

Restore What's Been Spent

A worksheet for identifying small, realistic ways to put energy back after stress, overtime, and constant pressure.



You Spend Energy Every Shift

Every call, every traffic stop, every report, every moment you hold it together, that costs something. Energy isn't just physical. The mental load of this job is real and cumulative.

Attention

Staying alert and scanning constantly, even when nothing is happening, drains your cognitive reserves faster than most jobs ever will.

Patience

Staying calm when situations escalate, when people push back, when the radio won't stop, that takes sustained emotional effort.

Decision-Making


High-stakes calls demand fast, accurate judgment. Repeated decisions under pressure deplete your mental bandwidth shift by shift.

Emotional Control

Containing your reaction to what you see and hear, and then going home like it's fine, is an invisible weight that adds up.

Physical Readiness

Standing by. Running when it counts. Absorbing the physical stress of the uniform, the car, the gear, your body keeps score.

 None of this is weakness. It's physics. Output requires input. The job takes, you have to put something back in.

What Has Been Spent Lately?

Be honest with yourself. Go through each category and check in on where you're running low. You don't have to share this with anyone, just assess where you actually are right now.

Physical Energy

Are you dragging through shifts? Slower to recover after exertion? Skipping workouts you normally wouldn't?

Patience

Are you shorter with your family, your partner, your coworkers? Are small things hitting harder than they should?

Focus

Is your mind wandering mid-task? Are you re-reading the same line, forgetting small things, losing the thread?

Motivation

Does it feel like you're grinding through the day rather than moving through it? Is the why getting hard to find?

Emotional Energy

Are you feeling flat, checked out, or numb? Are you going through the motions at home as much as at work?

Sleep

Are you sleeping but not resting? Lying awake with the shift still running in your head? Waking up already tired?

Connection

Are you pulling back from people who matter? Keeping things surface-level? Feeling alone even in a room full of people?

What Needs Restoring First?

You can't fix everything at once. Pick the area that's running lowest right now and start there. One priority. One step.



ARES FOR LAW
ENFORCEMENT WELLNESS



MOOD

Emotional regulation,
small positives.



BODY

Physical recovery,
movement, and
nutrition.



MIND

Mental rest, focus,
and quiet.



RELATIONSHIPS

Reconnecting with
trusted people.



SLEEP

Quality rest,
wind-down routine.



ROUTINE

Structure that feels
manageable.



SENSE OF CONTROL

Small decisions that
are yours alone.

Pick just one. Which of these areas is pulling on you the most right now? Start there, not everywhere.

Choose a Realistic Refill

Recovery doesn't have to be complicated. These aren't luxury options, they're basic inputs for a system that's been running on empty. Pick one that's actually possible today.



20-Minute Nap

Short, intentional rest. Not laziness. Twenty minutes of sleep debt recovery can reset your alertness and mood more than most people expect.



Walk

Movement without a destination. Even 15 minutes outside breaks the mental loop and brings your nervous system down a notch.



Protein and Water

You can't think straight or regulate yourself when you're under-fueled. This is maintenance, not a diet. Just put fuel in the machine.



Quiet Drive

No podcast, no call, no radio. Just you and the road for a few miles. Sometimes decompression needs a container and this is one that works.



Short Workout

Even 20 minutes moves cortisol out of your system. It doesn't need to be a full session. Just get your body working and your head out of the shift.



Early Night

Going to bed early is a tactical decision. One solid night doesn't fix a deficit, but it's a start, and it sends a signal that your body is worth maintaining.



Time Outside

Natural light and open space are basic physiological inputs. You don't need a trail or a plan. Just get outside and let your system breathe.



Talk with Someone Steady

Not to vent, not to process, just to be around someone who knows you and doesn't need anything from you right now. That matters more than it sounds.

Build a Simple Restore Plan

You don't need a five-step wellness program. You need four honest answers written down before the next shift starts. Keep it simple enough that you'll actually do it.

Your Four Questions

1 One thing I need today:
Not a goal, a genuine need. Sleep, food, quiet, contact. What's the most honest answer right now?

2 One thing I can skip or delay:
What can come off the list today without real consequence? Give yourself permission to not do everything.

3 One thing that helps me feel human again:
You know what it is. The thing that reminds you there's more to you than the badge. What is it?

4 One small action I will take:
Specific. Today. Something you can actually do before the next shift. Name it and it's more likely to happen.

How to Use This

Write your answers down, even on your phone or a scrap of paper. The act of writing signals your brain that this is real and that you intend to follow through.

These don't need to be big answers. "I need to eat a real meal" is a valid answer. "I'm going to skip the gym tonight and go to bed early" is a valid plan.

✔ A plan doesn't have to be ambitious to be effective. It just has to be honest and small enough to actually happen.

Come back to this worksheet after a heavy week, after a bad call, or whenever you notice the signs showing up again. It takes less than five minutes. The return is worth it.

You Do Not Have to Earn Recovery

If the job takes something out of you, put something back in.

Recovery is not a reward for a good shift. It is not something you schedule after everything else is handled. It is maintenance, the same kind you'd give your vehicle, your gear, your weapon. You wouldn't run your patrol car with no oil and call it discipline.

The Job Is Real

What you carry is legitimate. The weight of this work is not imagined, not exaggerated, and not something to just push through indefinitely.

Recovery Is Professional

Maintaining your mental and physical capacity is part of doing this job well. Depleted officers make harder decisions in worse conditions.

Start Small, Start Now

You don't need a program. You need one small action today. Then another tomorrow. That's how you restore what's been spent.

- ⓘ This worksheet is a starting point, not a fix. If you're regularly running on empty and small steps aren't moving the needle, talk to someone. A peer support officer, a chaplain, a counselor. You're not the first to need it, and you won't be the last.

