



Fitness Discussion Guide

"Every Marine must be physically fit, regardless of age, grade, or duty assignment. The MCPFP emphasizes the requirement for all Marines to adopt a healthy lifestyle and a lifelong commitment to fitness. This combination has a direct and positive impact on job performance and combat readiness." MCO 6100.13

There are many components which work to optimize a Marine's physical readiness. They are organized along four chords: Mind, Body, Spirit, and Social. Fitness is not just running the PFT/CFT, a balanced approach requires consideration of all four aspects. Marines are professional warrior athletes who must remain physically fit to ensure readiness of mind and body for optimum performance gains, combat conditioning, and readiness to fulfill commitments at home and in garrison or on deployment.

1. Have the Marine take Part I of the **MCFIT Self-Assessment Tool** and/ or the **Warrior Personal Stress Rating Scale** (LDP Fitness Forms 1&2), the leader and Marine should then use Part II of the tool or score off the Warrior Personal Stress Rating Scale as a guide for discussions on Fitness topics along the four chords.

2. *Here are some open-ended questions you may ask your Marines along the four chords:*

- Why is Fitness (Mind, Body, & Spirit) education important for the personal and professional development of Marines?

Mental Fitness (Mind) incorporates a Marine's self-confidence, strong coping and decision making skills. A fit Marine engages in healthy behaviors that help to maintain focus, perseverance, and allow Marines to meet their duties successfully while deployed or in garrison.

Physical Fitness (Body) reflects a Marine's ability to physically perform the tasks assigned individually and as a unit, both in garrison and while deployed. Physical training is part of and contributes to physical fitness and the ability to perform tasks, but it also includes compliance with body composition standards, managing fatigue, maintenance of good health, and making life style decision to support health and physical ability to perform work (i.e. High Intensity Tactical Training, Marine Corps Martial Arts, etc...).

Spiritual Fitness (Spirit) is the way one refers to or gives meaning and purpose of life leading to their individual faith journey in their chosen belief system or philosophy. It captures a

person's overall spiritual health and reflects how spirituality may help one cope with and enjoy life. It may be following the practice of a certain religion, philosophy or way of living harmoniously with those around you.

The overarching concept of concept of Mind, Body, & Spirit encompasses **Social Fitness** where Marines and their families engage in socially healthy behaviors that enable them to successfully interact with peers, families and their community, and better equip them to meet their duties while deployed or in garrison.

- What challenges do Marines face in this area? What are the scope and depth of the problems in this area: How do problems in this area conflict with Marine Corps institutional values? How do these problems negatively affect readiness?

The Marine Corps is emerging out of 10 plus years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of our wounded warriors are not only facing the physical scars of the combat environment but the internal battle scars as well. These wounds must be addressed properly. In addition to our wounded warrior heroes, Marines returning from combat without the physical scars contend with those same internal challenges (i.e. Combat Operational Stress Control, Post Traumatic Stress Disorders, Suicides, Substance Abuse, etc...). We owe our Marines and their families to recognize these challenges and get them the necessary treatment they need to return them back to full duty with their heads held high.

-How does physical fitness contribute to managing stress, performance at work and improve the quality of personal time?

- What part do healthy behaviors play in developing coping skills, reducing stress, and meet the demands of duties in garrison and on deployment?

- Do you have a personal fitness plan that takes a holistic approach to preparing both your mind and body?

- How does spiritual fitness impact our ability to meet challenges, deal with stress, and meet obligations to both family and the Marine Corps?

- In what ways does making the choice to engage in healthy behaviors contribute to a positive family environment and interacting with superiors, peers, and subordinates in garrison and on deployment?

- What existing programs or other resources currently exist to help Marines in the area (inside or outside the Marine Corps) either to improve on strength or overcome problems? Are they being utilized? Which are the most effective?

Marine Corps internal initiatives are addressing these problems head-on in a variety of Marine lead programs (i.e. Wounded Warriors West/East BN, MCCS, Sexual Assault Prevention, Combat and Operational Stress Control, Family Advocacy Program, DSTRESS etc...).

The following external resources exist to assist Marines and their families with fitness challenges:

- Joining Forces Initiative
- Behavioral Health Information Network (BHIN)
- TRICARE
- In Transition
- Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress
- Military Health System
- Force Health Protection & Readiness
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration
- Military Home Front
- National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- DOD Issuances
- National Military Family Association
- National Library of Medicine
- Military One Source
- Wounded Warrior Regiment
- Marine 4 Life
- eMarine
- Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society.

The internal programs are being used to their fullest capacity. MCCS spokespeople are continuously educating, training, and counseling the operational forces on the intricacies of their physical & behavior health programs and how – if utilized often and correctly – they can best support their Marines and family members.

3. Both of the tools will identify some area that the Marine may not have identified as an area for either personal or professional development. Based off your discussion the leader should use organic resources or those provided on the LDP website/ CD to guide the Marine/s towards taking a holistic look at their own fitness and setting personal goals. The tools and discussion may also cue the leader in to situations where they need to refer the Marine to the unit Force Preservation Council, unit SME's such as the Chaplain, OSCAR team members, or professionals at MCCS for additional help to deal with stressors.