



3d Marine Aircraft Wing Total Fitness Summer Resources

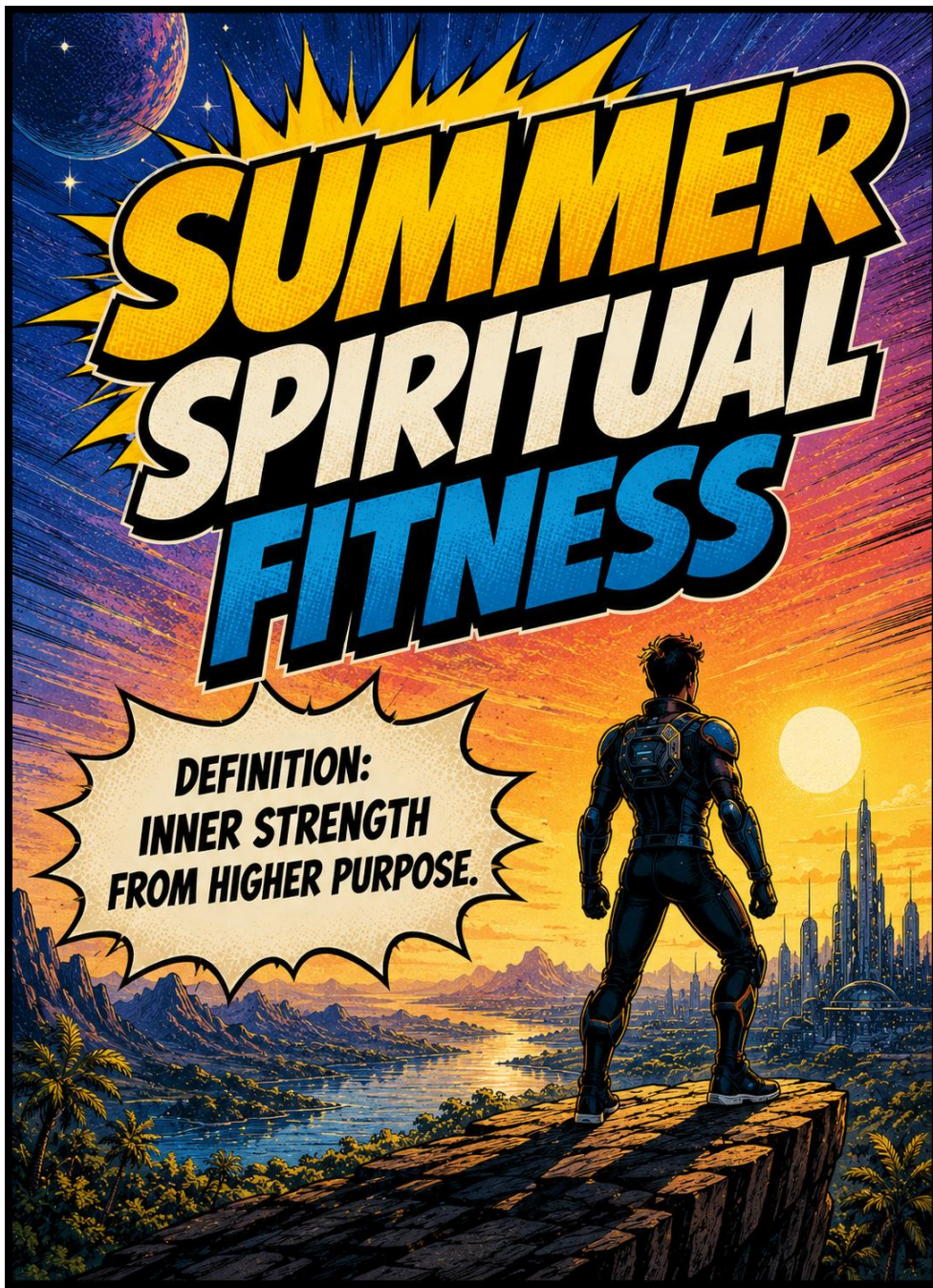
Quick access to resources for Marines, Sailors, and families.

Table of Contents

3d MAW Spiritual Fitness Summer Newsletter	2
Spiritual and Mental Preparation for War	3
Summer Spiritual Fitness.....	4
Spiritual Fitness Guide.....	5
Spiritual Fitness Challenges.....	6
Total Fitness Self Check and Resources	7
Additional Resources	8



**Spiritual and
Mental
Preparation for
War**



**Summer Spiritual
Fitness**

**Spiritual
Fitness
Challenges**

1 Spiritual and Mental Preparation for War!



As 3D MAW Marines and Sailors, we know how to prepare for the physical violence of combat. We train our bodies, master our weapons, and perfect our tactics. But what prepares us for the battlefield of the soul? In his profound book, *What It's Like to Go to War*, Vietnam veteran and Rhodes Scholar Karl Marlantes confronts this essential question, earning his work a place on the Commandant's Professional Reading List in 2019.

Marlantes argues that while the military excels at teaching us how to fight, it often falls short in preparing us for the deep psychological and spiritual impact of war.

As he puts it, "I felt responsible for the lives and deaths of my companions. I was struggling with a situation approaching the sacred in its terror and contact with the infinite...I needed help with the existential terror of my own death and responsibility for the death of others, enemies, and friends."

This feeling is a reality for many Marines returning from combat. The book serves as a powerful validation for the complex mix of pride, fear, guilt, and nightmares that can follow a combat tour. It is a crucial reminder that no Marine is alone in these experiences. For many, the hardest part of coming home is knowing how, where, or with whom to talk about what happened. Marlantes provides a language for these experiences, giving warriors the tools to have the meaningful, in-depth conversations that are essential for healing and growth.

For leaders, from NCOs to officers, this book is more than just a story; it is a vital tool that can be used to discuss how best to prepare for combat mentally and spiritually. It underscores that true readiness involves not just physical toughness but also spiritual and moral resilience. As Marlantes points out, the "spiritual component... must never take second place to the physical." Without this preparation, the journey home can be more difficult than any battle fought overseas.

Marlantes writes...

"Warriors deal with death. They take life away from others. This is normally the role of God. It can also lead to killing and the infliction of pain in excess of what is required to accomplish the mission. If warriors are returned home having had better psychological and spiritual preparation, they will integrate into civilian life faster and they and their families will suffer less."

What It's Like to Go to War is a guide to understanding the unseen wounds of combat and a testament to the strength required to heal them. It is an essential read for any Marine who seeks to lead and to understand the complete nature of the warrior's life.

You can borrow a free copy of the digital book or audio book at <https://libbyapp.com/library/dod>

Discussion Questions

1. The author writes, "You can't be a good person until you observe how bad you are." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? How does self-awareness impact a Marine's character and actions?
2. "We lie because we find ourselves in positions where it appears the truth will hurt us" (p.132). How does lying intersect with the core values of honor, courage, and commitment?
3. "Behavior sets standards, not ideals" (p.113). What behaviors form the standards of the USMC? Of our unit? Of your family?
4. How does character impact your actions both on and off the field of battle?
5. What can Marines and Sailors do now to prepare their character, so they are ready to make good decisions under the pressures of combat?
6. Marlantes says he needed a spiritual guide. Who are the people that you currently go to as a spiritual guide for your life?
7. Use the spiritual fitness guide of this newsletter to evaluate how spiritually prepared you are to go to war.
8. What types of ceremonies or rituals would be helpful to spiritually prepare for combat?

2 Summer Spiritual Fitness

Fortifying Your Inner Strength This Summer

As the weather warms and the days lengthen, Marines, Sailors and their families look forward to getting outside and having fun this summer. This period, stretching from Memorial Day to Labor Day, is a well-deserved time for recreation, travel, and reconnecting with loved ones. However, as our annual safety briefs remind us, this season also brings a higher risk of mishaps, from the highways to the waterways. While we diligently check our tire pressure, wear our life jackets, and stay hydrated, may we also take time to deepen our higher purpose and strengthen our spiritual core.

More Than a Domain—It's Your Core

The Marine Corps defines spiritual fitness as "**inner strength from higher purposes.**" As laid out in the *Spiritual Fitness Leader's Guide* (MCRP 6-10.1). It is a concept that includes your personal faith, foundational values, and moral living. The "101 Critical Days of Summer" campaign focuses on mitigating external risks by taking time to apply some operational risk management to our off-duty activities. As you do, also take time to apply spiritual fitness principles to your summer fun.

Connecting Inner Strength to Summer Safety

How does this "inner strength" translate to a safer summer?

- **Enhanced Decision-Making:** The decision to not get behind the wheel after drinking, to wear a helmet, or to check the weather before heading out on the water isn't just a matter of following a checklist. It stems from a **foundational value** of your own life and the lives of those you have a duty to protect. **A strong spiritual core reinforces the discipline to make the right call, every time. Taking the time to ensure everyone is following safe practices impacts people you encounter as you improve the quality of life all around you.** One poor decision to disregard safe practices can cause loss of life, pain, and sadness.

- **Purpose and Perspective:** Summer can be a time of high tempo, both in training and personal life. By taking time off to nurture your Spiritual fitness, delve deeper in understanding your sense of purpose, can serve to help you manage stress and prevent burnout. By taking time to spend outdoors connecting to something larger than yourself—be it your family, your faith, God or other higher power, your community, or the Marine Corps itself—you gain perspective that can turn a stressful moment into a peaceful and manageable one.
- **Resilience in the Face of Adversity:** Lets be real, mishaps can still happen no matter how well we plan, prepare, and follow all necessary safety precautions. Taking time to nurture and strengthen your spiritual foundation provides the resilience to bounce back from hardship when these things happen. Whether it's a minor injury, a personal setback, or the stress of a challenging season. **It is the engine for the "persistent strength of mind and spirit" needed to overcome friction in all aspects of our lives.**



Discussion Questions

1. What gives you strength? Is it your family, your faith, your values, your commitment to your fellow Marines? Share an example with your fellow Marines.
2. What positive practices can you plan to do this summer to boost your spiritual core? Consider the following list: Reading, Journaling, Meditation, Prayer, Confession, Gratitude, Generosity, Forgiveness.
3. Can you share a practical example of how a clear sense of your personal values might help you or a fellow Marine navigate a high-risk summer activity, such as a party where alcohol is present or a long-distance road trip?

Spiritual Fitness Guide: This is a self-assessment Tool to help service members determine their spiritual condition.

Green Zone	Yellow Zone	Orange Zone	Red Zone
Potential Indicators	Potential Indicators	Potential Indicators	Potential Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged in life's meaning/purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neglecting life's meaning/purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Losing a sense of life's meaning/purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feels like life has no meaning/purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hopeful about life/future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less hopeful about life/future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold very little hope about life/future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holds no hope about life/future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes sound moral decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes some poor moral decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes poor moral decisions routinely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged in extreme immoral behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully engaged with family, friends, and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somewhat engaged with family, friends, and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weakly engaged with family, friends, and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not engaged with family, friends, and community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to forgive self and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty forgiving self or others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not likely to forgive self or others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forgiveness is not an option
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less respectful of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong disrespect for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete disrespect for others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged in core values/beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straying from core values/beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disregards core values/beliefs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abandoned core values/beliefs

If you find yourself in need of support, do not suffer in silence. Immediately seek assistance from any avenue of support.

Resources for Support:

Chaplain — Military and Family Life Counselors — Community Counseling Program Leaders
 Leaders — Family or Friend — Military OneSource **800-342-9647**
 Military Crisis Line: Dial **988** then press **1**

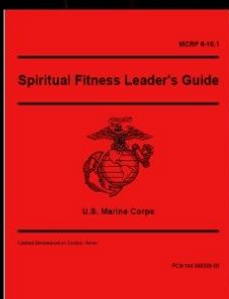
Your religious ministry team cares about you and is committed to helping you develop your spiritual fitness.

Absolute 100% confidentiality is provided.

Contact your unit Chaplain for support.

Put succinctly, spiritual fitness is “inner strength from higher purpose.”

- General Eric M. Smith, 39th Commandant of the Marine Corps



SPIRITUAL FITNESS CHALLENGES

Challenge 1: Moral Compass OODA Loop



With the "101 Critical Days of Summer" beginning, this challenge focuses on preparing for the increased decisions and pressures of the season. It is centered on the spiritual fitness elements of Moral Living and Self-Assessment.

The Challenge:

Observe (Week 1): Use the Observe-Orient-Decide-Act (OODA) loop for self-reflection as described in MCRP 6-10.1. At the end of each day, take five minutes to review one decision you made. Ask yourself: Was the decision morally sound? What were its consequences?

Orient (Week 2): Identify the primary "influences" that guided your decisions during the first week. Were they internal (your personal values, your goals) or external (peer pressure, convenience, orders)? Consider which influences are pulling you toward your best self and which are not.

Decide & Act (Week 3-4): Intentionally make one small decision each day that is actively guided by a core value (like honor, courage, or commitment) rather than convenience or habit. This could be as simple as being the first to take ownership of a team mistake (Honor), having a difficult but necessary conversation (Courage), or seeing a task through to completion without being asked (Commitment).

Goal: To sharpen your moral decision-making skills and proactively align your daily actions with your foundational values, ensuring you are prepared to act with integrity throughout the summer and beyond.

Challenge 2: Get Outside

Hiking and Nature Walks

Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve: Offers stunning coastal views with trails for all skill levels. The Beach Trail leads you down to the ocean, while the Guy Fleming Trail is a flatter loop with panoramic overlooks. Arrive early as parking can fill up quickly.

Cowles Mountain: Located in Mission Trails Regional Park, this is one of San Diego's most popular hikes. The climb to the summit is a great workout that rewards you with 360-degree views of the entire county.

Sunset Cliffs Natural Park: Ideal for a relaxing walk along the coastline. As the name suggests, it's one of the best places in the city to watch the sunset over the Pacific Ocean.

Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve: A lush, flat canyon trail that is great for a longer, less strenuous hike or a bike ride. It features a waterfall, a forest of sycamore trees, and rich wildlife.

Beaches and Bays

Coronado Beach: Famous for its wide, sparkling sand and the iconic Hotel del Coronado. It's a perfect spot for a classic beach day, family picnics, and gentle waves.

La Jolla Shores & Cove: La Jolla Shores is a great sandy beach for swimming and learning to surf. A short distance away, La Jolla Cove is a hub for snorkeling and kayaking, where you can see sea lions, seals, and bright orange Garibaldi fish. The Coast Walk Trail connects the two and offers beautiful scenery.

Mission Bay Park: This large aquatic park is perfect for activities on the water. You can rent kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, sailboats, or jet skis. The park also has miles of flat paths for biking, running, or having a barbecue.

Pacific Beach & Mission Beach: For a more energetic atmosphere, the boardwalk stretching from Pacific Beach to Mission Beach is perfect for biking, rollerblading, and people-watching. You can also enjoy the historic Belmont Park amusement park.

Parks and Gardens

Balboa Park: A must-visit destination. While it is home to many museums, its outdoor spaces are a primary attraction. You can explore numerous gardens (like the Japanese Friendship Garden and the Alcazar Garden), walk the beautiful Prado, or find a quiet trail to explore.

Cabrillo National Monument: Located at the tip of the Point Loma peninsula, this monument offers a piece of history with the old Point Loma Lighthouse. More importantly, it provides arguably the best panoramic view of the San Diego skyline, harbor, and the Pacific Ocean.

3D MAW - TOTAL FITNESS SELF CHECK TOOL

This is a private self-assessment tool that may help a Marine or Sailor identify a need for support. It is not designed for use by the chain of command to evaluate a Marine's fitness or readiness.



Physical Fitness

RESOURCES: Gym/HITT/MCMAP/Personal Trainers/Nutritionist/Dietician

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:

- a. I have the physical fitness necessary to perform all of my duties with confidence (both deployed and in garrison).
- b. My duties are not affected by an unreported medical or dental condition.
- c. In the past 30 days, poor physical health did not keep me from my usual activities or from performing my duties.
- d. I have the necessary knowledge to make good choices regarding nutrition, alcohol use, tobacco use, and safe sex practices.
- e. I meet my body composition standards (height and weight or body fat).
- f. Please indicate your most recent PFT/CFT classification.

Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
1st Class	2nd Class	3rd Class	Partial	Failed
4	3	2	1	0

Physical Fitness Total:

	19-24	13-18	7-12	0-6
--	-------	-------	------	-----

Mental Fitness

RESOURCES: Mental Health/MCCS/MFLC/Chaplain

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:

- a. I feel pride in my accomplishments.
- b. I look forward to beginning each day.
- c. I am making a real contribution toward mission accomplishment.
- d. I usually know what I can and cannot control.
- e. I am comfortable seeking assistance and asking for help in times of emotional challenge or crisis.
- f. I am currently engaged in activities (reading and education) that contribute to growth.

Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0

Mental Fitness Total:

	19-24	13-18	7-12	0-6
--	-------	-------	------	-----

Spiritual Fitness

RESOURCES: Chaplain, Civilian Clergy, Counselor, Mentor

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:

- a. My life has meaning/purpose.
- b. I am hopeful about life/the future.
- c. My decisions are always moral.
- d. I have no problem forgiving myself or others.
- e. I am respectful of people of other beliefs.
- f. I am engaged in core values/beliefs.

Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0

Spiritual Fitness Total:

	19-24	13-18	7-12	0-6
--	-------	-------	------	-----

Social Fitness

RESOURCES: Single Marine Program, MCCS, Chaplain, CREDO Retreats

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:

- a. I am respectful of the members of my unit.
- b. I can depend on my spouse/significant other/friends for support.
- c. I get along well with members in my unit.
- d. I get involved in efforts to improve the community.
- e. I actively participate in base or community events and activities.
- f. I effectively use USMC and/or local civilian community resources.

Agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0
4	3	2	1	0

Social Fitness Total:

	19-24	13-18	7-12	0-6
--	-------	-------	------	-----

TOTAL FITNESS SCORE

	73-96	49-72	25-48	0-24
--	-------	-------	-------	------

Additional Resources

Behavioral Health: Counseling Services: MCAS Yuma: 928-269-2561 / MCAS Miramar: 858-307-1129 / Camp Pendleton: 760-763-3222. Other resources include your local Chaplain's office and embedded MFLC.

SMP: Single Marine Program events can be found at the following links:

- <https://miramar.usmc-mccs.org/recreation-fitness/recreation/single-marine-program>
- <https://pendleton.usmc-mccs.org/marine-family-support/single-marine-program>
- <https://yuma.usmc-mccs.org/marine-family-support/single-marine-program>

SJA: Family Law assistance is always available to Marines via the Legal Assistance Office (miramarlegalassist@usmc.mil or 858-307-1656). Victims of domestic violence should contact MCAS Miramar VLC (Capt Stephen Sakowicz, 760-645-5949, stephen.t.sakowicz.mil@usmc.mil) for a free consultation with a Judge Advocate on their case

Marine Corps Community Services: [MCCS and Total Fitness](#)