

## WELLNESS CHECKLIST AND RECOVERY STRATEGIES

### CHECK-IN STRATEGIES

Triggers can set our bodies or minds responding to our situations. Crisis situations mean that you are going to start making certain small errors – these might be small for us civilians, but for front-line responders they can be indicators of potential for errors that could result in lost lives. What do they look like, what should we pay attention to? Here are questions to ask yourself to reflect on what is normal for you, what might have changed, and whether that is a reason to pause for reflection and think about whether some recovery strategies are needed.

- Where are your keys?
- If you are organized, when is the last time you couldn't find something you always put in the same place?
- Did you leave something on that you know to turn off? Oven, car, curling iron...
- When did you last feed the cat, dog, yourself?
- Did you remember to take any meds/do you know the last time you did?
- Did you brush your teeth twice a day, if you do normally?
- Did you do something you've never done before by mistake? (For example: I never run the garbage disposal with spoons in them, haven't for years; under stress I've done it three times in the last week.)

Your baseline questions:

1. What have I lost track of or stopped doing that is normal for me?
2. What have I started doing that I've never done and is perhaps detrimental to me if I think about it longer?
3. What have I changed in my routine, why?

If you have more time or inclination, use the below cycle to determine how your energy is being gathered and focused. The wellness cycle allows you to think through energy based on quantity, derived from physical wellness; quality based on emotional wellness, focus of energy based on mental, and finally purpose of your energy grounded in spiritual wellness. The circle can operate in either direction and you can replenish your energy by focusing on different aspects of wellness, obviously you need all of them for a complete circle.

Start by determining how you are feeling in each realm and where you may want to supplement some of your energy cycle. The below yes/no questions can help start the reflection.

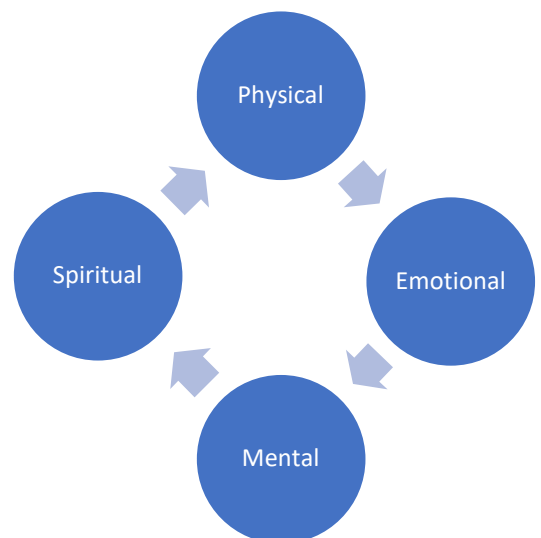
- Do you know your purpose; do you feel like you are pursuing it
- Are you cognitively engaged? Are you learning or curious?
- Do you feel connected to family, friends, and things you care about?
- Are you getting enough sleep, nourishing food, and exercise?

Finally, reflect on:

When you are fulfilled, where do you need support?

How do you usually get fulfillment in each sector of your life?

Is that strategy viable in this situation?



## MINDFULNESS AND RECOVERY STRATEGIES

The strategies below are binned into how long they will take. You can also see what part of the cycle it supports, if you are finding yourself needing greater physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual inputs to your energy cycle. You will see that the higher order (mental, spiritual) take more time on average.

### ~30-Second Strategies

Strategy	Execution	Time	Wellness Cycle
<i>Breathe</i>	4-4-4-4 Use tactical breathing. Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold it for 4 seconds, and breathe out for 4 seconds. Repeat four times.	48 secs	Physical Mental
<i>Neck Maintenance</i>	Pull back your shoulders and straighten your back. In this position, lean your ear towards your right shoulder and hold for 3 seconds. Roll your chin down to your chest, hold for 3 seconds. Roll to the left side and hold for 2 seconds. Bring yourself upright with a straight back. Now roll your shoulders to the front twice and then the back twice. Breathe out.	10 secs	Physical
<i>Hand Maintenance</i>	Press your palm flat as if pushing against a wall, use your other hand to press gently on your palm and fingers back towards your arm. This will stretch your forearm. Do this for 5 seconds. Now flip your palm so that you have “Thriller” arms – again push gently against the back of your hand to stretch the forearm for 5 seconds. Repeat on the other hand.	20 secs	Physical
<i>Foot Maintenance</i>	Roll your ankle to the right 5 times and then left 5 times. Now standing on one leg, push the top of the toes of the other foot to the ground and stand straight, this will stretch the front of your foot and release your sole. Hold for 5 seconds. Now reverse, press your heel down and bend the standing leg, while keeping the one with the heel down straight – this will help stretch the back of your leg – calf and hamstring. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat on the other leg.	40 secs	Physical
<i>Walk/Exercise</i>	Especially if you can step outside and take a minute to change your scenery, take just a quick walk or do some quick squats, lunges, or jumping jacks.	30 secs	Physical
<i>Massage Your Feet</i>	Just before bed, take 15-20 seconds per foot and just use your thumbs to massage your arch, big toe area, and near your ankle and heel.	30-40 secs	Physical
<i>Play the Refrain of a Happy Song</i>	Happy by Pharrell Williams and Can’t Stop the Feeling by Justin Timberlake are always good choices. Playing a song that is associated with happy feelings or triggers a changed response can help you change the mental place you’re in.	14-25 secs	Emotional
<i>Step Outside</i>	The change of scenery can help reframe a situation. If it is nice enough outside sit down for a few minutes and bask in the sun. This helps up our Vitamin D intake and some warmth can release muscle tension.	30 secs	Emotional Mental
<i>Be Thankful</i>	Find one thing as you brush your teeth in the morning and again one at night to be thankful for. It will start with things like your bed or family, but you will eventually have to dig deeper and find other things. Eventually, this can help start to reframe daily occurrences and help you seek out those moments of gratitude when in other situations.	10-15 secs (brush your teeth for 2 mins)	Emotional Spiritual
<i>Write a Thank you Note</i>	This helps you tap into your gratitude as well as the recipient to feel a little pick me up as well.	30 secs	Emotional Spiritual

## 1-5 Minute Strategies

Strategy	Execution	Time	Wellness Cycle
<i>Do a Muscle Tension and Relaxation Progression</i>	Start from the top of your head and start clenching each muscle as you cascade down your body – you may already be holding tension somewhere. Recognize that. Now start again from the top of your head and release it as you go down – you should release from some places that were previously tense. This can help you realize where your tension points may be and be more proactive about releasing them early. Repeat 2 times.	~1 min	Physical
<i>Cardio</i>	I find nothing heals me up faster than getting out frustrations and other pent up energy. Do at least 2 and up to all of these exercises for 30 seconds each and feel the endorphin release: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jumping Jacks</li> <li>○ Lunges - alternating</li> <li>○ Squats/Jump squats</li> <li>○ Burpees</li> <li>○ Jab, Cross, Jab – remember to repeat on each side, or alternate sides</li> <li>○ High Knees</li> <li>○ Butt Kickers</li> <li>○ Torso Twists</li> <li>○ High Kicks – again each side or alternating each time</li> </ul>	1-5 mins total	Physical
<i>Make Yourself a Parfait</i>	Mix some yogurt, fruit, and granola, add honey if you're feeling decadent. The act of making yourself something healthy should help you resettle. It's also an act of nourishment towards yourself – and you deserve it. The making and eating of a parfait without distraction can help you re-center.	3 mins	Physical
<i>Work on a puzzle</i>	If you have common space where it can be kept safely, use that to keep an open puzzle and work on it for a few minutes when you have time. Especially in the beginning the joy of accomplishment for getting a few pieces put in and moving on can be huge.	Set a timer	Mental
<i>Combine Elements from Above</i>	Step outside. Take three deep breaths in and out. Make a 2-minute loop around the garden/building/space. While walking focus on your footsteps and the sensations that it brings up – let your mind clear out of the other things you need to do or are worried about. Before walking in, stop to the side, close your eyes, take five deep breaths in and out.	3 - 5 mins	Physical Mental Emotional

## 6-20 Minute Strategies

Strategy	Execution	Time	Wellness Cycle
<i>Cardio/Stretch</i>	This <a href="#">five-minute</a> routine can help you reset and requires no equipment.	5 mins	Physical
<i>Make yourself a quick meal</i>	The internet has 10-minute and 15-minute meal ideas, many of which involve starch (rice/pasta), vegetables, and protein. These are quick and can help you create something either learning something new or giving yourself control over a situation with immediate (hopefully positive) feedback.	10-15 mins	Physical Emotional
<i>5-minute yoga</i>	Yoga can help you focus on your physical and emotional state while focusing on breathing, a source to measure where we are. This free <a href="#">list of videos</a> can help get you started.	5-20 mins	Physical Emotional Spiritual
<i>Reconnect with Friends and Family through Letters</i>	If you have the bandwidth, write a letter to post – writing can be cathartic for some people and more expressive. If you mail something it's the best kind of mail to receive and can brighten up the recipient's day, creating a virtuous cycle. If you want, make your own card or decorated paper to tap into your creative side.	7-10 mins	Emotional
<i>Gratitude Journal</i>	Writing what you are grateful for or using prompts, like <a href="#">these</a> or <a href="#">these</a> , can help you step back and reflect in a way that helps to reframe situations. If you have the time and inclination, do a 6-why's analysis on it – it'll help you dig deep in a way that will make the feeling a core strength.	12-17 mins	Emotional Spiritual
<i>Do a brain teaser/puzzle/game</i>	Find a crossword, sudoku, or other brain games on line or in a book to spend <i>10-15 minutes</i> doing. Like the puzzle it forces your mind to think in a different way and will distract you from some other things, hopefully allowing your mind to reset and recover a little bit.	Set a timer	Mental
<i>Meditate</i>	To get in a mental state of actual relaxation you need a few minutes, it's why we wait to take blood pressure till someone has sat with their feet on the floor flat for five minutes and relaxed. There are many apps out there with free resources as well as timers. Alternatively, try this <a href="#">introduction to anapana</a> – watching your breath to help clear your mind.	10-15 mins	Mental Spiritual

## 21-40 Minute Strategies

Strategy	Execution	Time	Wellness Cycle
<i>Workout</i>	There are some great short workouts out there – the <a href="#">7-minute workout</a> can be done in a three round circuit for a <i>21 minute</i> workout and <a href="#">Fitness Blender</a> has 75 free, body-weight only workouts between	21-35 mins	Physical
<i>Dance</i>	Similar to the music idea earlier as well as movement. Music is related usually to happy events and dancing releases endorphins similar to working out. You connect both to memories that fulfill you emotionally as well as physical activity which help bolster energy.	~3 mins/song	Physical
<i>Prepare a Meal/Bake</i>	Cooking and baking allow you to find a sense of accomplishment having completed something and give you immediate feedback – a nice complete loop for stressful times. They can also let you try new things – using creativity and your learning skills. Bonus: you either have a treat or something nutritious at the end. You could even try to explore what’s left in the pantry and innovate from there. Cooking and baking aren’t therapeutic for everyone – so do what floats your boat.	As long as it takes	Physical Emotional
<i>Clean</i>	Some people like the accomplishment of getting a project out of the way – cleaning out a closet, doing a deep grout clean of the bath, or just mopping up the floors. Cleaning can help you feel like you are moving past something as well, it’s a fresh beginning.	As long as it takes	Physical Emotional
<i>Call your Mom, Best Friend, someone you haven’t talked to in a while but have been thinking about</i>	Emotional connection is important for all humans and calling up friends or family to chat can help you feel grounded and perhaps even change your perspective on a situation. Alternatively, it can help you get out some of your feelings without bringing them home if you are worried about stressing your family.	30 mins	Emotional
<i>Pamper Yourself</i>	Treat yourself to something nice – a bath, a nice well-laid out meal, give yourself a manicure/pedicure, give yourself a massage (working from head to foot, gently rub or knead various muscles to release muscle tension), make a hot drink and do something relaxing – like reading.	As long as you wish	Emotional
<i>Journal</i>	Journaling in a productive way can help you process feelings, thoughts, and even plans for the future. When used appropriately they can help reframe a situation, moving from anxiety or stress responses to proactive, empowered responses. There are some great journaling resources online, but having a goal of what you’d like to process and sticking to that can help. Even just writing what happened to you or what you experienced during the day, may help you get some of that out of your head.	30 mins	Emotional Mental Spiritual
<i>Garden</i>	Similar to baking, cooking, cleaning, and being creative, gardening can help you accomplish a task, see the results, and of course continue to yield dividends as your plants grow. It also requires physical labor, which can be tiring, leading to better sleep. Gardening can be very healing for the people who want to be in nature but need to be occupied while out there.	As long as you want	Physical Mental
<i>Make Art</i>	Creativity is a big part of re-centering for folks in the midst of responding to a crisis. Create with paint, drawings, clay, music, words, or a camera. Sew, knit, color, make cards, make new	As long as you have time for	Mental

	decorations. There are literally thousands of ideas on Pinterest and other websites for crafts to make around the house. Allowing yourself to express whatever you are feeling or processing through whatever means you can, helps to let some of it go and begin processing some of the feelings, which can free up space emotionally and mentally to continue responding when you have to.		
<i>Learn Something New</i>	Learning something new can help you create new neural connections and help you accomplish something. Remember that mastery takes time – so be patient with yourself. You can pick up and brush off an old skill or learn something completely new that you’ve always wanted to – it can be a language, how to play a musical instrument, how to do calligraphy, how to cook new dishes (check this out: <a href="http://globaltableadventure.com/recipe">http://globaltableadventure.com/recipe</a> or of course you can do food porn at <a href="http://www.foodgawker.com">www.foodgawker.com</a> ), take online courses in a subject you’re interested in, go bird watching from your window, or go for a walk and identify the trees you see. There are lots of ways to explore new territory or ideas.	30 mins or more	Mental
<i>Read</i>	Read for pleasure or listen to an audiobook. This is not the same as listening to the news or watching TV, though it might be similar to movies that allow you to escape (feature films are just longer). You can let your mind rest from solving, asking, being curious, and just be transported	As long as you want	Mental
	<i>Meditate/Yoga/Work on a Puzzle/Any of the stuff listed above, but longer</i>		Spiritual Mental Physical Emotional

## Tripwires for External Intervention

If you continue to feel:

- Lonely
- Depressed
- Apathetic
- Persistent Fatigue
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Continued cognitive impairment – difficulty remembering things or staying focused
- Inability to sleep for more than a few days
- Restlessness
- Uncontrolled anger
- Change in appetite
- Consistent elevated blood pressure or heart rate

Please seek professional help.