Health and Wellness of America’s Military, Family Members, Retirees, and Civilians: The Performance Triad

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Introduction

As part of the Army’s Ready and Resilient campaign, the Army has introduced a new Performance Triad that encourages every professional Soldier to optimize their own health in order to improve their performance and resiliency. There must be an effective way to change mindsets, not just dictate behaviors. As Army Medicine continues to open the aperture, we must look at where health is truly influenced.

The Performance Triad: ANS

In the performance triad, there are three points of focus to build and sustain health: physical activity, nutrition, and sleep (ANS).

The Surgeon General, LTG Patricia Horoho, stated, “Over the last 12 years, we’ve learned that you need to train not just our Soldiers but their families as well, and ensure that they’re healthy mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. By improving health, we’re improving the readiness of the force.”

The approach to the training is that small unit leaders will be responsible for motivating their Soldiers with the Performance Triad health information. This empowers the squad leader in the overall health and wellness of their Soldiers. It is critical for the squad leaders and Soldiers to be supported by the chain-of-command to be successful, but it is not a top-driven program.
Physical Activity

Gymnasiums are available on post with personal trainers and coaching, but activity is not limited to what happens in the gym. The general recommendation is to exercise at least 150 minutes per week with a good mix of aerobic activity and strength training. You can achieve more health benefits if you increase your exercise to 300 minutes a week (moderate-intensity aerobic activities such as brisk walking).

Exercising 150 minutes per week may sound like a lot of time, but you do not have to do it all at once! It is best to spread your physical activity out during the week. Break it up into smaller chunks of time during the day. Do your activity at a moderate or vigorous effort for at least 10 minutes a time.
**Nutrition**

Fueling with the right amount of **Carbohydrates**, **Protein**, and **Healthy Fats** promotes energy, endurance, stamina, and muscle growth.

**Benefits:**
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Decreased post-exercise muscle soreness
- Stronger and healthier muscles

Plan your meals like you plan your workouts! A plan for eating and hydrating before, during, and after physical training is essential.

The table below outlines some excellent benefits and sources of each food group.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Fruits and Vegetables</strong></th>
<th>• Loaded with carbohydrates, natural antioxidants, vitamins and minerals that enhance recovery and support your immune system</th>
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| **Carbohydrates**         | • Primary fuel source for your muscles and the only fuel source for your brain  
• Whole grain sources have more fiber and vitamins essential for energy metabolism  
  o Whole-grain breads, cereal and pastas, rice, oatmeal, legumes (beans), and fruit |
| **Lean Protein**          | • Provides the amino acids your muscles need to grow, repair, and recover  
  o Skinless poultry, fish, lean beef and pork; low-fat milk and yogurt; legumes (beans), eggs, and tofu  
  o Nuts and seeds are also a good protein source |
| **Healthy Fats**          | • Unsaturated fats, especially omega fatty acids, can be healthy when eaten in small amounts  
  o Olives, salmon, walnuts, almonds, flax and avocados |
Poor quality sleep can have serious short and long term consequences, particularly in new parents, shift workers, deployed Soldiers, and high OPTEMPO Soldiers.

Sleep deprivation affects mood, concentration, reaction time and cognitive function. It is important to find innovative ways to incentivize the strategic shift moving away from treatment to prevention.

Did you know that the Brian Allgood Army Community Hospital has a **Sleep Medicine Clinic**?
A Community Program

We advocate the Performance Triad as a community program where you can learn and apply change to behaviors related to activity, nutrition and sleep. Some of our Soldiers and community are unhealthy and the cost of healthcare is astronomical and rising. This program can be used as a predictor for units to reduce the amount of injuries they experience.

In addition to Performance Triad Training Sessions, squad leaders will receive a guidebook that can fit in their pockets, "Performance Triad: A Leader's Guide and Planner." The guidebook not only explains the importance of activity, sleep and nutrition for performance, it also provides tips for how squad leaders can get their Soldiers motivated and on board with the training. It also includes a calendar and activity log, goals, and links to useful videos and websites. Soldiers receiving training will also get a guidebook: "Soldier's Guide: Tools for the Tactical Athlete." It contains similar information, minus the leadership tips portion. Additionally, numerous links are available online that are packed with details to help with everything from preventing injuries to choosing dietary supplements and tips to become healthier and stronger.

Personal Readiness Device

To measure performance and improvement in the future, Soldiers will be issued a “personal readiness device.”

The **Fitbit Flex** is an inexpensive tool that measures activity, nutrition and sleep. It provides real-time feedback to the user through data that can be viewed daily, weekly, or monthly to track progress over time. Data is uploaded and stored to the user's account via Bluetooth connection between the device and the user's personal computer or smartphone.

Some key features include:

- Tapping the device twice illuminates between one and five of the LEDs
- Each LED represents 20% of the daily goal, set to 10,000 steps by default
- The average price of the Fitbit is between $60–$130
- “Silent alarm” - can set a once-off or recurring alarm that will make the Flex vibrate
- It also has tools to help promote weight loss
On a single full charge the battery should last about 2 weeks, which is great given it’s the sort of thing you want to wear as much as possible. It is also waterproof and you can wear it in the shower. The Flex makes people more aware of their behavior, which is the first step to changing it.

Through Mobile Apps or websites, you can log:

- Additional details (graphs)
- Foods eaten (calorie and nutritional info)
- Amount of water consumed
- Body measurements (weight, heart rate, blood pressure, glucose)
- A journal of your mood and other health factors (sharing statistics with friends)
- Wear on non-dominant hand for accuracy

**Fitbit Flex Sleep Tracking**

The Fitbit sleep tracking function is useful. When you are ready to go to bed, you can either tap the device five times, or hit a button in the app to tell it you are going to sleep (and again when you wake). Alternatively, you can manually input the hours that you slept. The device will look at your movements to report back with how well you slept during the night. All of those features combined means you have little reason to ever take it off, which is exactly how an activity tracker should be used.

**Success**

Success is measured by the improvement in health and the reduction of disease and injury among our patients, our Military members, Families, Retirees and our civilian workforce. We are confident that the Performance Triad is an innovative path to the wellbeing and readiness of our community. Go ahead and start optimizing your health and performance today!
Links

The Performance Triad
http://armymedicine.mil/Pages/performance-triad.aspx

Leaders’ Guide

Soldiers’ Guide

Training Sessions
http://armymedicine.mil/Pages/Performance-Triad-Training-Sessions.aspx

The Foundation of a System for Health: Army Medicine’s Performance Triad

65th Medical Brigade Website

Health Tips on Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/OfficialArmyMedicine

Points of Contact

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