

CHAMP/SOCOM Spiritual Fitness Scale (SSFS)

Spiritual Fitness (SF) is a key component of the Department of Defense (DoD) Total Force Fitness framework for maintaining the total well-being and readiness of the force (CJCSI 3405.01, 2011). Spiritual Performance (SP) is a key component of the U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) Preservation of the Force and Family (POTFF) program framework for total well-being and readiness (SOCOM Directive 10-12, 2021). Both frameworks seek to enfranchise nontheists as well as theists. Both also address the importance of maintaining and strengthening the connections Military Service Members hold with their highest beliefs and values, and the connections they hold with other people.

DoD mandates that SF stakeholders produce metrics that provide useful information on individual, unit, and organizational readiness related to SF. SOCOM mandates the same for stakeholders related to SP. However, tools to holistically measure SF/SP remain in

their infancy. The academic literature contains many validated and publicly available survey instruments that assess aspects of spirituality, but they don't adequately capture SF/SP. Available scales are often lengthy and burdensome to administer for baselining and tracking trends over time. They also frequently assume a theistic orientation, so for non-theists these scales risk being invalid or even offensive. Lastly, most are poorly aligned with fitness and readiness objectives. As a result, military leaders lack validated tools to track SF/SP and optimize supporting programs and services.

In response, Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP) researchers partnered with SOCOM to develop the CHAMP/SOCOM Spiritual Fitness Scale (SSFS), a multi-year project that included input from more than 8,000 people in quantitative panels, responding to an initial 378 items.

During exploratory factor analysis completed within the 6 iterations of the project, 3 distinct spiritual traits emerged, which might be seen as Core Attributes of SF/SP. Each is represented by its own sub-scale.

The 3 Core Attributes/sub-scales are called: Personal Connection with a Higher Power (PCHP); Pursuing Meaning, Purpose, and Value (PMPV); and Service and Sacrifice for the Greater Good (SSGG).

To ensure survey validity for nontheists, a screener was included to allow nontheists to opt out from the PCHP subscale. The scales provide a good balance of the following properties: They are reliable and metrically sound, they're concise but not too narrow (17 items

in the final product), they're sensitive to many belief systems, and they correlate with many wider wellness traits such as gratitude, quality of life, forgiveness, familial commitment, coping, resilience, and adaptive reframing.

Using the SSFS

The SSFS is capable of informing and supporting many activities related to SF/SP, including:

- Establishing multi-dimensional baseline profiles for groups and individuals
- Assessing trends over time
- Bridging trends to individual coaching and mentoring
- Providing an evidence base for SF/SP program alignment
- Evaluating the effectiveness of programs designed to impact SF/SP, and articulate the impact of this growth with total well-being and readiness

Administer the scale within two blocks:

- Block 1: PMPV and SSGG
- Block 2: PCHP

To avoid any priming effect, the scale designers recommend administering the horizontal sub-scales (PMPV and SSGG) before the vertical sub-scale (PCHP). When administering the SSFS using an electronic system, the order of the items within each item-block can be randomized. When using paper and pencil to administer the SSFS, consider using the provided version below (this item sequence will minimize likely order-effects).



SOCOM Spiritual Fitness Scale (SSFS)

Reflect on your attitudes, commitments, and beliefs and answer as accurately as possible.

1. I know what my life is about.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

2. Human value and respect should be the greatest social value.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. I've been able to find a sense of meaning in my life.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. Looking at my life as a whole, things seem clear to me.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. I believe strongly in humanity and the power of people.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. I have a core set of beliefs, ethics, and values that give my life a sense of meaning and purpose.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. I often think about a "grand plan" or process that human beings are a part of.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

8. The greatest moral decision is doing the greatest good for human beings.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

9. Being of service to others is an important source of meaning in my life.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

10. I can find meaning and purpose in my everyday experiences.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

The next set of statements reflects commitment to God or a higher power. Even if you don't think of yourself as religious, try to answer as accurately as possible. If you believe a statement doesn't align with your belief system, then choose the option "The assumptions behind this statement aren't consistent with my world views."

11. I believe in God or a higher power.

- Yes No

12. I feel God's love for me.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
 The assumptions behind this question aren't consistent with my world views.

13. I look to God for strength, support, and guidance.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
 The assumptions behind this question aren't consistent with my world views.

14. I feel God's presence.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
 The assumptions behind this question aren't consistent with my world views.

15. I am grateful for all God has done for me.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
 The assumptions behind this question aren't consistent with my world views.

16. God comforts and shelters me.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
 The assumptions behind this question aren't consistent with my world views.

17. I've decided to place my life under God's direction.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
 The assumptions behind this question aren't consistent with my world views.

18. Religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
 The assumptions behind this question aren't consistent with my world views.
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Scoring

For profiling, sub-scales should be scored by first coding the response options, such that:

- Strongly disagree = 1
- Disagree = 2
- Neutral = 3
- Agree = 4
- Strongly agree = 5

Averaging

- Each sub-scale should be averaged separately; after this, the sub-scales may be averaged together.
- In the version above, PMPV items (1, 3, 4, 6, 10) and SSGG items (2, 5, 7, 8, 9) are mixed together, and must be unmixed to generate separate averages.

Classifying scores

Rigid cutoffs to classify individual scores can be seen as arbitrary for nonclinical traits that exist along a continuum. However, for the purposes of creating working categories that can be matched with suggested readiness interventions: An average score below 3.5 for any sub-scale can be considered a 'low/lower score,' indicating ample room for growth. Accordingly, an average score above 3.5 for any sub-scale can be considered a 'high/higher score,' indicating the need for a readiness focus on both maintenance and growth.

Other considerations

- PCHP items (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18) *should* be scored if respondents indicate they *do* believe in God.
- PCHP items *should not* be scored if respondents indicate they *do not* believe in God.
- PCHP also *should not* be scored if respondents use the option "The assumptions behind this statement aren't consistent with my world views" on two or more items.
- When using sub-scales to evaluate program-related growth in one of the three Core Attributes of SF/SP, extending to a 10-point, Likert-type format is recommended, with descriptors placed only on points 1 (strongly disagree) and 10 (strongly agree). Change scores in the 10-point format can then be divided by 2 to compare with scores in the 5-point format.

SSFS Qualitative Companion Tool: Spirituality & Performance Coaching Grid (SPCG)

Scales	Notes on Commitment & Connection Related to the 3 Core Attributes			Goals to Maintain or Strengthen Spiritual Commitments
	How has my commitment to this attribute changed in the past 6–18 months?	Which factors might help me strengthen my commitment to this attribute?	Which factors might threaten my ability to maintain commitment to this attribute?	
PMVP				
SSGG				
PCHP				

Using the SPCG

You can use the SPCG in conjunction with SSFS to capture narrative feedback corresponding to SSFS item responses. It can also be used as a tool for bridging SSFS results into tailored coaching or mentoring for optimized performance and enhanced readiness.

Note: The SPCG isn't a static tool. Designed as a qualitative companion matrix to the SSFS, its top-column categories can be dynamically adjusted for use anytime an SF/SP stakeholder wishes to capture first-person comments related to SSFS scaling. The top-column categories in the version above are ideal for preparing an individual coaching encounter. However, if an SF/SP stakeholder wishes to use the SPCG as a component in program evaluation, it's expected that the top-column categories would be changed to pursue information on program-related processes and outcomes.

For more information, contact:

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