

TRAUMA STORAGE IN THE BODY



Trauma's Connection to the Body

When you think of the word "trauma," you likely associate it with mental health. However, there is research that has shown that trauma is not only stored in the brain, but also in the body. Trauma is defined in many different ways. Everything from "an injury to living tissue" to "a disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury." Each person copes with their traumas in different ways (many in public safety through laughter). But not addressing trauma and staying in a constant state of "fight or flight" can actually have physical effects on the body.

What is "Fight or Flight?"

Your body releases hormones meant to prepare you to fight or flee during the automatic reaction of "fight or flight." This reaction is a stress response that is normal, but it even more prevalent for those working in the fire service. Think of the way your body reacts each time a box alarm drops. Or how you feel on the way to a cardiac arrest. Your heart rate increases, you begin to tremble, you're more on edge and observant, muscles begin to tense, and much more. The normal person maybe experiences this stress response once a week. Whereas those in fire rescue experience this reaction many times over the course of 24 hours. This brings up the issue of being stuck in a constant state of fight or flight, causing sleep issues, put you at risk for injury due to prolonged muscle tension, create anxiety and irritability, and more.

So how do we get ourselves out of that stress response in times where it isn't needed? **This month's newsletter will give you the knowledge and tools needed to reverse this stress response and in turn, help with releasing body tension and preventing injuries.**

Releasing Trauma & Tension

Did you know that your body has its own calm down switch? It is called the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve is activated in order to bring your body into a state of rest and digest (the opposite of fight or flight). This nerve is activated naturally to bring you down from the fight or flight response. However, if you are continually put into a state of fight or flight (like during a 24-hour shift), the vagus nerve might not be firing the way that it should. **Here are some ways that you can stimulate your vagus nerve today, some you may already be familiar with!**

How to Stimulate the Vagus Nerve

Links are underlined!

- Cold water immersion (yes to ice baths!)
- Laughter or singing
- Chewing gum or eating crunchy snacks
- Breathing exercises (Box breathing, 4-7-8 breathing)
- Exercise
- Listening to music
- Eating Omega-3 Fatty Acid rich food: salmon, chia seeds, walnuts, pasture-raised eggs, spinach, and more linked HERE!
- Massages
- Add a probiotic supplement to your diet (speak to your physician before incorporating any new supplements)



Dr. Kelsey Tanler

*Certified Athletic Trainer
MCFR Health & Injury Prevention*

Did you know that you have someone working within MCFRS to provide you with quality injury care, injury prevention, and functional assessments to lengthen your time on the floor and keep you out of FROMS?

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Starting this January, all station visit requests will be submitted through the link attached to the QR code below. Any station in any battalion can sign up for a station visit with the choice of activities, now including:

- In-station injury clinic
- Trigger point release work
- Group mobility instruction
- Group instruction on prevention of common injuries (low back pain, shoulder immobility, or any area of your choosing!)
- And more!

Want to make a 2025 goal to stay out of FROMS? Sign-up for a station visit with Dr. Kelsey Tanler to take advantage of all of the injury preventative services she has to offer you and your crew! Use the link below or scan/click on the QR code to submit a request.



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CLICK HERE TO REQUEST A STATION VISIT!