



## NAEMT Mental Health Resilience Officer Course

### Mindfulness Techniques

Technique	Setting	Method
<b>Tactical Breathing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This technique can be performed in a group or individually</li><li>Tactical Breathing requires little planning and can be done as needed whether the participant is in the field, at the station, or any other location they prefer.</li><li>This technique is useful as an “in the moment” tool. It can also be used for planned decompression at the end of the day or end of a shift.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Inhale fully and then forcefully exhale, to completely empty your lungs.</li><li>At the end of full exhalation, breath in a full breath (through your nose if possible) while counting out 4 seconds</li><li>At the end of the 4 second inhalation, hold that breath while counting to 4 again</li><li>At the end of the 4 second hold, exhale in a controlled manner while counting out 4 seconds</li><li>At the end of the 4 second exhalation, hold the exhalation while counting to 4 again</li><li>At the end of the 4 second hold, begin the cycle again by inhaling while counting out 4 seconds.</li><li>Repeat the full inhale, hold, exhale, hold cycle for a total of four to 8 repetitions (one to two minutes.)</li><li>This technique can be combined with guided imagery, visualizing the exhalation as a method of releasing, or letting go the stress that has built up inside.</li></ul>
<b>Stretching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This technique can be performed in a group or individually</li><li>Stretching will require some room, so may be better suited for use at the station or while at home. For crews that post away from a station, a parking lot or other safe area may also be used.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gentle stretching of all muscle groups can be useful to combat fatigue and soreness that can develop over the course of a long shift.</li><li>The emphasis should not be on “popping” joints, rather on expanding and mobilizing muscle groups.</li><li>Divide your body into 4 parts:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Head and neck<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gently roll the head and neck in a clockwise motion for 2-4 revolutions, then let your chin hang down to your chest and count to 5</li><li>Gently roll the head and neck in a counter-clockwise motion for 2-4 revolutions, and allow your head to hang back, look toward the sky and count to 5</li></ul></li><li>Upper extremities</li></ul></li></ul>



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Close your fists and curl your arms from distal to proximal, tensing them all the way to your core</li><li>▪ Hold the tension while counting to 10</li><li>▪ Release the tension from proximal to distal in a controlled manner while counting to 10</li><li>▪ Repeat this 2 times</li><li>○ Lower extremities<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Find something to lean against</li><li>▪ Extend your right leg back and press your heel to the floor, stretching your calf. Hold for 10 seconds.</li><li>▪ Switch to the left leg and repeat.</li></ul></li><li>○ Chest and back<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Stand with your feet shoulder width apart.</li><li>▪ Extend your arms to the side and then continue to pull them back, fully engaging the muscles in your upper back, as if opening your arms for a big hug.</li><li>▪ As you are extending your arms, breathe in as fully as you can.</li><li>▪ At the end of inhalation, pull your arms in front of you while exhaling, until your arms fully cross across your chest. Repeat this 2-4 times.</li></ul></li><li>○ Additional stretches or repetitions can be added and the exercises modified to fit the environment you are in.</li><li>• Emphasizing the muscles of the chest and back to fully expand the lungs can then be combined with a breathing exercise to increase wakefulness and combat fatigue.</li></ul>
<b>Gazing Meditation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This can be performed in a group or individually.</li><li>• This technique is flexible and can be performed on duty or in a planned fashion.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pick a fixed object in the distance and focus in on that object, making a conscious effort to mentally eliminate distractions in the peripheral vision.</li></ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Using this technique can help individuals work on consciously tuning out distractions and increase focus.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Set a timer for 3-5 minutes and focus on the object intently. It is ok to blink but urges to resist the object should be resisted.</li><li>Allow your mind to wander during this time. IF negative thoughts become pervasive, try to transition your thinking to more enjoyable activities or moments.</li></ul>
<b>Activities in Nature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This technique can be used alone or in a group.</li><li>This is a planned activity and has limited use while on duty.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hiking in nature without technology or work intrusion has been shown to calm anxiety and stress.</li><li>Engaging in activities around natural water sources such as rivers, waterfalls, beaches, and lakes and tuning in to the sounds around you can reduce anxiety levels.</li><li>If participating in nature activities alone, make sure to inform a friend or family member of where you are going and when to expect you back.</li></ul>
<b>Body Scan Meditation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This technique requires a quiet area free of distractions.</li><li>If there is a call room or bunk area at the station, this technique could be employed there.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Body scan meditation is a technique that involves intentionally focusing in on individual areas of your body and noting the sensations and feelings that each of those areas is experiencing.</li><li>This technique is usually performed while lying down or sitting in a chair, with your back straight and feet flat on the ground. You will then be guided through a routine that pays attention to each area of your body and allows you to tune in to what your body is telling you in the moment.</li><li>While this technique can be relaxing, the focus should be on tuning in to what your body is telling you, to gain deeper understanding of how stress and current experiences may be impacting individual areas of your body.</li><li>When learning this technique, a script or guide will be required. A few links are provided below:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="https://youtu.be/QS2yDmWk0vs">https://youtu.be/QS2yDmWk0vs</a></li><li><a href="https://youtu.be/_DTmGtznab4">https://youtu.be/_DTmGtznab4</a></li><li><a href="https://www.helpguide.org/meditations/body-scan-meditation.htm">https://www.helpguide.org/meditations/body-scan-meditation.htm</a></li></ul></li></ul>



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Many other free, online resources are available to guide you through this technique. A simple internet search for “body scan meditation” will provide multiple resources.</li><li>Over time, you may learn to guide yourself through body scan meditation without a guide or script.</li></ul>
<b>Cooking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This technique is limited to use in the home or in a station setting where meals are prepared at work.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Many people find the act of cooking to be calming.</li><li>Cooking can include an entire meal or be limited something as simple as a desert or healthy snack.</li><li>Cooking something that can be shared can be a helpful way to reduce stress and do something kind for your neighbors, co-workers, or family members.</li><li>If you plan on using this technique, be cautious to make sure that cooking is something you can enjoy doing and avoid letting it become a responsibility or burden. If you routinely cook for your family or at the station as part of your day-to-day responsibilities, try to separate cooking for pleasure and routine cooking to maximize the benefit you can obtain from this technique.</li></ul>
<b>Swimming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This technique requires access to a swimming pool or other body of water.</li><li>This is not a useful technique while on duty, but can be employed as part of a scheduled self-care routine.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Swimming requires breathing coordination which can be helpful for stress and anxiety reduction.</li><li>Swimming for fitness can be used as a stress reduction technique that has the benefit of a low impact aerobic fitness activity.</li><li>Simply floating in a pool or body of water can be helpful for mindfulness, as the water naturally shuts out the surrounding sounds, and to maintain your buoyancy, you will have to consciously inhale and exhale.</li></ul>
<b>Yoga</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Yoga can be performed in sessions as short as 5 minutes, or as a full 30 to 60 minute class.</li><li>Short sessions can be useful while on duty as a break to reduce fatigue, increase focus, and reduce anxiety.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Yoga has 3 main components:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Posture</li><li>Breath control</li><li>Meditation/Mindfulness</li></ul></li><li>There are various styles of Yoga with a variety of goals for each style. Some forms of Yoga focus on fitness, while others focus on mindfulness</li></ul>



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		<p>and relaxation. This makes Yoga a useful tool for most individuals, as they are likely to find a style that meets their needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are now apps which can guide participants through Yoga sessions from their phone or TV, outside of a formal studio. This can make Yoga useful while on duty.</li></ul>
<b>Physical Exercise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical exercise can be a planned part of your off-duty routine. In situations where you are at a station with workout equipment, you can incorporate this as part of your daily on shift routine also.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical exercise can involve strength training, cardio, and other exercises.</li><li>• Partnering with other colleagues, friends, or family can help make this activity more fun and hold you accountable.</li><li>• The major benefit from this activity is seen when you engage in regular exercise over a period of weeks to months, slowly building it into your lifestyle.</li><li>• Many workplaces offer incentives for regular exercise and for meeting certain exercise goals throughout the year.</li></ul>