

## Kick the year off right

It's the start of a new year and many people create resolutions to encourage themselves to improve their lives. Airmen sometimes begin the year by developing goals that will help them pass their fitness assessments.

While physical health is important, mental wellness is equally significant. The Air Force describes mental wellness as "the ability to effectively cope with unique mental stressors and challenges needed to ensure mission readiness." As you continue to strengthen your physical body, make your mental health a priority too.

## Comprehensive Airman Fitness

According to the Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) model, mental fitness is recognized as one of the four domains, which include: physical, mental, spiritual, and social. While each domain is separate, they influence one another holistically.

- **Physical** – The ability to adopt and sustain healthy behaviors needed to enhance health and wellbeing.
- **Mental** – The ability to effectively cope with unique mental stressors and challenges.
- **Spiritual** – The ability to adhere to beliefs, principles, or values needed to persevere and prevail in accomplishing missions.
- **Social** – The ability to engage in healthy social networks that promote overall well-being and optimal performance.



## How to boost your mental health

Mental health struggles are common and many people are affected by them. Do not ignore the signs that tell you something may be wrong. These signs may include, but are not limited to, feelings of extreme highs and lows, social withdrawal, and drastic changes in your sleeping or eating habits. It's never too late to address your challenges. The following tips can assist with strengthening your Mental Health Fitness:



**Increase social connections** – Make the effort to be in the company of others. As an Airman, you are taught to be resilient, but there are times when you need to let your guard down and confide in someone else. The answer that you seek may be one conversation away.



**Eat right** – The food you eat can also affect your mental health. An unhealthy diet can drain your energy and take a toll on your mood. Monitor the food you eat to see how it makes you feel. Begin consuming foods that boost your focus, mood, and energy, such as whole grains, beans, and vegetables.



**Exercise** – Staying active is as important for your mental wellness as it is for your body. Small amounts of physical activity such as strength, endurance, flexibility, and mobility training can play a huge role in boosting your mental and emotional health.

## Get to work

Now that you're ready to conquer your goals and make strides towards improving your mental health, it's time to get to work. Be sure to motivate your fellow Airmen to ensure they stick to their goals. Stay determined and remember that a new year can mean new opportunities, new discoveries, and a renewed YOU!

## Set yourself up for success

Here are some tips to ensure that you achieve your New Year's resolutions:

### Make a list of goals

Create a daily regime that will make it easier to monitor your goal progress. Break down each goal into a specific, clear task and activities needed to accomplish your goals.

### Develop a routine

Routine provides a sense of structure and familiarity. Commit to a routine that will allow you to reach your desired goal. For example, if you want to lose five pounds, begin exercising at least 30 minutes in the gym twice a week.

### Visualize your success

Create a detailed mental image of your desired outcome. Twice a day, pick a time during which you'll review your goals and visualize your success.

### Stay positive

Recreate moments in your mind that make you smile. Once a day, take five minutes to reflect on something that you're grateful for. It could be something as simple as waking up in the morning!

### Get others involved

Be a good Wingman. Once a month seek out someone that you can share your goal progress with. This partnership is mutually beneficial and helps everyone push forward.