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## FireFlex Yoga Named as a Top Resource for Firefighter Wellness

SAN FRANCISCO, October 2019 - Active Wellness, a fitness design and management company, announces its FireFlex Yoga program is now listed as one of the top three resources benefiting firefighter wellness. Listed on the California's Professional Firefighters Association's "Healing Our Own" website, the resources are available for firefighters to relieve the occupational effects of acute and post-traumatic stress.

FireFlex is designed for first responders to mitigate stress and on-the-job injuries. Classes are delivered at fire stations, and it's the only yoga program curated specifically for firefighters that gathers quantitative data before/after a series of classes. Results consistently showcase the program's impact on increased wellness for first responders, enhancing both their physical and mental wellness. Currently, Active Wellness offers the FireFlex Yoga program at 17 Bay Area Fire Departments, supporting hundreds of firefighters locally.

"I highly recommend FireFlex Yoga for any fire department. It truly blends physical fitness along with mental fitness, and I think both of those correlate," said Firefighter Luke Duncan of the Scotts Valley Fire Department.

Before a group of firefighters begins a FireFlex class series, an instructor completes a Functional Movement Screen (FMS) with the group, which includes: squat, lunge, lift, and carry - mirroring the fundamental movement patterns used daily on the job. After the 10-class series is complete, the FMS is remeasured.

On average, participants have achieved a 74% improvement in their FMS scores. This quantitative physical data correlates to firefighters' testimony of increased mental resiliency, and it's also used to demonstrate a return on investment for the Department.

Captain Jason Golden of Southern Marin Fire Protection District said, "We are constantly on the go and in a state of hyper-awareness. It's important that we find time to slow things down and I have learned how to do this by slowing down and regulating my breath. This is one of the many benefits I have experienced through yoga classes offered at our department. Now when I hear the tones go off, I take a deep breath and feel my body calming down. This helps me to think more clearly when I have to make decisions that will ultimately affect my crew and the public."

Without proactive interventions, like yoga, first responders are vulnerable to traumatic stress disorders, compassion fatigue, and maladaptive coping strategies. Through FireFlex Yoga, first responders are learning how to strengthen their bodies, breath, and attention to increase resiliency.

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FireFlex utilizes an additional form of measuring before/after results: the Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness. This assessment quantifies mind-body awareness; an increase in interoceptive awareness creates stronger resilience and decision-making under pressure. To achieve this, FireFlex integrates breathing and mindfulness practices to encourage firefighters' ability to focus on present-moment sensations in their body during yoga postures.

Michele Wong, Active Wellness' Chief Operating Officer, said, "We're proud to offer FireFlex to our first responders, because it helps protect and support those who protect us."

You may review the list of resources on the [California Firefighters Association site](#).

#### About FireFlex Yoga

FireFlex Yoga is a wellness program designed for first responders to mitigate stress and on-the-job injuries. It's the only yoga program for firefighters that gathers quantitative data before/after a series of classes to measure results of daily fundamental movement patterns. The data has consistently demonstrated improvement for a high majority of firefighters, which also correlates to testimonials describing increased mental resiliency and decreased chronic and acute stress.

Founded in 2014 by Shannon McQuaide, FireFlex brings the yoga practice to first responders with a deep knowledge of their culture. McQuaide comes from a "fire family" with several firefighters including her father and her sister. In addition to yoga certification, McQuaide has completed immersive education in psychology, mindfulness, Trauma Sensitive Yoga, and earned a master's degree in Leadership.

Active Wellness partnered with FireFlex Yoga in 2018 to expand the program's reach and positively support the wellbeing of first responders. For more information, please visit [FireFlexYoga.com](#).

#### About Active Wellness

Active Wellness designs fitness amenities and delivers wellness programs for multi-tenant, medical, corporate, commercial, and community centers across North America with the ultimate goal to inspire people to live actively. With more than 60 managed facilities, Active Wellness has 1,200 employees and manages accounts for 80,000 members. Services include fitness center design, equipment procurement, operations management, high-tech programming, site marketing and member engagement, plus a testing lab for pre-market fitness products. Founded in 2014 by a team of industry experts, Active's mission is to partner with clients to create engaging environments to motivate their employees, residents, patients, and community to live healthier, more active lives. For more information, please visit [ActiveWellness.com](#).

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