

# Dimensions of Readiness

By LCDR Klaus Gottlieb, MC, USN

A Sailor's readiness to be deployed and then become an effective team member of his gaining command has several different dimensions. Obviously, medical readiness is of paramount importance. Medical readiness and physical fitness are two sides of the same medallion. It takes a couple of days to get people supplied with the necessary shots; but loosing thirty pounds and shaping up, that takes a little longer. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Navy as a whole now promotes a culture of fitness and will separate those members who consistently fail to demonstrate improvement in this regard. The Navy is a fighting service and the dictum "the more you sweat in peace the less you bleed in war" can be taken literally. A prerequisite for readiness in military terms is a mental or emotional "readiness" or self-discipline that is hard to define and harder yet to instill into those who lack it. Once readiness exists on the emotional and mental plane, the other readiness dimensions such as physical readiness should naturally follow: A healthy spirit in a healthy body.

## Self-Discipline and Emotional Readiness

Most of us would rather look trim and fit than overweight and fat. So why don't we do something about it? It is not that the goals are not within reach. It is often a fear of failure and a fear that our self-respect will take another hit if the goal is not reached. There are thousands of self-help books out there which try to help transform our dreams into reality.

The topics and title range from the mundane to the esoteric, from selling more widgets to the meaning of life. Fortunately, there are also compilations, and this one gets many good reviews:

"50 Self-Help Classics: 50 Inspirational Books to Transform Your Life, From Timeless Sages to Contemporary Gurus," by Tom Butler-Bowdon.

## Dealing with Adversity

For some, involuntary deployment will mean just the interruption of a job and a seamless reintegration with little or no loss in pay and status. For others, it can damage, endanger, or even end their civilian career. To stay strong, to quote the motto of Navy Reserve advertising, requires more than just telling the spouse at home where to find the Last Will and Testament.

In short, it requires a personal world view grounded in religious, other spiritual, or purely philosophical roots that helps the individual to survive and make the best out of circumstances which are only partially under his or her control. Some of us are blessed with such a value and belief system and others are confused or still searching. The latter groups could do worse than reading Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* which went through numerous editions and sold three million copies.

Also highly recommended are VADM James Stockdale's publications. He recently passed away. He will be less remembered as a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient than as the individual

who filled an ancient doctrine, the Philosophy of the Stoics, with new meaning for military men and women of our time. Some of his papers can be accessed on the Internet, e.g., <http://www.usna.edu/Ethics/Publications/Occasionalpapers/stoicism1.pdf> and <http://www.usna.edu/Ethics/Publications/Occasionalpapers/Stoicism2.pdf>.

## Physical Readiness

Nearly half of American adults (four in ten) report that they are not active at all; seven in ten are not moderately active for the recommended 30 minutes a day, five or more days a week. The percentage of adults in the United States who were overweight or obese (body mass index greater than 25) in 1999 was 61 percent.

Military personnel are less obese; but according to a Department of Defense Survey of Health Related Behaviors in 2002 measured by body mass index (BMI), 23.8 percent of the military under age 20 were overweight, 17.2 percent of those ages 20-25 were overweight, 27.1 percent ages 26-34 were overweight, and 31.4 percent ages 35 and older were deemed overweight [www.tricare.osd.mil/main/news/DoDSurvey.htm](http://www.tricare.osd.mil/main/news/DoDSurvey.htm).

Congratulations, if you maintain excellent fitness. Maybe you could even motivate some of your shipmates to shape up! NAVADMIN 180/05 spells out some of the long-anticipated changes to the Navy Physical Readiness Program.

### NAVADMIN 180/05 KEY POINTS

#### Processing for Administrative Separation (ADSEP)

For members who do not achieve prescribed physical readiness standards by failing to pass three PFA cycles in most recent 4-year period, ADSEP processing will become mandatory July 2006.

COs may request ISIC waive ADSEP processing for special cases.

Personnel who have failed the PFA three or more times in four years but passed the Spring 2006 PFA must continue passing PFAs during each subsequent cycle until no longer possessing three PFA failures in most recent 4-year period.

July 2005 to July 2006, COs will have discretion to ADSEP, with ISIC concurrence, those personnel who are not trying nor making reasonable progress to meet standards.

#### Promotion/Advancement/Frothing

Officers and enlisted members shall be ineligible for promotion, advancement, and frothing if they have failed most recent official PFA. Members may participate in monthly FEP mock PFA to regain eligibility.

If you are looking for guidance, the NEHC Physical Fitness Homepage (<http://www-nehc.med.navy.mil/hp/fitness/>) with downloadable resources including the comprehensive "Exercise & Nutrition Peak Performance Manuals" is probably all you need.

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### Administrative Readiness

A cluttered desk, piles of files, and no clue where to find things is not a state of affairs that promotes peace of mind, especially when deployment is imminent. The first step is, therefore, to make sure that somebody at home can find a piece of paperwork, or any document for that matter, all by themselves or with minimal instructions. A well-regarded filing system that does just that is “Kiplinger’s Taming The Paper Tiger” ([www.thepapertiger.com](http://www.thepapertiger.com)).

Documents are put away in numbered files (in filing cabinets) and are found by typing in keywords into a computer database. This works amazingly well. Whenever a new document is to be filed, the filer associates it with two or three keywords or

phrases. This allows rapid retrieval, beating even well-thought-out, rigid hierarchical filing systems such as the Standard Subject Identification Code (SSIC). According to their Web site, the Paper Tiger filing system is used by numerous government organizations including the Navy. I use it myself and find it very helpful.

Once some semblance of organization has been established in the home office, the next step would be to attack specific deployment-related chores. There are numerous lists available which help to accomplish this. Rather than repeating these here, I would like to point the reader to the “Deployment Center” of the [military.com](http://military.com) Web site. Although commercial, the page nicely pulls together the different areas that need to be considered. Areas covered are:

## What Is Mobilization and Deployment?

Legal Preparation  
 Job Preparation  
 Financial Preparation  
 What Extra Pays Do I Receive?  
 What Benefits Am I Eligible For?

Medical Benefits  
 Preparation for Emergencies  
 The Worst-Case Scenario  
 Your Children and Separation  
 Military Support Services

“The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy’s not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable.” Sun Tzu (ca. 500 BC)

**Readiness is a transient state which we can never attain for any length of time but requires constant adjustments and work.**