

THE POLICE TREATMENT CENTRES



EXERCISE & WELLBEING - FOUR PILLARS

1. BUILDING PHYSICAL & MENTAL RESILIENCE

Physical Resilience is not just the body being able to defend itself from illness & weakness, it is the body's ability to regulate itself from internal and external stressors and the pace at which it adapts.

Mental Resilience is not just the ability to persevere in the face of adversity, it is the ability to guide your thoughts to more positive places and outlooks and feel more in control of your situation. Exercise promotes a simple risk/reward task that allows a lot of control and self-assessment.

"Leveraging strengths and new skills acquired through exercise, ultimately enhances resilience." (Hamby et al '18)

How do we build Resilience (and what exercise)?

- Include exercises you are confident with and that energise you, to try more challenging exercises.
- Identify your current strengths and how you can improve, using a tried and tested framework; e.g. same exercise – more weight or a different variation.
- Mid-to-High intensity resistance exercise (15-45 mins, 3-5 days a week) are more likely to:
 - increase short term alertness
 - increase sense of control
 - decrease short term stress.

2. ACHIEVEMENT & EMOTIONAL BALANCE

All too often, especially in this current climate, it can feel as if life has come to a halt and we lose our sense of ongoing **achievement**. This in turn affects our **emotional balance**.

Through exercise and staying active, skills and strengths can be developed through small, incremental progressions; which help keep that sense of achievement and most importantly, control.

A sense of control is important to maintain feelings of positive emotions, engagement, meaning and accomplishment. (Seligman et al '11).

Exercise is also a great way of refreshing the thought processes and allowing your brain a chance to unwind and re-focus.

How do we track achievement to help keep a balance (and what exercise)?

- Try an app to log your workouts and keep track of important goal markers to show how you have developed.
- Give yourself reasonable short, mid and long-term goals, and mark a review date on the calendar.
- How Happy do you feel? Exercise releases endorphins into the blood stream, so take a walk or hit the gym.
- Low-intensity aerobic exercises (15-35 mins, 3-5 days a week) are more likely to improve overall mood and outlook.



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3. FLOW ACTIVITIES & FOCUS

A **flow activity** is one that promotes optimal states in consciousness due to total absorption (focus) in a single task. (Csikzentmikli '97).

Exercise provides an opportunity for physical and emotional release, but also provides ongoing feedback and continuous positive reinforcement to aid in improving mood.

The right exercise for focus feels challenging, but possible to accomplish.

What's my Flow Activity?

- Pilates, Yoga and Tai-Chi all promote a quietening of the mind and focus on movement, whilst being challenging and aiding mobility.
- Aerobic exercise such as running, hiking, swimming and biking have a tunnel effect, meaning, the longer they are performed, the easier it is to switch off & focus on the task at hand. Bear in mind, an hour of activity is optimal!
- Take the stairs or scenic route when possible to allow time for you to unwind and re-centre your thoughts.

4. TRAINING & THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

In this moment of social distancing, a lot of us are training more than we were before.

A fit body makes for a stronger immune system - our wound healing ability increases, as do our "killer" cells - the cells our immune system uses to fight viruses.

But overtraining (volume or intensity) can become detrimental. After hard sessions our immune system can be suppressed, the body using up vital energy to recover and reducing our immunity.

Remember:

- A healthy body creates a strong immune system
- Overtraining suppresses the immune system
- 80:20 rule - 80% of training is low intensity and 20% is high intensity.
- During low Intensity = aim for up to 80% Max Heart Rate
- During high Intensity = aim for above 90% Max Heart Rate
- Max Heart Rate = 220 - your age.

Returning to training after illness

Exercise physiologist lecturer Anthony Hackney (University of North Carolina) researched return to exercise following illness or whilst ill. The following is only advise and not strict guidelines, if you are showing overt signs of infection.

- Day 1 - No strenuous exercise, plenty of fluids, avoid getting wet or cold.
- Day 2 - If symptoms worsen, no exercise, rest. If no fever or worse symptoms, light exercise for 30-45 minutes.
- Day 3 - Symptoms persisting, no exercise. Improvement in symptoms, light exercise 45 - 60 minutes.
- Day 4 - Symptoms not improving, rest and no exercise. If this is the first day feeling better, light 30-45 minutes exercise (day 2). If gradually improving manage work load until returned to normal training level. If you become to feel unwell, take further days off and return to the beginning (day 1). Light exercise is activities like walking, gentle housework.