

# 6-week movement for wellbeing program

A wellbeing resource for ACTCS



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# Week 1: Importance of physical health for overall wellbeing

Physical health plays a critical role in balancing overall health and wellbeing of corrections officers. The demand of working as a corrections officer can take a serious toll on the mind and body with the required juggle of shift work, managing overtime, spending time with family or friends as well as to cope with high physical and psychological stressors. Commonly CO's feel like there is little time to workout and can tend to get overwhelmed or have poor motivation to complete physical activity or exercise.

One way to increase the likelihood of participating in physical activity is if you set SMART Goals that relate to your desired physical activity outcome:



Start by taking a step back and thinking about what you would like to achieve. For example, I would like to start exercising more. This is a very common one however many of us have struggled with the idea of becoming more physically active yet never seem to be able to stick to it. This sometimes comes down to having a broader goal and not following through with an action plan to achieve it.



This is where your smart goals will come into play. Applying SMART framework to your goals helps you learn how to breakdown your goals into achievable chunks by making them specific to what you want to do, achievable and realistic being something that you know is possible and can be done within a time frame. By following this process, you will be one step closer to being more physically active.

Another key component that needs to be considered when creating goals, is knowing your reason why. Why are your wanting to do this?

What is your motivation to be more physically active? Is it:

**Work requirements**

**Wanting to keep up with the family**

**Health reasons**

**Because you enjoy it**

When you have a reason why to participate in physical activity you are more likely adhere to and maintain your goal, overcome barriers and therefore achieve your goal.

Incorporating physical activity into your lifestyle is shown to improve your overall wellbeing but has also been proven to prevent and improve physical mental health, chronic medical conditions as well as improve brain function.



# Setting SMART goals

**Start by setting overarching short term, mid term and long term goals for your physical activity:**

Long term (3+ months)

Mid term goal (6-12 weeks)

Short term goal (1-2 weeks)

**Pick one of your short term goals and break it down into the SMART matrix. This will give you more clarity on how you will approach and complete this goal.**

Goal 1	
<b>Specific</b>	What is it that you want to achieve? What does this look like?
<b>Measureable</b>	How are you going to measure the progress?
<b>Achievable</b>	What are the steps that you will take to accomplish this goal?
<b>Realistic</b>	What resources do you have? Is it reasonable and how?
<b>Time-bound</b>	What is the duration allocated to achieve this goal? What is the deadline?



# Creating goals for physical activity

Now that you have made some goals for your physical activity, it may be helpful to use a tracking chart, diary or activity planner or any system that you find helpful to keep you on track.

Writing down the goal and what motivates you to do it, barriers you may come across and how to overcome them plus steps to take to reach your goal will assist in effectively completing them.

Planning out your activities will also keep you accountable and help allocate time to the goal.

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## Workout Plan

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1							
Week 2							
Week 3							
Week 4							
Week 5							



# My goals

Goal start date:	Goal review date:
------------------	-------------------

Goal:		
Motivation:	Barriers:	Steps to take:

Goal:		
Motivation:	Barriers:	Steps to take:

Weekly planner						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun

Goal completed:	Goal completed:
Notes:	



# No equipment full body workout

Many barriers to exercise come down to time, energy, not having the resources, knowledge or equipment accessible. One of the magical things about physical activity is that you do not need fancy equipment, special gyms or large amounts of time to exercise.

On the next page is an example of a full bodyweight exercise program that requires no equipment that targets strength.

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Completing this exercise program, you are encouraged to go at your own pace and listen to your body.

If you have any injuries or are unsure of what to do, please seek professional advice from a medical professional or an exercise physiologist.





# Setting SMART goals

Time under tension: 30 seconds work, 15 seconds hold, 15 seconds rest  
4 upper body + 4 lower body + 4 core exercises

## Warm up 20 seconds each exercise

- Arm circles
- Shoulder stretch
- Active hamstrings (holding feet)
- Runner lunges
- Plank to A frame (plank down dog)

## Exercises 1:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Push up</li> <li>• Shoulder tap</li> <li>• Triceps dip single arm rise</li> <li>• Y-pull down back extension</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 seconds work</li> <li>• 15 seconds hold</li> <li>• 15 seconds rest between exercises</li> <li>• 60 seconds rest after all exercises</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

## Exercises 2:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Squats</li> <li>• Lunges L</li> <li>• Lunges R</li> <li>• Glute bridge marching</li> <li>• Side lunge L</li> <li>• Side lunge R</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 seconds work</li> <li>• 15 seconds hold</li> <li>• 15 seconds rest between exercises</li> <li>• 60 seconds rest after all exercises</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

## Exercises 3:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90/90 crawling + hold</li> <li>• Plank walk outs</li> <li>• Mountain climber</li> <li>• Russian twists dish hold</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 seconds work</li> <li>• 15 seconds hold</li> <li>• 15 seconds rest between exercises</li> <li>• 60 seconds rest after all exercises</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

## Cool down

- Wall pec stretch
- Triceps stretch
- Body twists
- Butterfly
- Single leg HS stretch e/s
- Pigeon
- Reverse pigeon
- Knee rocks



# Week 2: Importance of routine - mobility

**Working as a correction officer, you are required to maintain a level of physical fitness to meet the demand of your job.**

However, it can be difficult finding the time to incorporate physical activity and structured exercise into that daily routine when you are faced with changing shifts, home life expectations and other roles and responsibilities. Exercise or physical activity is usually one of the first things in a daily routine that get kicked to the curb.

Aside from establishing realistic goals and understanding your “why” for keeping active, maintaining your physical activity and mental wellbeing routine is crucial for any corrections officer. (ref to week 1 for goal setting)

Learning how to incorporate physical activity into your weekly structure has been proven to assist correction officers with stress management and the ability to rebound from physical and mental injury faster. Being active promotes physical safety and prevents injury by being physically fit and ready to perform work duties.

Maintaining a moderate level of physical activity per week helps enhance cognitive abilities like memory, attention and problem-solving skills, allowing you to make sound decisions and critically think in highly stressful situations.



Prioritising physical health can also assist in the prevention of burnout and maintaining/improving a healthy work-life balance. This is partly due to regular exercise also serving as an outlet for stress and tension, socially engaging and can help officers unwind, recharge and improve headspace which promises wellbeing on an off the job.

Finding ways to incorporate physical activity into your daily routine or lifestyle will enhance your chance of managing organisational stressors faced daily at work as a corrections officer.

Ways to incorporate physical activity into your daily routine can include:

**Making family time active**

**Doing workouts in 5-minute bouts: small chunks of exercise can still have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. For example; doing it while brushing teeth, waiting for the kettle to boil etc.**

**Carving out time in your daily schedule dedicated to physical activity**

**Watching tv whilst doing activities**

**Complete simple bodyweight exercises**

**Aim to walk 10 000 steps per day.**

**Park further away from your destination**



# Tips to start your exercise routine

- Create personalised goals for physical activity
- Set aside time to prioritise physical activity
- Create or follow a program that works well with your roster
- Add physical activity at the start or end of your shift using onsite or nearby facilities
- Keep it social - connect with other officers, family or friends
- Make it fun, engaging, accessible and a priority

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## No Equipment Mobility Exercises:

- Walk daily start with 5 minutes and increase ideally to get one lot of 20 – 30 minutes.
- Listen to a podcast or some great music dance and move!
- Stretch and be mobile even during work or long periods of sitting.
- Any movement is better than none!

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## Self-guided mobility exercises. Head to toe examples:

Head tilts forward and back

Head tilt side to side

Head rotation horizontal

Head and shoulder rotation

Side stretch to side hamstring stretch / ROS

Middle standing straddle stretch

Deep squat into shoulder drop e/s

Cossack lunge

Cat/ cow and disco cat

Child pose, hand crossed over child pose e/s

Lunge > back leg up lunge > Hamstring drawback ROS

Lunge thoracic rotation - elbow up to sky/down to floor

90/90 hip mobility rotation (windscreen)

Back leg lift > Hip CARs rotation e/s

Pigeon stretch e/s

Frog tactical stretch rock forward and back

Cobra pose

Shoulder CARs in side lay

T spine rotation > knee to chest > figure 4 stretch

Side knee rocks

Squat ankle rocks > wrist stretch



# Week 3: Strength training for mental and physical preparedness

Building the capacity to keep pushing on and knowing that you have the physical preparedness to manage the changeable physical demands as a corrections officer is essential to sustain you in the job. It's your first layer of armour or protection, and here's why:

## **Physical demand of the job:**

Working as a correction officer involves various physical demands and tasks, including restrains, responding to emergency, conducting cell searches and managing potentially physical and sometimes violent situations.

Being physically prepared, strong and aerobically fit is a requirement to obtain and maintain correctional officer work and is a crucial part of performing these tasks effectively and safely. Strength training exercises including resistance training (bodyweight and weighted), helps develop muscular strength, power and endurance enabling officers to handle physical confrontation and exertion with greater ease.

## **Injury prevention and safety**

Correction officers face inherent risks of injury due to the nature of their work. Engaging in regular strength training exercises helps enhance the body's ability to withstand strain or resistance to injuries. Strength training develops the muscles being used but also strengthens and stabilises tendons, ligaments, joints and improves bone density.

These outcomes help prevent the risk of falling and the severity of physical (musculoskeletal) injuries. This can also improve job performance as it enhances the capacity to operate equipment, manage incidents and reduce fatigue as well as increase concentration.

By building strength corrections officers can better prepare and protect themselves and others ensuring a safer work environment.



## Cardiovascular health and endurance

Aerobic exercises (cardiovascular training/ endurance) is any type of activity that raises heart rate and makes breathing harder or more strained. Activities usually incorporate large muscle groups in your body that are exercised in a rhythmic and repetitive way. Cardiovascular fitness refers to how well your body takes in oxygen and delivers it to your muscles and organs during prolonged periods of exercise.

Aerobic training is an essential part of a corrections officer program as it increases an officer's cardiovascular fitness, enabling them to withstand the physical demands of their job, including pursuits, performing prolonged physical tasks, spending long periods standing or walking and responding to emergencies. Aerobic exercise also aids in managing stress and promotes overall health and wellbeing.

Participating in activities regularly like walking 10 000 steps per day, running, cycling, swimming or interval training can help improve the efficiency of the heart and lungs (cardiorespiratory system) aiding correction officers' work performance. Enhanced physical ability and cardiovascular fitness supports mental focus and decision making.

## Stress management

Engaging in physical training of any kind enhances the body and mind's ability to manage stress. Regular exercise releases neurochemicals responsible for mood management and increased oxygen to the brain to assist in clarity of mind and decision making, which act as natural stress mediators.

Physical activity also provides healthy outlets for stress, allows social interaction and helps officers manage their psychological health which can take a hit over time when there is prolonged stress.



# Banded bodyweight strength program

Resistance bands provide an accessible and convenient way to add resistance to movements that would usually require free weights or machines. By using these, you have the flexibility of location, time and ease of access. They come in a range of strengths so ensure you pick one suitable for your levels of strength and physical ability.

## 6 exercises: 3 x 12 reps

Warm up:

- Jogging high knees 30 seconds
- Butt kicks 30 seconds
- Arm circles fwd. 15 sec/ backward 15 sec
- Air squats 30 seconds
- Lunge rotations 30 seconds L/ 30 seconds R
- Jumping jacks 30 seconds

## Exercises group 1: 3 x 12

Strength resistance band and bodyweight

- Squat + bicep curl band
- R Lunge + Shoulder press
- L Lunge + shoulder press
- Dead lift + bent over row
- Side plank shoulder abduction

Cool Down:

- Cobra 20 seconds
- Childs pose 20 seconds
- Standing touch toes 20 seconds
- Quad stretch L+R 20 seconds each
- Hamstring swings L + R 20 10 seconds each





# Week 4: Exercise for time-poor people

Time is of the essence. Everyone has the same 24 hours in a day, but time is commonly one of the largest barriers to partake in physical activity. Correction officers face long working shifts, over time and rotating night shifts which can make it difficult to fit in physical activity, especially when you factor in fatigue, time of day, external to work commitments and personal preferences to exercise.

As physical activity is a fundamental component of health and wellbeing, it is important to make time in your busy schedule. Make the activity you are engaging in accessible, achievable, fun and enjoyable (we all know you will not do something if you see no benefit or enjoyment in it). Being able to carve out time to be physically active is going to be the biggest tool to assist in maintaining physical preparedness for work, managing physical and mental stressors and allowing you to have an outlet that is not related to work.

## So, find a way to make it work for you

**Incorporate physical activity around work schedules**

**Listen to your body a walk is better than no movement at all**

**Exercise intensity should be adaptable around your work shifts and night roster**

## Time chunk

**Exercise can be effective even in as smaller bouts of 5 to 12 minutes. Allowing collective blocks of time for example 4 blocks of 5 minutes per day or 3 blocks of 10 minutes where you allocate to moving has been shown to decrease sedentary time and decrease the burden of chronic disease associated with sedentary time**

**Make it fun and social: include friends, family or professionals**

**Walk daily to decrease sitting time, 10 000 steps is the gold standard**



A great way to get the benefits of physical activity in a short amount of time is by incorporating High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) into your weekly exercise schedule. Benefits of HIIT:

### **Effective use of time**

Due to the short burst of intense activity followed by brief recovery periods. HIIT workouts are perfect for those like correctional officers who are time poor which makes it easier to fit it into the busy schedule.

### **Assist in weight management and muscular endurance**

HIIT exercise required the body, heart and lungs to respond at a high intensity, which increases aerobic endurance as well as increase caloric consumption assisting weight management.

### **Prepare for emergency response**

HIIT exercises also assist with preparing the body to engage in physically demanding tasks and the potential high intensity activity required in an emergency response.

### **Stress relief**

Many forms of physical activity release hormones that enhance mood and decrease pain as well as provide the individuals a physical, psychological outlet to help reduce or manage stress. Sometimes a short fast bout of physical activity is the distraction that was needed to manage stressors.

### **Maintaining motivation**

In the world we live in today results are expected instantaneously. When it comes to seeing results from physical activity or structured exercises, we often lose motivation if we do not see results quickly, often physical aesthetics. Some things to remember. Physical activity and exercise do not have to be about obtaining a certain look or lifting a certain amount of weights, it is important to keep in mind your goals and outcomes.

To notice physical change can take a few weeks which may discourage some people. Remember to notice the small changes like sleep improvements, ease of activities, change in tightness of clothing or even maintaining a regular routine. Physical activity can be used as a stress relief outlet, social interaction, fun and engagement.

**Remember to celebrate small wins and this will keep you on track to achieving your goals.**



# High intensity interval training bodyweight

**5 exercises, 3 rounds: 40 seconds work, 20 seconds' rest**

Warm up: 20 sec each

- High knees
- Boxing
- Frog squats
- Inch worm
- Lunge elbow rotation

Exercises:

- Squat X jump
- Triceps tip toe touch
- Kick sits
- Commando push ups
- Lunge forward/back

Stretch to cool down

- Close gate stretch 20 each side
- Lunge side reach 20 sec each side
- Kneeling lunge quad stretch 20 sec each side
- Hamstring stretch kneeling 20 sec each side
- Cobra 20 seconds
- Child pose and pray hands 20 seconds
- Pec rotation stretch 20 sec each side

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# Week 5: Work based superset bodyweight program

Being able to physically prepare your body and mind for the job and tasks required is a core component of physical training for correction officers. Choosing exercises that mimic common movement patterns repeated in day to day tasks may help perform and physically tolerate at higher rates.

Allowing yourself to have stronger and more flexible bodies has been shown to assist in the physical output needed for correction officers and has been shown to decrease the likelihood of injury.

When you are exercising next, think about what movements you do in a day and how you can use your body, weights or machines to help build up those muscles or joints in work based movement patterns.

Common movement patterns include:

- Pushing and pulling at waist height or above head
- Squatting and lunging or hinging at the hips
- Rotation against load
- Standing or walking for fair periods of time and negotiating stairs
- Lifting from floor to waist height
- Gripping

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# Bodyweight superset training

Warm up: 20 sec each

- Jumping jacks
- high knees
- windmill stretch
- deep squats
- A frame to down dog

Superset 1: 3 x 15 reps

- Squat pulse + Curtsey lunge

Superset 2

- Glute bridge walk outs + Russian Twists

Superset 3

- A frame push up + Gorilla jumps

**Repeat all in a row 1 x 15 each exercise**

Cool Down

- Cobra 20 seconds
- Childs pose 20 seconds
- Standing touch toes 20 seconds
- Quad stretch L+R 20 seconds each
- Hamstring swings L+R 20 10 seconds each



# Week 6: Mindful movement - yoga

**Recent studies have investigated the impact yoga has on correction officers with data suggesting officers are able to reduce stress.**

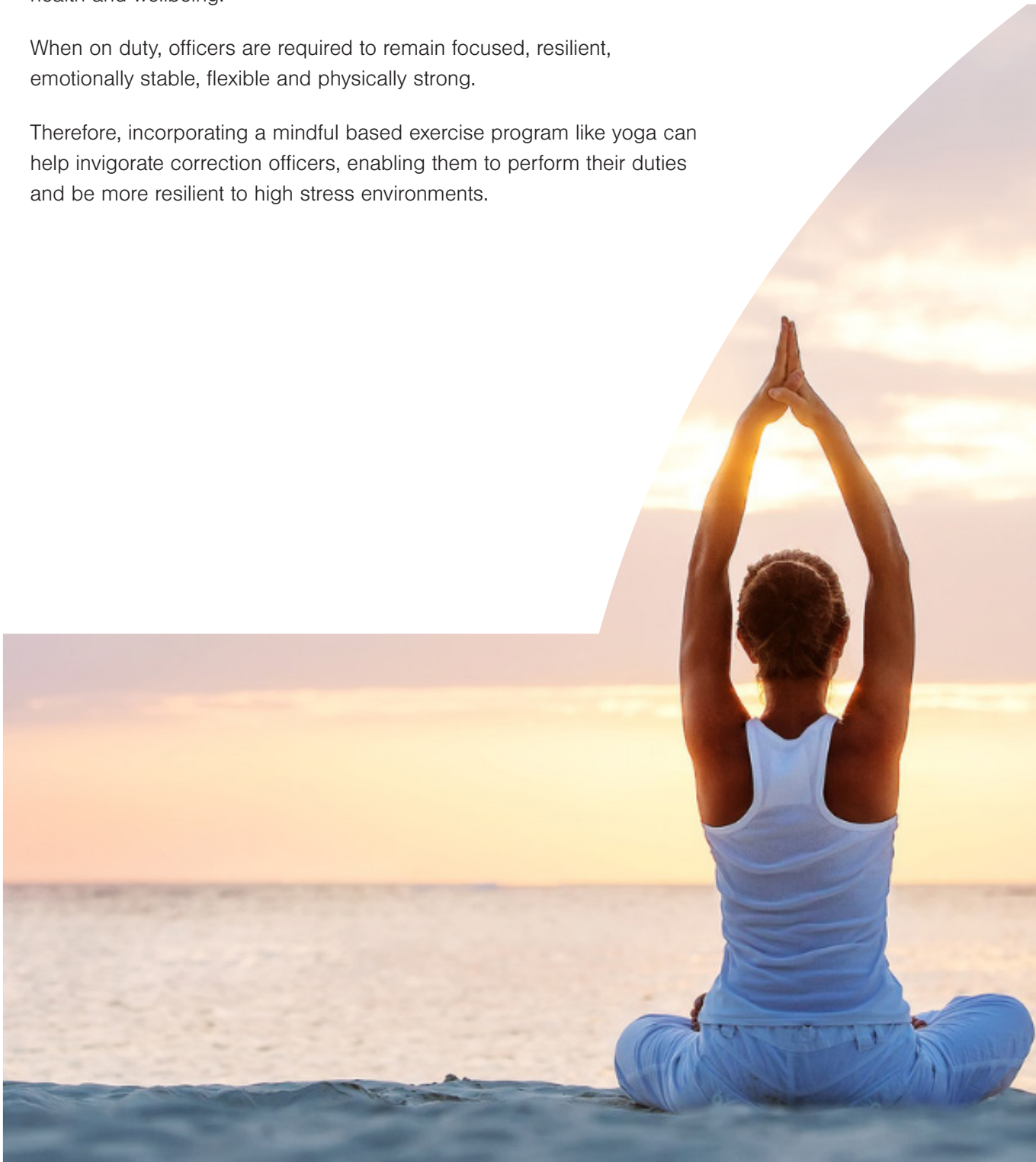
It can also feel a sense of ease and control over they reaction to stressful situations, increase responsibility to emergency situations and promote health and wellbeing.

When on duty, officers are required to remain focused, resilient, emotionally stable, flexible and physically strong.

Therefore, incorporating a mindful based exercise program like yoga can help invigorate correction officers, enabling them to perform their duties and be more resilient to high stress environments.

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Yoga has been proven to provide a holistic approach to stress reduction by combining physical postures, controlled breathing and mindfulness techniques to reduce stress and improve emotional wellbeing.

Regular practice of yoga can promote body awareness, relaxation, sense of calm and control, which empowers the correction officer to manage stressors faced at work.

Yoga is a wonderful tool to practice as it can increase physical fitness and flexibility. Due to the physical demands required on the job (strength, endurance, flexibility and attention), yoga can help develop these elements through different flow sequences and meditation.

The deliberate controlled movements through sequences increase the individuals' body awareness and alignment reducing the risk of injury, as they are physically strong, malleable and have been found to tolerate the daily tasks with more ease, develop mental clarity and focus and less strain on the body during work. All in turn increase mental and physical preparedness.

Finally, yoga is a positive practice of self care and awareness. Due to the demanding and stressful nature of the work correction officers face, they often neglect self care. Yoga provides a time to practice physical movement, breathing, self awareness and to take time out for yourself, providing a release from work.

Yoga also allows a safe space for individuals to reflect on their sources of stress, how it impacts their body, and how to move their body to help release strain and internal tension.



# Wrap up

Now you have completed your 6 week program it is time to implement these activities and strategies in your daily routines.

Physical activity and structured exercise have been proven to assist in the daily functioning of correction officers as well as improve their ability to respond to emergency situations, manage stressors and be physically prepared for the job.

Attached to this worksheet you will have access to 6 exercise videos going through the written exercises you will find in each week. You can also click here to access them. If you need further assistance with being physical active or are managing injuries, please seek professional advice.

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**CONGRATULATIONS** on finishing the Movement for resilience module. Follow the QR code to fill out this survey as your feedback on the program is highly valued.





# Contact us

## Are you...

### A first responder who is struggling?

Reach out to our team for specialised help and support.

For more information on who can access our services, visit the Who we serve page on our website, [fortemaustralia.org.au/who-we-serve](https://fortemaustralia.org.au/who-we-serve).

To speak with a professional at Fortem Australia, please contact us by email or phone.

**[psychology@fortemaustralia.org.au](mailto:psychology@fortemaustralia.org.au)**

**1300 33 95 94**

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