



**WARRIOR TOUGHNESS
LEADER'S
REFERENCE GUIDE**



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INTRODUCTION

What is Warrior Toughness?

Warrior Toughness is an evidence-based, holistic initiative that strengthens the spiritual, mental, and physical toughness of our Sailors. It consists of performance psychology skills, mindfulness, character development, and a Warrior Mindset developed by Navy SEALs. The trained warrior will keep fighting after taking a hit, perform under pressure, and excel in the daily grind.





WT ORIGINS

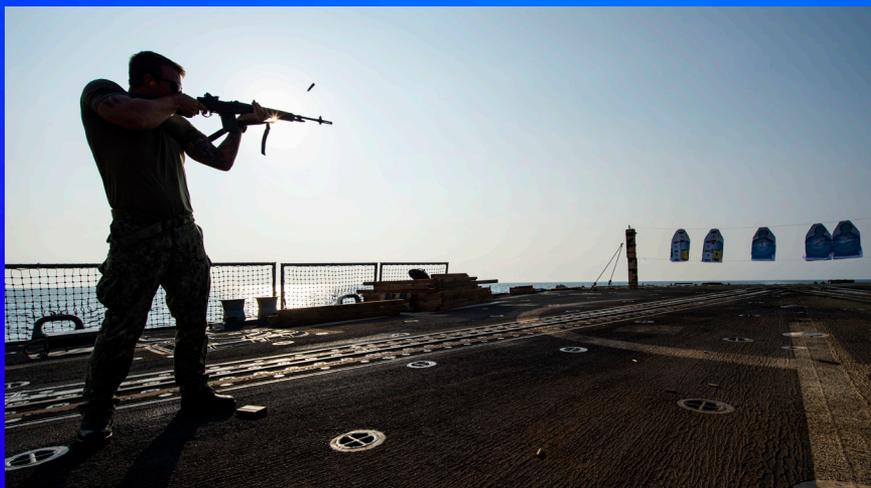
Imagine if the Navy expected excellent performance on PRTs without doing any physical training. Imagine if we expected to execute our missions relying only on OJT. This has been how we have been approaching toughness in our Sailors – hoping they happen to form it along the way with no standardized training. Following recommendations from a 2017 review of “Street to Fleet” training conducted at Recruit Training Command (RTC), a program to inculcate the CNO’s core competency of ‘toughness’ was instituted at the Navy’s only boot camp. RTC developed and implemented an evidence-based pilot program to assess the applicability and effectiveness of several approaches aimed at improving the mental, spiritual, and physical toughness of recruits and staff. This program was implemented throughout RTC for all recruits and Recruit Division Commanders in October 2018.





EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Warrior Toughness is focused on enhancing the performance of Sailors in everything they do. We expect Sailors to be able to perform under pressure in a variety of settings from high-pressure crisis situations to the more mundane grind of sustained operations. The Navy trains Sailors to achieve and maintain high standards to be ready for decisive operations and combat; Warrior Toughness complements technical training to achieve this goal. Toughness is not simply physical and mental, but also spiritual. For Sailors to fight and win America's wars and uphold our standing internationally, they have to have moral and ethical strength to live out our core values and attributes.





SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION

To build this program, we conducted an extensive review of what has been done and what worked. We looked at mental toughness research on many different elite performing organizations and individuals. Consulting partners for the applied psychological exercises include sports psychologists, the Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP) - a DoD Center of Excellence Human Performance Resource Center (HPRC), and Naval Special Warfare (NSW). Research studies produced by the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and the RAND foundation are the basis for our character development.





TOUGHNESS VS RESILIENCE

When we hear “toughness”, many think of “resilience.” We want to distinguish these terms because they are often confused and are actually two different concepts. Resilience (and resilience programs) focus on prevention of negative outcomes and recovery after a critical event. Toughness focuses on performance enhancement and character development before the critical event occurs. Essentially it is not enough to bounce back from bad things that happen to us; we need to be ready and capable before adversity strikes.





CORE CONCEPTS: WARRIOR MINDSET

The way we build toughness is through the Warrior Mindset. It is an unending cycle that when completed repeatedly, builds and sustains toughness while progressing toward peak performance.

Commitment is identifying our sense of purpose and establishing a personal philosophy to live out our values.



Execution is where we demonstrate peak performance, including a mindful response instead of an emotional reaction and ensuring our actions align with our commitments.

Preparation is developing our body, mind, and soul with rigorous training.



Reflection occurs at the organizational and individual level, gleaned information to fuel our Commitment, thus creating a continuous cycle of building and sustaining toughness while progressing toward peak performance.



CORE CONCEPTS: CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND CORE ATTRIBUTES

Character is developed by strengthening the soul. Our soul is our identity, it is the essence who we are. The soul is what gives that motivation and determination necessary to maintain faithfulness to one's commitments, beliefs, and values in the face of adversity and the daily grind. Character is simply a manifestation of the soul. The result will be Sailors with a "fighting spirit" living out character to execute for that which they fight.

Toughness – The core of toughness is a Sailor with a "fighting spirit." They know who they are, what they are fighting for, what they believe/value, and why they do what they do. This understanding of one's self is the foundation of spiritual toughness fueling the drive to be physically and mentally tough.



Integrity – Tough Sailors align their decisions and behaviors with our Navy Core Values. It is our values that align us internally as a unified force.





CORE CONCEPTS: CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND CORE ATTRIBUTES

Initiative – Tough Sailors take ownership, act and lead within the limit of their authority, and capture and implement new ideas.



Accountability – Tough Sailors take responsibility for the commitments they make - commitment to the mission, their shipmates, and our values. The mission aligns us externally as a unified force resulting in trust and confidence up and down the chain of command.





APPLIED PSYCHOLOGICAL EXERCISES

Taking a holistic approach to toughness includes using mental tools to be able to perform at your best, responding (instead of reacting) to an unforeseen obstacle, and excelling in your everyday life. The science behind accomplishing this is called performance psychology. A wealth of evidence demonstrates the benefits of mindfulness and performance psychology for emotion regulation and performance.

Mindfulness is defined as “present moment awareness.” Exercises such as focused breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, body scan, and cognitive diffusion are practiced every day. After physical training, Sailors lower their heart rates, regulate their breathing, and improve their focus while in an elevated physiological state. At night, they reset.

Performance psychology incorporates skills known as “The Big Four”:

Goal setting - focusing on performance objectives

Self-talk - creating awareness of beliefs and their consequences

Mental rehearsal - vividly practicing a successful evolution in your mind to create a mental version of muscle memory

Energy management - controlling bodily energy.



EARLY OUTCOMES AT RTC

The applied exercises portion of WT was tested through a series of institutional review board (IRB)-approved research studies (currently pending publication). Across all studies, applied exercises led to an increase in “on-time” graduation rates with the recruits’ first assigned division. This equates to decreased time-to-train and associated training/personnel costs. Applied exercises also led to improved performance on baseline PFA, swim qualification, and inspections, although this result was not as consistent as the graduation result.

Anecdotally, we have received numerous reports from staff and recruits about the positive impact of Warrior Toughness. Recruits who have gone through the holistic WT training (character development and applied exercises) consistently espouse and display a sense of belonging/connectedness and increased commitment to our organization.





HOW TO BUILD WT CULTURE

It is vital that Warrior Toughness training is inculcated into the culture of how we train and prepare our Sailors. During formal training, find opportunities when increased focus, confidence, and ethical decision making are necessary. These are the natural entry points to reinforce applying the concepts learned in boot camp. In informal training and mentorship, help Sailors identify their Warrior Philosophy – what they are committed to, and how they are preparing their mind, body, and soul to win the next fight. When addressing the entire command, Wardroom, or Chiefs Mess, these talking points can help build WT into the culture of your command:

→ From street to fleet, Warrior Toughness will improve the performance of Sailors under stress and in their day-to-day lives.

→ Warrior Toughness is the ability to fight after sustaining a hit, to endure the long, slow grind, and to maintain clarity of thought and decisiveness of action under pressure.

→ Toughness is not simply physical and psychological, but also spiritual. Tough Sailors know what they stand for, why they do what they do, and have a sense of meaning and hope for the future.

→ Warrior Toughness is about producing a stronger and more lethal Navy, NOT a softer, gentler Navy. By standardizing best practices for training, we can then raise the standards and develop tough, more qualified Sailors.



HOW TO BUILD WT CULTURE

→Recalibrating does NOT require you to stop what you are doing. You should practice the slow, controlled breathing technique often enough so that in a high pressure situations you can slow your breathing via muscle memory without much effort or stopping.

→For Navy Sailors to fight and win America's wars, they have to have moral and ethical strength.

Toughness has always been a requirement to be a U.S. Navy Sailor. The Warrior Toughness program seeks to imbue Sailors with the warrior mindset, supported by physical fitness, strong character, and proven mental fitness techniques—all necessary to win the next fight. So out in the fleet, we need you to continue this training and sustain these skills. Warrior Toughness must become a part of how we do business and seamlessly overlaid onto our training and leadership.





WARRIOR MINDSET

As active-duty Sailors, we are all considered warfighters to varying degrees because we serve in the US military. The Warrior Mindset conveys to each individual Sailor that being a “warrior” is possessing the mentality of pressing forward into the fight, the willingness to endure adversity, and transcends a job title or rate within the U.S. Navy.

This mindset begins with each Sailor identifying their personal why, knowing their purpose, and fully understanding their level of commitment. This commitment drives us to be disciplined in our pursuit to adequately prepare mind, body, and soul for the known and unknown challenges associated with our profession. We prepare so that we can be good at our jobs, physically fit, and demonstrate moral character in difficult circumstances. Our commitment and preparation then enables us to execute to our true potential in that high-stakes moment. Once we have completed the event, we take the time to reflect upon our actions and the actions of our teammates to seek improvement on our performance for future endeavors.

The Warrior Mindset is a continuous cycle of commitment, preparation, execution, and reflection to ensure continuous growth. A Sailor who has integrated this continuum into his/her professional and personal life will be a “tougher” and higher-performing individual.



WARRIOR MINDSET

Commitment

Commitment enables the Sailor to persevere through hardship and overcome challenges. The deeper the level of commitment, the more adversity you are able to endure. We want each Sailor to understand what commitment is and ensure that theirs is strong enough to carry them through hardship and the daily grind.

Examples of application in the Fleet

→ Leaders must teach and reinforce to their Sailors the importance of identifying their personal why, helping their Sailors align their sense of purpose with the Navy Core Values, and understand what and who they are committed to. An example of this is when leaders shoulder the burden and responsibility of reinforcing the commitment of their junior Sailors. This is done through strong leadership and mentorship at EVERY level. Leaders must facilitate this cohesive work environment through discipline, accountability to each other, and mutual respect.

→ Leaders should understand the differences between motivation and discipline and then how to effectively convey these concepts to subordinates in the proper context.

→ Leaders must also ensure that they demonstrate the standards expected of their subordinates within their respective communities. Leaders may choose to bring the organization together during times of hardship or before critical events to convey the purpose or “why” behind the mission or operation and how success is predicated upon the commitment and actions of ALL involved.



WARRIOR MINDSET

Preparation

To perform to a high standard of excellence, Sailors must adequately prepare mind, body, and soul for both the known challenges and lay the foundation needed for the unknown challenges of serving in the U.S. Navy. We do not rise to the occasion but fall to the level of our preparation.

Examples of application in the Fleet

- Leaders understand the concept of quality Sets and Reps in training and identify what these repetitions look like in relation to specific demands of the organization and command and have them implemented to increase warfighter competence.
- Leaders must identify, define, and implement realistic and stressful scenario-based training to increase warfighter competence and confidence within both individual Sailors and respective community.
- Leaders must create a culture of excellence within their respective communities and facilitate a Sailor's ability to adequately prepare the mind, body, and soul so that Sailors can be good at their jobs, physically fit, and demonstrate moral character in difficult circumstances. They can adjust their respective unit's battle rhythm to prioritize physical fitness and mental preparation and encourage adherence to the standard through desirable incentives.
- Leaders must set the example of what right looks like themselves physically, mentally, and spiritually through physical fitness, warfighting competence and strong moral character.



WARRIOR MINDSET

Execution

This is where our commitment, training, and preparation are ultimately tested, as individuals and as a Navy.

Examples of application in the Fleet

- Flexibility is key for adjusting to the demands of the mission, the environment and the developing situation. This is achieved through the warfighting competency gained through experience and adequate preparation.
- Under duress, a high-performing Sailor must remain in control of their emotional and physiological response to stress.
- Each Sailor must maintain situational awareness of what is happening around them but also possess the ability to mentally focus on the current task or objective.
- Each Sailor must effectively assess their environment and appropriately respond to the situation, avoid reacting emotionally from fear or anger potentially making mistakes that could have life-threatening consequences.



WARRIOR MINDSET

Reflection

Disciplined and professional post-event procedures to debrief success and failure aid in learning valuable lessons to improve performance.

Examples of application in the Fleet

➔ Group Reflection. Process of holding ourselves and our teammates/Shipmates accountable in a professional setting. This is not the time to pass on blame but to identify lessons to be learned and how to implement them into the preparation phase to ensure success in the future. Group Reflection examples include After Action Reviews (AARs) and Debriefs shortly after an evolution is complete. SEAL teams learn from other units within the SOF community through AARs and exercise the practice of debriefs to learn from their own mistakes. This valuable information is then implemented into the preparation phase to improve upon current tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) for future training opportunities and deployments.

➔ Individual Reflection. The process of critical reflection is done on a personal level. This is where we ask ourselves the hard questions and hold ourselves accountable. Were my actions and words in alignment with who I am and who I want to be? What did I do well and what did I not do well? What were my mistakes and how can I improve upon them? What do I keep and what do I discard? This can be done by taking 10 minutes each day to review personal mistakes and think through the lessons learned. This can be done on the drive home from work to review your personal actions and performance of the day's events and in the morning prior to the next day's events.

➔ Leaders should encourage individual reflection practices and facilitate group reflection.



CHARACTER

The Navy Core Values are rooted in sound character. A person of sound character will exemplify the Core Values of Honor, Courage and Commitment in every aspect of their professional and personal life. Because Sailors have had varying degrees of character modeled to them prior to the Navy, it is vitally important that commands promote a culture and climate that develops the same standards of character for each and every Sailor.

The Core Attributes as defined in the CNO's Plan for Maintaining Maritime Superiority are Toughness, Initiative, Integrity and Accountability. These Core Attributes align fully with the Navy Core Values. Character is integral to each of these four attributes, and character is found rooted in the soul.

Through the soul we produce the conviction that drives our actions. We must intentionally develop a personal philosophy based on personal values that are consistent and aligned with our Navy Core Values. We exercise and strengthen those values by putting them into practice daily through our decisions and actions. These “reps and sets” for the soul strengthen the core of who we are and help us define for ourselves the “why” for what we do. Developing and strengthening personal and professional connections will strengthen our values and resolve.



CHARACTER

Toughness

As a component of character, toughness enables Sailors to:

- Take a hit and keep going
- Perform under pressure
- Excel in the day-to-day grind

Examples of application in the Fleet

→ Leaders must understand the difference between toughness and resilience. Toughness is the ability to withstand adversity, whereas resilience is the ability to “bounce back” following adversity.

Toughness prepares Sailors before adversity while seeing them through that difficulty and sustaining them after; resilience focuses on helping them quickly recover afterward.

→ Leaders should understand the benefits of tough, realistic training as a means to develop toughness. Sailors who are led through challenging training acquire the ability to excel in times of adversity and high stress. Tough, realistic training produces tough Sailors who are confident in their abilities. Leaders should strive to make their training as realistic as possible prior to an event to best develop this toughness.

→ Leaders must also ensure that Sailors tap into additional sources of strength, namely the fighting spirit of the command and our Navy and the steadfast support of our families. Leaders can cultivate a command climate where Sailors are willing to give fully to accomplishing the mission if they know the many sources of spiritual support that are available to them. Some of these include Navy Chaplains, Command Religious Ministry Programs, CREDO programs & retreats, military/civilian faith community partnerships, civilian houses of worship and local USO chapters.



CHARACTER

Initiative

As a component of character, proper initiative enables Sailors to accomplish what needs to be done, even in the absence of direct orders.

Examples of application in the Fleet

- ➔ Leaders can empower their Sailors to act within the limits of their authority and take ownership of their work. Engaged leadership encourages Sailors to do what needs to be done. The difference is exemplified when Sailors refer to “my” ship, “my” squadron or “my” unit, rather than “the” ship, squadron or unit. A strong sense of ownership enhances unit pride, camaraderie, unit cohesions, and mission accomplishment. Plane captains in the aviation community are an excellent example of fostering this ownership and responsibility.
- ➔ Leaders must instill in their Sailors an initiative that fosters a questioning attitude. Knowing “what right looks like” will encourage Sailors to take action when something is not in accordance with acceptable norms.
- ➔ Leaders must foster a culture that encourages junior Sailors to put forward new ideas. Although junior Sailors may not have the experience of more senior teammates, they can bring fresh perspective and energy. These can become great opportunities for junior and senior Sailors to brainstorm ideas that enhance the command and the mission. Consider having subordinates take charge in the planning and execution of an upcoming evolution rather than relying solely on your more senior leaders.



CHARACTER

Integrity

As a component of character, integrity enables Sailors to do what is right even when no one is looking.

Examples of application in the Fleet

→ Integrity is an internal character trait, but it is displayed in the execution of tasks. If Sailors have integrity, it will be noticeable to everyone around them. A lack of integrity will likewise be revealed. Sailors look to their Leaders as exemplars of integrity: if they see it, they will emulate it. In times of hardship and adversity, Sailors will gravitate toward Leaders of upright and honorable character. Integrity inspires Sailors toward personal excellence.

→ Our behaviors as Leaders need to align with our Navy Core Values. The Leaders a Sailor sees every day are who they look to for alignment.

→ Each Sailor must be able to identify their personal values. Engaged Leaders can assist Sailors in determining if their personal values align with our Navy Core Values. Properly aligned values are what motivates Sailors to do what is right.

→ Integrity is subject to erosion and degradation if it is not maintained. Leaders can assist Sailors in developing personal habits that support and enhance their personal integrity. Consider discussing this prior to an inspection or testing evolution.



CHARACTER

Accountability

As a component of character, accountability enables Sailors to take responsibility for the commitments they have made.

Examples of application in the Fleet

→ The outward manifestation of integrity is found in accountability. While integrity is about the self, accountability is about the community. Sailors became accountable to the mission the day they took their Oath of Enlistment. They are accountable to the U.S. Constitution; to obeying orders; to the Sailor's Creed; to the unit; to the mission; to Shipmates.

→ Accountability unites Sailors internally and externally. Accountability is enhanced when Leaders foster a climate of constant introspection and review. Reflection is the process that helps a Sailor to determine if their personal values are aligned with the mission. Our values align us in who we are, while the mission aligns us in what we do. A means of reinforcing this is by conducting guided reflection following a training evolution or completion of a mission.



PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED EXERCISES

To realize the full potential of the Performance Psychology techniques introduced in Warrior Toughness, regular practice with the command leadership and crew must occur. These techniques are generally most effectively utilized when paired to challenging duties that require our highest concentration and effort.

Every command has different duties that are considered high stress, with high stakes. In this document, “high stress duties” include those in which any sub-optimal or poor performance has serious consequences for ourselves, our shipmates, our allies and the overall mission. For example, in a medical treatment facility, conducting surgery or triaging a mass casualty event would be considered high stress. Aboard an aircraft carrier it could be doing an underway replenishment or conducting flight operations in poor weather. For those deployed in non-permissive shore locations, it could be anytime leaving the wire. At a training command, it could be taking examinations. For everyone in the Navy, this includes briefings with leadership and earning qualifications, where attention and confidence are key. Even the PRT could be considered high stress.

It is up to each division within each department of a command to determine what their high stress duties are and pair the concepts below with them. Many high stress duties are so routine that complacency can set in, causing poor performance or even harm. Pairing these Performance Psychology techniques to those events can help ensure continuous high performance.

Honing these techniques through regular practice helps develop toughness. These techniques should be practiced individually and as a team. Sharing effective personal strategies with our shipmates helps build Warrior Toughness into our culture. The table below contains each Performance Psychology skill along with its rationale and examples where they may be best incorporated. You can use these as a starting point to make this program fit your command in the ideal way.



PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED EXERCISES

Recalibrate

A slow breathing technique, meant to help “center” mentally to improve focus and hence performance on a task. Research shows it lowers heart rate and influences brain activity to bring about a feeling of being calm but alert.

Examples of application in the Fleet

- Leaders must initially teach and lead their Sailors how to recalibrate, and give personal examples of its effectiveness. Leaders need to check that their Sailors understand how to do it and what the benefits are.
- Leaders can teach/lead a prolonged recalibrate exercise routinely, for example at quarters at regular intervals (e.g. once every 1-2 weeks) using a provided script. Leaders can also utilize apps such as Breathe2Relax and/or Tactical Breather, both DoD-funded.
- Leaders should also lead recalibrate “just in time” before a high stress duty.
- Once Sailors understand the concept, Leaders should regularly remind Sailors to monitor their own stress and use recalibrate as needed during high stress duties.



PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED EXERCISES

Mindfulness Exercises, such as PMR and Body Scan

Mindfulness Exercises, such as Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) and Body Scan are meant to train the person to focus their attention on the “here and now”, to reduce “mind wandering” while also building mind/body awareness. Research shows that regularly practicing these exercises, approximately 45 minutes per week, can enhance the functioning of the frontal cortex of the brain.

Examples of application in the Fleet

- Leaders must initially teach and lead their Sailors how to do Mindfulness Exercises, and give personal examples of its effectiveness. Leaders need to check that their Sailors understand how to do it and what the benefits are.
- Leaders should utilize the provided scripts and/or lead their Sailors through the Mindfulness Coach app (DoD funded) and/or acclaimed non-DoD apps such as Calm and Headspace, though DoD does not endorse the use of any one product or another.
- Leaders can lead these exercises in group format such as during quarters. At Recruit Training Command, Mindfulness Exercises are led after group physical training. As time limitations may preclude this from happening, these exercises can be combined with PT, for example combining “Body Scan” while doing cool down stretches (reminding Sailors to keep their mind focused, not letting it wander, while stretching each muscle group).
- Similar to recalibrating, these exercises could be led “just in time,” prior to high stress duties.
- Leaders should encourage their Sailors to do these exercises on their own during transitions from work and home. Mindfulness Exercises can easily be done in a parked car. “Mindful Walking” can be done while walking to and from work.



PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED EXERCISES

Self-Talk and Performance Statements (PSs)

Self-talk is the near constant narrative that occurs inside our minds. However, sometimes self-talk is unfocused or negative.

Performance Statements (PSs) are words we say to ourselves to help us stay focused and perform our best. They are most effective when brief, instructive, realistic, and motivational.

Examples of application in the Fleet

→ Leaders must initially teach their Sailors about PSs, and give personal examples of effectiveness. Leaders need to check that their Sailors have developed their own PSs and understand what the benefits are.

→ Leaders should pair PSs with high stress duties. At Recruit Training Command, PSs are shared and discussed prior to every group physical training. Leaders ask something like “what are you going to say to yourself when your mind starts telling you to quit?” Common PSs are “keep breathing in through my nose,” “the harder I push now, the better I will feel after,” and “make my Shipmates proud.”

→ Every work center has unique duties that could benefit from specifically tailored and highly unique PSs. For example, for armed watch standers, “Treat Never Keep” is a common PS that can be taught for weapon safety. “Plug and hug” is taught to recruits so they plug their noses and brace their arms when doing abandon ship plunges into the pool.

→ Leaders should share their own and ask Sailors for their preferred PSs and post them someplace visible, such as on a team white board. For example, as the PRT approaches, every Sailor can put their favorite PSs on the white board.



PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED EXERCISES

Mental Rehearsal (MR)

A mental exercise where the person imagines successfully doing a high stress task step-by-step. A strong Mental Rehearsal is vivid, involving all the senses (as realistic as possible), and controlled, where each action, no matter how difficult, is completed sequentially and successfully.

Examples of application in the Fleet

→ Leaders must initially teach their Sailors about MR and give personal examples of its effectiveness. Leaders need to check that their Sailors understand how to do MR and what the benefits are.

→ Leaders should lead their Sailors through MR as a group to help practice teamwork skills that require mastery. An example would be a Chief Boatswain's Mate who leads all his BMs together through a vivid MR of the steps for a successful UNREP, including what to do if there is a mishap. Another example would be a Chief Damage Controlman leading his team of DCs through a MR of what the team would do if the ship was damaged in any number of ways.

→ Leaders should encourage Sailors to do MR individually for particular tasks that they are new to or struggling to master. For example, if a Hospital Corpsman is having difficulty staying calm and drawing blood, they could use MR individually until they master it. MR, like doing Mindfulness Exercises, takes additional time and a distraction-free space to be most effective. Leaders need to be intrusive about when and where their Sailors will use it to strengthen their skills. Will they do it during a break at work? Will they do it while at home before coming into work? Leaders should help Sailors come up with MR schedule, similar to a physical training schedule.



PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED EXERCISES

Goal Setting (GS)

Specific and measurable outcome and process goals are better at improving performance for high stress duties than vague goals or not having goals at all.

Examples of application in the Fleet

- Leaders must initially teach their Sailors about specific and measurable outcome and process goals, and give personal examples of their effectiveness. Leaders need to check that their Sailors understand the nuances of Goal Setting (GS) and what the benefits are.
- Leaders should be aware of what are the goals of each of their Sailors, as well as for the team. Goals should be put into some form of written log. Some Sailors will have awareness of their weaknesses and know their own goals. Leaders can help those Sailors clearly write out their outcome and process goals. For example, for a linguist, a specific and measurable outcome goal would be to pass a language proficiency exam, while the process goal would be to study every day for at least one hour, and use Mental Rehearsal every other day to imagine the exam day scenario to help reduce test anxiety. Other Sailors may not be aware of areas for improvement or may be unmotivated to better themselves, and would need to be given outcome and process goals to work on by their leadership.
- For the team, the leader should collaborate with the team members about what are the specific and measurable outcome and process goals. For example, a team of Aviation Ordnancemen may decide to set an outcome goal of a specific percentage of ordnance in operational condition by the next flight mission. The process goal would be for each AO to work a certain number of hours per day and to have quarters daily to discuss progress.



PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGY APPLIED EXERCISES

Energy Management (EM)

The “right amount” of energy, or stress response, is required to perform optimally. If we are feeling too “flat” we may be too lackadaisical to give a strong performance. If we are too “stressed” then our excited/nervous energy may cause us to rush or burnout, and make basic mistakes.

Examples of application in the Fleet

- Leaders must initially teach their Sailors about Energy Management (EM), and give personal examples of how it is effective. Self-awareness is key to improving in this area. Each Sailor needs to know how they are feeling and how that is affecting their performance. An observer can offer insight: “you seemed too nervous and it caused you to forget your answers at the board” or “you seemed a little too relaxed about safety procedures and you endangered your Sailors.” Leaders need to check that their Sailors know how to build awareness (Mindfulness Exercises like Body Scan can greatly assist with this) and how to both raise and lower their energy for optimal performance.
- For the team, an open discussion about what energy level is required for a specific high stress duty (short and intense vs. long and sustained) and the techniques people use to either raise or lower their energy can benefit each team member. These conversations can occur at quarters or “just in time” before the high stress duty. Many of the strategies will fall into one of the Performance Psychology techniques listed above. For example some Sailors will mention using Performance Statements or Mental Rehearsal to get “amped” while others may say they use Recalibrate to stay calm. Listening to or just playing preferred music in one’s mind is another common way to increase or decrease energy.
- On an individual level, leaders can have these discussions with Sailors who are either too “flat” or too “stressed” during tasks and are subsequently performing sub-optimally. Leaders should share strategies with that individual Sailor and check back in with progress.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Warrior Toughness: The warfighter who stands at the intersection of strong body, mind and soul is the Tough Warrior. They, the trained warrior, have the toughness to thrive in all challenges of military service, whether those challenges are abroad or at home. The trained warrior is tough enough to excel in the daily grind, keeps fighting after taking a hit, and performs under pressure.

Accountability: We are a mission-focused force. We achieve and maintain high standards. Our actions support our strategy. We clearly define the problem we are trying to solve and the outcomes to which we will hold ourselves accountable. In execution, we honestly assess our progress and adjust as required. We are our own toughest critic. Leaders at all levels from E-1 to those who assume command recognize the unique trust and confidence placed in them to operate independently. This is a profound responsibility.

Amygdala: The two small areas on both sides of the brain that are responsible for detecting threats and initiating the reactions in our body commonly known as the “fight/flight/freeze” response.

Applied Exercises: RDCs (Recruit Division Commanders) and instructors lead exercises that teach mindfulness and performance psychology techniques (mental rehearsal, goal-setting, energy management, and self-talk) to recruits. These exercises are completed outside of a classroom and are often followed immediately by application to other training.

Body Scan: A mindfulness exercise that involves scanning your body and noticing whatever sensations are there in a nonjudgmental manner. The body scan is designed to teach one how to be aware of physical sensations, observe them objectively, and let them go. It also allows one to practice mentally refocusing.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Character: Character is the adherence to the Navy Core Values and is demonstrated by the Navy Core Attributes. We know that a Sailor is a person of character because they act in ways consistent with our core attributes of toughness, integrity, initiative and accountability. The Navy cannot open your heart to see your character, but the Navy can see how you demonstrate your character.

Commitment: The first step in the Warrior Mindset – identifying our sense of purpose. It consists of our personal and professional goals as well as our individual and organizational values (Honor, Courage, and Commitment along with the four core attributes of Toughness, Integrity, Accountability, and Initiative). This step also includes establishing a personal philosophy to facilitate a deeper understanding and commitment to all of these values which guides our actions.

Core Attributes: In a design for maintaining maritime superiority, the Navy defined four core attributes: Toughness, Integrity, Accountability, and Initiative. These attributes, when present, show adherence to Navy Core Values.

Energy Management: A performance psychology technique based on knowledge that people perform at their optimal level at a “just manageable” level of physiological energy, referred to sometimes as stress. Energy levels at the far ends of the spectrum, either too little or too much stress, result in less than optimal performance. Sometimes we need to “psych ourselves up” and other times we need to calm ourselves down (“recalibrate”) to be in the optimal zone.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Execution: The third step of the Warrior Mindset. This phase is where we demonstrate peak performance, built on the previous steps of Commitment and Preparation. Proper execution includes a mindful response instead of an emotional reaction. We must maintain our situational awareness, agility, and focus on the task without losing control. We ensure our actions align with our commitments.

Frontal Cortex: The front portion of the human brain that is responsible for decision-making and emotional control. It is the last part of the human brain to develop and plays an important role in managing our amygdala's reactivity. Regular mindfulness practice has been shown to strengthen this portion of the brain.

Goal Setting: A performance psychology technique that enhances performance by giving the person a sense of direction and a target outcome. Goals should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based).

Holistic approach: Warrior Toughness seeks to develop the whole Sailor and engages mind, body and soul in its training. Any program that is not holistic (speaking to all aspects of an individual) is not Warrior Toughness.

Initiative: We strive to accomplish what needs to be done, even in the absence of direct orders. Leaders at all levels take ownership and act to the limit of their authorities. We foster a questioning attitude, and we encourage everyone to look at new ideas with an open mind. Our most junior teammate may have the best idea; we must be open to capturing and implementing that idea.



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Integrity: Our conduct must always be upright and honorable. Our behaviors as individuals, as teams, and as an organization must align with our values as a profession. We will actively strengthen our resolve to act consistently with our values.

Mental Rehearsal: A performance psychology technique of rehearsing in your mind, the exact steps necessary to complete a task. Mental rehearsal can apply to any physical activity (running, swimming, public speaking, reps and sets, inspections, etc.). When rehearsing something mentally, it should be vivid (using all senses) and controlled (only rehearsing what you want to happen).

Mental Toughness: Possessing the mental strength necessary to perform in a variety of challenging situations. Mental toughness exists prior to a stressful situation; this is different from resilience, which is one's ability to "bounce back" after a stressful circumstance. (Note: mental toughness originates from the performance psychology literature and is only one aspect of Warrior Toughness).

Mindfulness: Present moment awareness - paying attention to the here and now in a nonjudgmental manner. It is a way of relating to whatever is happening in the present moment: paying attention, noticing, and not judging. Although defined in different ways over time, the origins of mindfulness are ancient and universal, and can be found throughout the world's religious traditions. For our purposes, we use a secular definition and practice of mindfulness grounded in evidence-based practices in human performance and wellbeing.



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Mindfulness Exercises: A specific activity that can build mindfulness. If mindfulness is like strength or speed, mindfulness exercises are like running or going to the gym. Completing a mindfulness exercise typically means sitting still, noticing the present moment, and coming back, over and over again, despite getting distracted. It can also mean paying attention while eating, or walking, or falling asleep. Research shows mindfulness exercises increase one's ability to focus and strengthens the frontal cortex.

Mental Scan: A mindfulness exercise that involves observing one's mind. Mental scan is designed to teach one how to be aware of their thoughts and emotions, observe them objectively, and let them go. It also gives Sailors an opportunity to practice refocusing on the here and now when their minds wander.

Performance Statement: A performance psychology technique to improve one's "self-talk." A performance statement is a phrase or sentence you say to yourself during a performance to redirect your thoughts away from negative, unhelpful thinking. Performance statements must be brief, instructive, realistic, and helpful; they do not have to be positive. For example, a performance statement one could use while running could be "shoulders back, chin up, kick through" or "run to the end of the turn," or "I am running my race, no one else's."

Physical Toughness: Different from mental, spiritual, or Warrior Toughness, physical toughness is the ability to complete demanding physical activity. Physical toughness relates to strength and stamina, and is built by "reps and sets."



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Preparation: The second step in the Warrior Mindset. Preparation and training should be rigorous enough to fall back on during combat or high-stakes situations. It also must be holistic preparation: body (physical fitness, realistic training scenarios), mind (performance psychology, mindfulness), and soul (personal philosophy, personal connections). “We never rise to the occasion, but fail to the level of our training.”

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: A mindfulness exercise that involves tensing and releasing muscles in a sequence. PMR is designed to teach one how to control muscle tension and provides Sailors an opportunity to practicing refocusing on the here and now when their minds wander.

Recalibrate: An on-command exercise cuing someone to slow their breathing down so their heart rate slows down and they can focus better. When told to recalibrate, the person does not stop what they are doing or close their eyes; the series of events is: inhale for 5 seconds and exhale for 7 seconds. It is important that the exhale is longer than the inhale, no matter the length of breath to send a signal to the brain to engage the frontal cortex and focus.

Recovery Routines: Any number of activities designed for the body, mind, and soul to decompress and rejuvenate. Recovery routines are necessary at multiple points in a performance. For example, for RDCs, recovery routines are recommended during the day, at the end of the day, at the end of the push, and during Recruit Training Period. For other staff, it is recommended during the day, at the end of the day, on the weekends (non-work days), and during leave periods.



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Reflection: The final step in the Warrior Mindset. Reflection occurs at the organizational level (AARs, lessons learned, etc.) and individual level. At both levels it is vital that both successes and mistakes are not dwelled upon, but acknowledged. Information gleaned from this step feeds back into the first step - commitment - thus creating a cycle.

Resilience: The capacity to return to personal baseline (bounce back) following a difficult life event with minimal illness or injury. It is only one part of toughness as it focuses only on recovery after something negative. Warrior Toughness is not a resilience program as it is about performance, not wellbeing.

Toughness: Toughness in the Navy is seen in three ways: 1) The ability to take a hit and keep going. 2) Perform under pressure. 3) Excel in the day-in and day-out grind.

Self-Talk: Self-talk is the constant thinking that occurs inside our minds. These thoughts can be distracting and not helpful, therefore impeding performance. Self-talk can also be positive, motivating, or help us focus. Performance Statements can realign thoughts to be more focused and helpful. Mindfulness Exercises also help improve ability to notice and manage self-talk.



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Spiritual Toughness: Knowing who you are, what you believe, and why you do what you do is foundational to being spiritually tough. This understanding of one's self is the strength and depth of character that gives the motivation and determination necessary to maintain faithfulness to one's commitments, beliefs, and values in the face of adversity and in the daily grind. Spiritual toughness is a product of reflection, awareness, and commitment to something greater than one's self propelling them to prepare and execute with conviction.

Warrior Mindset: A continuous cycle of Commitment, Preparation, Execution, and Reflection. By completing this cycle repeatedly, one is building and sustaining toughness while progressing toward peak performance. Everything that we do can be viewed through the lens of the Warrior Mindset.