

Healthy Living

Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

E-Newsletter

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How will you manage stress during the winter months?

It is important for us during times we find ourselves stressed to find positive ways to manage our stress. It is common that we will experience bouts of high stress.

Prolonged stress can cause high blood pressure, a weakened immune system, heart disease, and digestion problems. Signs can be low energy, irritability, headaches, and depression are other common traits.

In the MOVE![®] Veteran's Workbook, Module 14, there are 6 Keys to Managing Your Stress and Finding Support. What will be your next move to manage stress during the winter?

1. Track Your stress
2. Identify the Source of Your Stress
3. Practice Mindfulness Regularly
4. Be Physically Active
5. Practice Deep Breathing
6. Plan Pleasant Activity

Source: MOVE![®] Veteran Workbook, pg 196

- Sleep Well
- Get Recommended Screening Tests and Immunizations
- Be Involved In Your Health Care
- Manage Stress
- Be Tobacco Free
- Limit Alcohol
- Be Safe
- Strive for a Healthy Weight
- Be Physically Active
- Eat Wisely

[Healthy Teaching Kitchen](#)

has new recipe videos! Click below

[Lemon Parmesan Broccoli](#)



Stress Free and Mindful Approaches

Source: www.mov.va.vetnetworkbook.asp

Deep Breathing Exercise:

1. Start by sitting down in a comfortable place that's free from distraction. Uncross your legs, put both feet on the floor, and rest your hands in your lap. Pay attention to how this position feels and let your mind and body just "be" for a few moments.

2. Close your eyes and notice the pattern of your breath as you inhale and exhale. It may be soft or loud, slow or quick, or shallow or deep. Make a mental note of your breath before you start relaxing with deep breathing. Just breathe naturally for a few moments, taking slow and breaths in through your nose and then breathing out through your mouth.

3. Now hold your breath for 5 seconds after you inhale, and for another 5 seconds after you exhale. Continue breathing in this rhythm for a few moments.

4. Breathe naturally for a moment. Now place both of your hands on top of your stomach and notice how your belly rises with each inhale and falls with each exhale. Notice your breath moving in and out again from your belly, to your chest, and gently out through your mouth. Continue breathing naturally.

5. This time say, "Relax" silently or aloud after each time you exhale.

6. Repeat this exercise for 1 to 5 minutes."



Mindfulness has been shown to be effective for reducing stress, improving emotional balance, increasing self-awareness, helping with anxiety and depression, and coping more effectively with chronic pain.

The Mindfulness Coach phone app offers information, audio-guides, and more.

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/mindfulness-coach>



Empower Yourself to Make a Change for Your Health

Where do I start? How can I make changes for my health? We may turn to magazines, social media, and maybe even those around us who look healthy.

We may try a new health approach, but find it too difficult to stick with so then guilt, frustration, and stress to find time gets us bogged down and we give up.

If you have ever done this, then I am here to tell you; you are not alone! We all have been there, but what can we do to change this dialog? Here are some tips to

consider your approach to health and empower you to make a commitment to your desired change.

Ask your healthcare provider if you need to rethink why you were unable to stick with your goals and go back to the drawing board. Ask yourself: What were the barriers? What are you willing to change for your overall health related to mind, body, and spirit?

Is your goal realistic? Pick an area you want to improve on

today and make small goals, yes, you may have a long-term goal, but those small daily and weekly goals will align and help you reach your long-term goals. Once you have decided to make a change be firm and commit to the change. Here are some additional tips to help you change your thinking about food, exercise, and yourself: Realize that you have control over your health.

*Lori Ruckhaber, RDN
MOVE! Coordinator
Mann-Grandstaff VAMC*

Types of Physical Activity during the Winter Months

Routine exercise is hugely beneficial as we age and can include daily walks, yoga, swimming, or chair aerobics. As you start putting these into your routine you may notice your blood pressure, weight, and sleep may improve.

If you are unable to get outside or cannot make it to the gym, challenge yourself to think of activities that start with the letters of your name.

Example: Suzanne

Salsa dance

Upper body strength exercises

Zumba

Aerobics video

Neck stretch

No equipment exercises

Extend legs, alternating

You can also follow the next two pages which show exercises that go with each letter.

Always
make sure
you are in
proper
shoes.

SPELL YOUR NAME EXERCISE GAME



INSTRUCTIONS

- To play the game, spell out your name and follow the exercises that correspond with each letter of your name.
- Perform each exercise for at least 15 seconds.

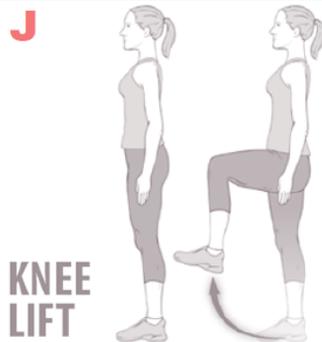
IMAGES CREATED BY:

- 1) *Employee Whole Health Program* by the Iowa City VA Media Department
- 2) *Chair Based Exercise Program* by the Later Life Training
- 3) *21 Chair Exercises for Seniors: A Comprehensive Visual Guide* by California Mobility
- 4) *Gym-free Workouts* by UK National Health Services

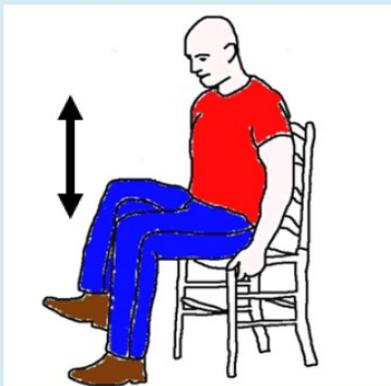
SPO MOVE!

Created by Joelle Netzel and Jin Yoo

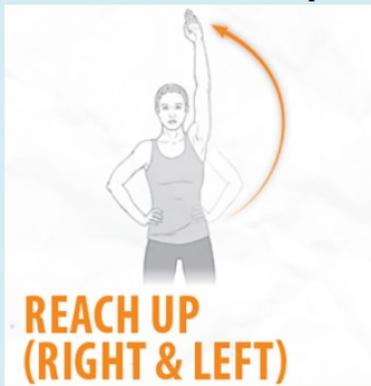
EXAMPLE: JOHN



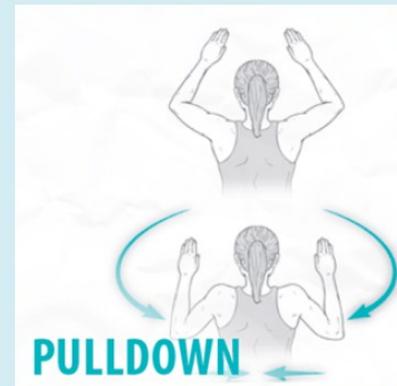
A: Chair March



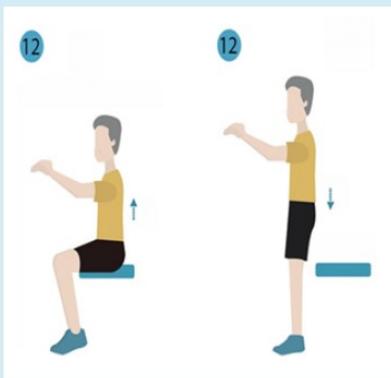
B,C: Reach Up



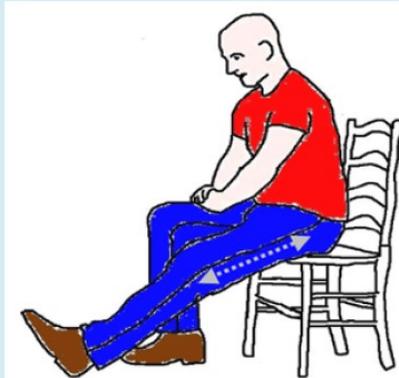
D,F: Pulldowns



E: Chair Sit-to-stands



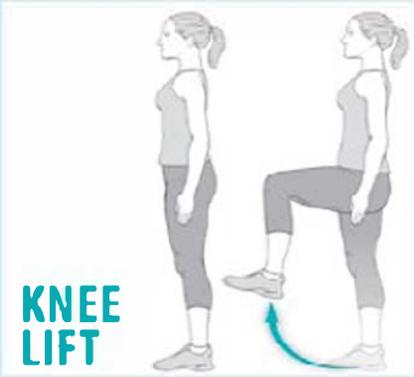
G,H: Hamstring Stretch



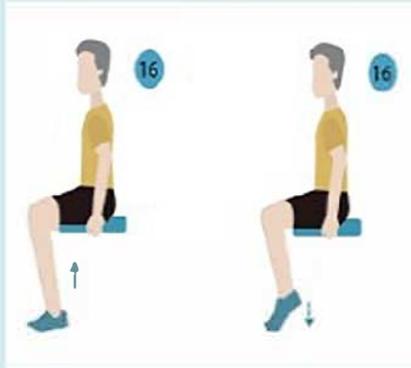
I: Arm Circles



J,K: (chair) Knee Lifts



L,M: Heel Raises



O: Toe Taps



N,P: (chair) Toe Touches



Q,R: Cardio Boxing



S,T: Side Bends



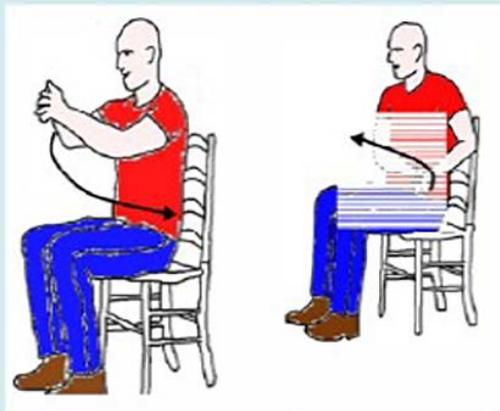
U: (chair) Side Reach



V,W,X: Elbow -knee taps



Y,Z: Arm Swings



Healthy Recipe Alternatives

Continue to eat family favorites and traditional foods by swapping out the high-calorie items!

Use the following tips to trim excess calories, fat, and cholesterol from your favorite recipes:

Cream:

Replace with: Evaporated fat-free milk, fat-free half-and-half. Even swap 1 cup for 1 cup cream

Sour Cream:

Replace with: Fat-free sour cream, low-fat Greek or regular yogurt, or blend 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese with 1 tablespoon skim milk and 2 tablespoons of lemon juice (for tartness)

Butter/Shortening:

Depending on the recipe, use canola, olive, or vegetable oil, can swap 1 cup mashed ripe banana or avocado puree for 1 cup of butter or oil

One-Ounce of Baking Chocolate:

Replace with : 3 tablespoons of cocoa powder and (if fat is needed) add 1 tablespoon canola oil



One Whole Egg:

2 egg whites, equivalent egg substitute, 1 egg white and 2 teaspoons of oil, or combined 1 tablespoon chia seeds with 1 cup of water. Let sit for 15 minutes – yields a 1-to-1 egg substitute for baking. 1 tablespoon flax seed (flax meal) with 3 tablespoons of warm water-whisk with fork, combine, let sit for 5-10 minutes – substitute for 1 egg in baking

Oil (in baking):

Swap out half the fat with applesauce (a recipe using 1 cup of oil would use ½ cup oil and ½ cup applesauce) or double the amount of plain yogurt

For more great ideas, check out MOVE's "Smart Stand-Ins for Healthy Cooking" [Click here](#)

VA Response to COVID-19

VA has implemented an aggressive public health response to protect and care for Veterans, their families, health care providers, and staff in the face of this emerging health risk. We are working directly with the CDC and other federal partners to monitor the outbreak of the virus.

On March 27, VA shared its COVID-19 response plan. This best-practice guide is a valuable tool, which may be useful nationwide for the medical community.

Source:

<https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/index.asp>

Managing Your Stress & Anxiety During the COVID-19 Outbreak

Taking care of your well-being, including your mental health, is essential during this time. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. Many people may experience stress, fear, anxiety, or feelings of depression. This is normal. Learn about things that you can do to manage your stress and anxiety at

<https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/coronavirus/>

Get more information from VA on the Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic at

<https://www.va.gov/coronavirus-veteran-frequently-asked-questions/>



Manage Stress

How can I manage my stress at home?

- Stay connected with your family and friends
- Take a few deep breaths

If you are in a crisis, call the Veterans Crisis Line at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**. Or text 838255 or chat online at: www.veteranscrisisline.net

Eat Wisely

How can I maintain a healthy diet when I am stressed or bored?

- Stick to a consistent meal schedule
- Stock healthy snacks
- Remove Temptation

Be Involved in your Health Care

How can I stay connected with my health care team at home?

- Send a Secure Message in MyHealtheVet
- Schedule a telehealth appointment

Sleep Well

How can I sleep better?

- Keep a regular sleep schedule every night
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and screen time before bed

Be Physically Active

How can I be physically active at a safe distance?

- Be active indoors
- Take a walk or hike
- Garden or do yard work

Limit Alcohol

How can I limit my drinking?

- Commit to safe daily limits 2 drinks/day (for men) or 1 drink/day (for women and those over age 64)
- Reach out for support if you are having trouble sticking to daily limits

To Learn More:
https://www.prevention.va.gov/healthy_living/Healthy_Living_During_Stressful_Times.asp

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs | Veterans Health Administration



COVID-19 What You Can Do

Follow Government & Public Health Guidance

- Leave your house only when allowed or needed (mask or cover your nose and mouth)
- If sick, call your provider but don't visit unless advised

Know Isolation & Quarantine

Isolation: how those who have COVID-19 or symptoms stay away from others

Quarantine: how those who may have been exposed to COVID-19 stay away from others



Know the Symptoms

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Diarrhea
- Cold or flu-like symptoms

Have enough food & medicines to limit trips outside.



Keep hands & surfaces clean.



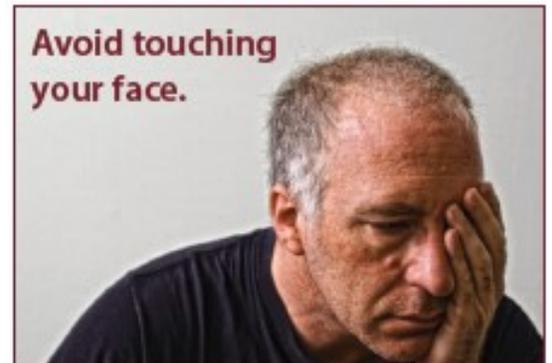
Stay Well & Manage Stress

- Stay in touch with others via phone or video chat
- Eat and drink wisely
- Take time for fun things
- Keep moving and stay active (inside and out)
- Use apps and tools to manage stress and mood

Distance Yourself

- Avoid crowds (more than 10 people)
- Greet others without touching (no handshakes, kissing, or hugging)
- Shop only when needed (delivery and pickup are best)
- Keep at least six feet from others (when in public or sick at home)
- If not urgent, cancel or postpone medical and other appointments

Avoid touching your face.



Keep informed from trusted resources

VA: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/index.asp>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

COVID Coach

For managing stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic

Uses:

- Learn ways to improve your well-being during this global pandemic
- Use trackers for mental health and personal goals
- Find tools for coping and self-care
- Follow links to additional resources



Learn more at the National Center for PTSD [website](#)



Mobile Apps: COVID Coach

The COVID Coach app was created for everyone, including Veterans and Service members, to support self-care and overall mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

NOTE: COVID Coach is not intended to replace needed professional care related to COVID-19 or mental health conditions, such as PTSD.



Need help or know someone who does?

If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others

- Call 911
- Call the Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255 press 1
- Visit the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#), call 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746
- Visit the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) or call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224

This newsletter is brought to you by your local **MOVE! Program Coordinators** and the [VISN20 Healthy Living Committee](#).



ALASKA VA HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

MOVE! (907) 257-4890

WHOLE HEALTH (907) 257-5453

HEALTH PROMOTION (907) 257-4726

BOISE VA MEDICAL CENTER

MOVE! (208) 422-1000 EXT. 7917

VA PORTLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

MOVE! (503) 220-3482

VA PUGET SOUND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

MOVE! (800) 329-8387 EXT. 76683

VA ROSEBURG HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

MOVE! (541) 440-1000 EXT. 45755

MANN-GRANDSTAFF (SPOKANE) VA MEDICAL CENTER

MOVE! (509) 434-7030

VA SORCC (WHITE CITY)

MOVE! (541) 826-2111 EXT. 7472

JONATHAN M. WAINWRIGHT (WALLA WALLA) VA MEDICAL CENTER

MOVE! (509) 946-1020