fitness/spiritual-fitness

---

Total Force Fitness — Medical and Dental Preventive Care Fitness

*Suggested Social Media Message:* It’s easier to prevent injury or illness than recover, especially chronic conditions. Take care of yourself through diet and exercise, stay up with your recommended screenings, and communicate with your healthcare provider – something that seems like a small problem now can get worse through neglect or continued overuse.

#TotalForceFitness  #BuildFitness2021

https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Operation-Live-Well/Preventive-Health
Total Force Fitness — Social Fitness

*Suggested Social Media Message:* Robust, fulfilling and healthy relationships with friends, family and coworkers are critical to many areas of wellness. They can buttress our mental health, be workout buddies to encourage exercise, and be nutrition partners to work together improving your diet. Socially fit Service Members are resilient Service Members.

#TotalForceFitness  #BuildFitness2021

https://www.militaryonesource.mil/national-guard/psychological-health-program/social-wellness/

---

Total Force Fitness — Financial Fitness

*Suggested Social Media Message:* Financial fitness is the ability to make good money management decisions, and stick to them. Living within your means has real health impacts – you won’t skip an appointment because you’re worried about money, and you can afford healthy foods instead of junk. Being in food financial shape also lowers stress and sustains family relationships.

#TotalForceFitness  #BuildFitness2021

Mental Toughness Infographic

*Suggested Social Media Message:* There are many misperceptions about what it means to be mentally tough. Get the real story:

https://www.hprc-online.org/mental-fitness/绩效心理学/7-myths-and-facts-about-mental-toughness

**MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT MENTAL TOUGHNESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MYTHS</th>
<th>FACTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| You either have it or you don’t | You can learn it at any age. The sooner you start, the more likely they’ll be sooner than later.
| If it’s not broke, don’t fix it | Practice those skills daily to prevent future problems.
| It’s all in your mind | Wind and body are connected. Some skills are mental, like talking yourself through anxiety. Others are physical, like calming yourself through breathing.
| I can only build it alone | Close relationships can boost resilience when things get tough. Having people to offer support, encouragement, and honest feedback can grow mental toughness.
| It’s about ignoring emotions | Finding constructive ways of expressing, harnessing, or coping with tough emotions is key to mental toughness.
| Mentally tough people don’t feel stress | Mentally tough people feel stress, but balance it with things like good sleep habits, mind-body strategies, and frequent and helpful outcome stress.
| Mentally tough people never fail | Mentally tough people fail. What sets them apart is how they handle failure. They find out what went wrong, get help, and try new solutions to prevent setbacks.

To Your Health – Build Your Fitness in 2021

*Suggested Social Media Message:* Building fitness in 2021 won’t be easy, but a #TotalForceFitness approach to wellness gets you started down the right path. Strengthen your whole self, and you can achieve performance you never thought possible!

#BuildFitness2021
Folic Acid Awareness Week

*Suggested Social Media Message:* Folic Acid Awareness week is underway, highlighting the importance for women of reproductive age to get enough folic acid, or folate in their diet, to lessen the chance of major birth defects like anencephaly and spina bifida.

#BuildFitness2021

https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/about.html

https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/prevention-month.html

---

TFF – Tobacco Free Living

*Suggested Social Media Message:* One critical piece of #TotalForceFitness living tobacco free! Using tobacco has negative health impacts across your whole body, and negatively affects performance. Live your healthiest life by avoiding, or ditching tobacco use.

#TotalForceFitness

#BuildFitness2021

National Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA) Week

Suggested Social Media Message: Did you know Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists trace their roots to military medicine? During the Civil War, nurses first gave anesthesia to wounded soldiers on the battlefield. Today, CRNAs are still critical to military medical operations, and we recognize their efforts during National Nurse Anesthetists Week.

New Year’s Day

Suggested Social Media Message: Happy New Years from the Military Health System!

#NewYear #2021 #BuildFitness2021

Cervical Health Awareness Month

Suggested Social Media Message: More than 13,000 women in the United States are diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer each year, but the disease is preventable with vaccination and appropriate screening. Preventive health fitness is a critical piece of #TotalForceFitness. Don't let preventable disease knock you out!

#BuildFitness2021
Winter Sports TBI Awareness Month

Suggested Social Media Message: DYK sports and recreational activities contribute to about 21 percent of all traumatic brain injuries among American children and adolescents, and TBI is the leading cause of death of sports-related fatalities? If your kids participate in high-speed or contact winter sports, make sure they have the proper equipment, and all concussion protocols are properly followed.

#TBIAwareness


Spouses Day (Jan 26)

Suggested Social Media Message: January 26 is National Spouses Day, a day to appreciate and enjoy your better half. Military spouses in particular serve in their own way, and their commitment and support also help keep our nation safe. Thank you to all military spouses out there!

#spousesday  #milspouse

Glaucoma Awareness Month

Suggested Social Media Message: About 3 million Americans have Glaucoma, a serious progressive eye disease that can lead to blindness if not treated.

Early detection is the key to minimizing the impact of glaucoma, so make sure you get glaucoma screenings as recommended for your age and arm yourself with the information you need:

https://www.cdc.gov/features/glaucoma-awareness/index.html
**Blood Donor Month**

*Suggested Social Media Message:* DYK know that every blood donation has the potential to save three lives? Give a little bit of yourself to give someone else a second chance. Learn how to donate to the Armed Service Blood Program at: [https://www.militaryblood.dod.mil/](https://www.militaryblood.dod.mil/)

---

**Vietnam Peace Day (Jan 27)**

*Suggested Social Media Message:* On January 27, 1973, the Paris Peace Accords ended U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, although the impact of that conflict continues to this day. We salute the medics, and all veterans, who served in Vietnam.

---

**National Intravenous Nurses' Day (Jan 25)**

*Suggested Social Media Message:* January 25 is National IV Nurse Day. IV nurses play a critical lifesaving role in battlefield medicine and are a staple of care in most hospitals and clinics across the MHS. Thank you for all you do for your patients!

---

**Navy Seal Birthday (Jan 1)**

*Suggested Social Media Message:* The New Year also marks the birthday of the Navy Seals, Created by President John F. Kennedy on New Year’s Day, 1962.

Happy Birthday!
Winter Safety

Suggested Social Media Message: If you work outside in a northerly climate, you know winter weather presents different challenges. Prolonged exposure to extreme cold, especially compounded by wind or wetness can have serious immediate and long term health effects. Get some tips for dealing with cold stress:


Suggested Social Media Message: If you live in an area where winter storms can knock out power, make sure you’re prepared! Keep flashlights, extra batteries, blankets, first aid kit and other items in a place you can find it if the light go out!

https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/features/winterweather/index.html

---

**Winter Safety**

**Build a Winter Emergency Kit**
- Battery-operated devices, such as a flashlight
- Extra batteries
- First-aid kit and extra medicine
- Ditty items
- Cat litter or sand for icy walkways

---

**Winter Running Tips**

- Layer Up
  - Dress in layers that you can add or subtract as you warm up and then put back in as you cool down.
  - Wear thermal and moisture-wicking layers.
- Pay Attention to Weather Conditions
  - Check the forecast before you head out.
- Avoid Frostbite
  - Watch out for cold or exposed skin, especially your toes, fingers, nose, cheeks, ears, and hands. Early warning signs of frostbite are a loss of normal sensation or a deepening numbness.

---

**Winter Safety Kit**

- Battery-operated devices, such as a flashlight
- Extra Batteries
- First-Aid Kit and Extra Medicine
- Baby Items
- Cat Litter or Sand (for Icy Walkways)
**Winter Safety – Car**

*Suggested Social Media Message:* Is your car ready for winter? Check your tires, your antifreeze levels, and keep your gas tank full to avoid icing. Keeping a winter emergency kit in your car is a good idea too, with items to keep your going and communicate if you get stranded in your vehicle.

https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/features/winterweather/index.html

---

**TFF in a pandemic**

*Suggested Social Media Message:* TFF has never been more important than during the #COVID-19 pandemic. As stresses mount, we need wholistic wellness to optimize performance and ensure readiness. Commit to

#TotalForceFitness    #BuildFitness2021

https://health.mil/News/In-the-Spotlight/Total-Force-Fitness

---

**TFF Infographic**

The 8 Total Force Fitness domains come together to build overall wellness and optimize performance and readiness.