

“SGT Ken and his cutting-edge fitness programs put the ‘fun’ in fitness. Having experienced his training firsthand, you not only feel like you have accomplished something—you can’t wait to do it all again!”
—CSM David Ray Hudson, Senior Enlisted Advisor to the National Guard Bureau Chief

OPERATION IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT

15-day Army Physical Fitness Test Quick Fix

By Ken and Stephanie Weichert



FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET!
SGT Ken hits the track.

[RECEIVED]

SGT Ken and Stephanie, Your workouts are amazing! I lost 24 pounds in eight weeks! My first sergeant uses your workouts for our unit PT. He loves them, too! I need your help. I have to take an APFT in a few weeks. I know it is short notice, but do you have an APFT crash course? If so, I need it! Thank you both for helping Soldiers get fit!

HOOAH!
PFC Michelle B.,
Mississippi Army National Guard

[RECEIVED]

SGT Ken and Stephanie, First, let me start by saying that your APFT 30-day calendar called "Operation Pushing for Points" is awesome! I used it several months ago and raised my APFT score 33 points. Now, however, I have just a couple of weeks to get ready for my next APFT. Do you have any advice?

Thanks,
2LT Nathan T.,
Pennsylvania Army National Guard

[SENT]

Dear PFC and 2LT, Thank you! We're glad you've benefited from our workouts! In between work and family time, test preparation can fall to the bottom of the to-do list. With little time to train for the upcoming APFT, we designed a 15-day training calendar. As a bonus, we have included tubing exercises for muscle recovery and strength training. Stay the course and keep us informed of your progress!

HOOAH!
SGT Ken and Stephanie



SECTION 1: Exercise Instructions

8-MINUTE ABS

You can also download audio exercises at:
www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness

1. Flutter Kicks

- Perform Flutter Kicks for 60 seconds.
- Freeze your legs together approximately 12 inches above the ground for 20 seconds. Flex your feet.

2. Straight Leg Pulses

- Perform Straight Leg Pulses by moving both legs together, up and down, 12 to 18 inches from the ground for 30 seconds.

- Freeze your legs together approximately 12 inches above the ground for 20 seconds. Flex your feet. Raise your legs straight upward until your feet line up over your hips.

3. Straight Leg Drops

- Perform Straight Leg Drops by lowering your legs to 12 inches above the ground and raising your legs to the start position. Continue moving your legs up and down for 60 seconds.
- Hold your legs in the upward position. Point your arms toward your toes. Flex your feet.

4. Vertical Leg Crunches (Dying Cockroach)

Perform Vertical Leg Crunches by raising your upper body toward your toes and returning to the start

position. Continue moving your upper body up and down for 60 seconds.

5. Box and Reach

- Perform the Box and Reach drill by elevating your upper torso and reaching, with your arms, over your left thigh and dropping back slightly and reaching over your right thigh. Continue switching, left and right for 60 seconds.
- Bend your knees to 90 degrees of knee flexion, and place your hands behind your head, fingers clasped.

6. Cradle Crunch

- Perform the Cradle Crunch drill by raising your lower and upper body sections, at the same time. Return to the start position and repeat. Continue for 30 seconds.

- Straighten your body and turn over on your abdominals. Contract your rear end and lower back muscles until your chest and knees come off of the ground. Bend your elbows and tuck them in toward your sides and keep your hands level with your shoulders.

7. Modified Back Bends

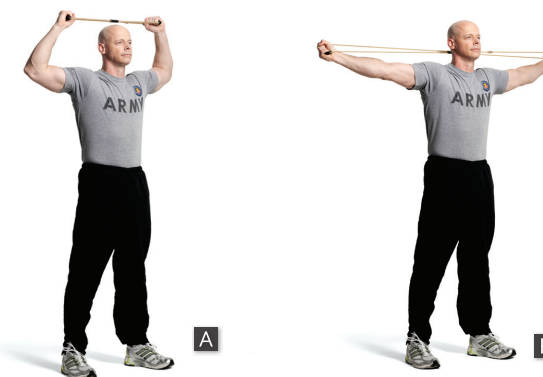
Perform Modified Back Bends for 30 seconds.

8. Modified Child's Pose (Balasana)

- Perform the Modified Child's Pose stretch for 30 seconds.
- Roll your back up to a kneeling position.
- Elevate to your knees and stand up.

AEROBICS [WARM-UP EXERCISES]

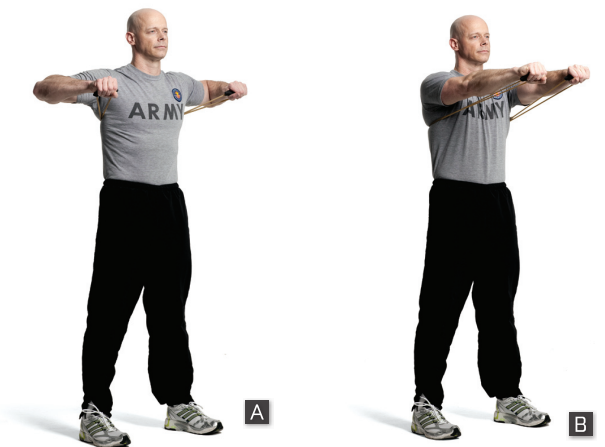
Examples: Running in Place; Side-Straddle-Hops ("Jumping Jacks"); High Steps/Knees



ARMS EXTENSION WITH TUBING

START: Grasp the handles and position the tubing slightly behind your head with arms forming 90-degree angles, elbows level with shoulders and palms facing in. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent and toes pointing forward.

ACTIONS: Straighten your arms until parallel with the ground, palms facing up. Keep wrists firm. Return to the start position and repeat. Exhale through your mouth as you extend and inhale through your nose as you bend inward.



CHEST PRESS WITH TUBING

START: Grasp the handles and position the center of the tubing behind your upper back and under your shoulder blades, arms in front and level with shoulders, elbows bent and palms facing down. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent and toes pointing forward.

ACTIONS: Press your arms in front of you until fully extended. Keep wrists firm and elbows slightly bent. Return to the start position and repeat. Exhale through your mouth as you extend and inhale through your nose as you bend your arms.

PHOTOS: EVAN BAINES; SGT KEN ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF START FITNESS ©

“SGT Ken provided fitness training for our RSP Warriors. He did an outstanding job and it seemed to really motivate them! He also instilled hope in the Warriors with weight issues, and showed them what they needed to do to meet weight requirements and pass the APFT!”
—CPT Jim Ridings, East Region OGT, Tennessee National Guard Recruiting



DIPS ON A BENCH

START: Sit on the edge of a sturdy flat bench with your hands slightly behind your hips, gripping the bench tightly. With your legs together and knees bent 90 degrees, place your heels on the ground and point your toes in the air. Straighten your elbows, elevate your hips and move your hips slightly away from the bench.

ACTIONS: Slowly lower your body by bending both elbows 90 degrees. Point your elbows backward while lowering your body. Do not allow your elbows to point in or outward. Return to the start position and repeat until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you lower your body and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

FULL SIT-UP

START: Lie down on your back with both legs together and bent 90 degrees at your knees. Place your heels on the ground and point your toes upward. Interlock your fingers and place your hands behind your head.

ACTIONS: Tighten your abdominal muscles and raise your upper body until your back becomes perpendicular with the ground and return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you raise your body and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

Notes: The repetition counts when you return to the start position. It is authorized to temporarily rest in the upward position without resting on your knees.

WARNING: Do not pull on your neck with your hands. Keep your elbows wide and your face pointing upward during the exercise.



DIVE BOMBER PUSH-UP

START: Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Position your feet several inches outside the width of your hips, hands slightly more than shoulder-width apart, legs and arms straight. Next, raise your hips upward until you reach 90 degrees at your hips, head aligned with your arms.

ACTIONS: Lower your body to the ground slowly by bending at the elbows until your face reaches the ground. Continue moving downward to forward to upward by slightly dragging your upper body across the ground until your abdominals are over your hands, pressing your body upward until your arms are straight and your lower back is arched back. Return to the start position by reversing the steps. Inhale through your nose as you lower your body and exhale through your mouth as you return to the start position.

Want to listen to it or watch it on video? Go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness, Get Fit, Upper Body, Dive Bomber Push-Up.

HALF SIT-UP

START: Lie down on your back with both legs together and bent 90 degrees at your knees. Place your heels on the ground and point your toes upward. Interlock your fingers and place your hands behind your head.

ACTIONS: Tighten your abdominal muscles and raise your upper body until your shoulder blades come off of the ground and return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you raise your body and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

WARNING: Do not pull on your neck with your hands. Keep your elbows wide and your face pointing upward during the exercise.



PUSH-UP

START: Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, legs and arms straight.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, lower your body straight down by bending both elbows until your upper arms become parallel with the ground. Return to the start position and repeat. Inhale through your nose as you lower your body and exhale through your mouth as you return to the start position.

Notes: The repetition counts when you return to the start position. It is authorized to temporarily rest by raising your hips. You cannot sag your back, go to your knees, or lift your hands or feet off of the ground. You must return to the start position before resuming the exercise.



“SGT Ken helped me tremendously! I knocked three minutes off my 2-mile run in less than a month of training under his program. I’m confident that with the improvement I’ve already made I can shave off even more time on the next APFT! Thanks!”
—SPC Michelle Waters, Human Resources NCO, Kentucky Army National Guard



PUSH-UP WITH TUBING

START: Grasp the handles and position the center of the tubing behind your upper back and under your shoulder blades. Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, and legs and arms straight.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, lower your body by bending both elbows until the upper parts of your arms become parallel to the ground. Return to the start position and repeat. Exhale through your mouth as you push up and inhale through your nose as you lower your body.

EVAN BAINES

PUSH-UP IMPROVEMENT PLAN #1

1. Begin the push-up exercise in the close grip position.
2. Continue as long as you can in this position.
3. Assume an authorized rest position.
4. Slide your hands outward to the normal grip position.
5. Continue as long as you can in this position.
6. Assume an authorized rest position.
7. Slide your hands outward to the wide grip position.
8. Continue as long as you can in this position.
9. “Go to muscle failure!”

Want to listen to it, or watch it on video? Go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness, Get Fit, Upper Body, Push-up Improvement Plan #1.



PUSH-UP INTERVAL TRAINING

Push-up Interval Training is where you complete the most push-ups possible in 20-second intervals.

Example: Perform push-ups for 20 seconds and rest 20 seconds. Repeat this sequence for the required amount of time. 1 set x 4 minutes is 6 sets of push-ups at 20 seconds each with 6 resting periods of 20 seconds each.

PUSH-UP PULSES

START: Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, legs and arms straight. While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, lower your body straight down by bending both elbows until your upper arms become parallel with the ground.

ACTIONS: Using your arms, raise your body upward 4–6 inches. Lower your body and continue until your goal is reached. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth naturally.

Note: These actions are performed quickly.

RUNNING LONG DISTANCE

Long-distance running is performed at moderate speeds.

Note: The best way to condition your body for the 2-mile run as part of a fitness test is to condition your body to run longer distances.

RUNNING INTERVAL TRAINING

Running Interval Training is running at moderate and fast speeds.

Example: Choose to run on a treadmill, track, or well-known route. After a thorough warm-up, run at a moderate speed (jogging) for 30 seconds and sprint as fast as you can for 30 seconds. Repeat this sequence for the remainder of your run. Or, if on a track, sprint the stretch and jog the curve.

Note: Be certain to time your sprint drills. That way, you can challenge yourself to sprint for longer periods of time each week.

Want to listen to it? Go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness, Get Fit, Aerobics, Running Interval Training.

STRETCHING



STRETCHING EXAMPLE #1: SEATED FORWARD BEND

START: Sit on the ground or on a mat with your legs straight and together, feet flexed.

ACTIONS: Reach toward your toes or bring your chest toward your legs. Breathe deeply and hold the stretch for 30 seconds.



UNEVEN PUSH-UP

START: Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Next, place your left hand on a platform that is 4–12 inches higher than the ground. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, legs and right arm straight.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, lower your body straight down by bending both elbows until the upper part of your right arm becomes parallel with the ground. Return to the start position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch arm positions and repeat. Inhale through your nose as you lower your body and exhale through your mouth as you return to the start position.

Want to listen to it or watch it on video? Go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness, Get Fit, Upper Body, Uneven Push-Up.



STRETCHING EXAMPLE #2: SEATED BUTTERFLY STRETCH

START: Sit on the ground or on a mat with your back straight, shoulders down, abdominals engaged, feet in front of you, knees bent 90 degrees and pointing outward, and bottoms of feet together. Grasp the outer parts of your feet with your hands.

ACTIONS: While keeping your heels on the ground, bring your elbows toward the ground and pull your chest toward your legs. Breathe deeply and hold the stretch for 30 seconds.

Want more stretching examples? Go to GX Fitness 6.2 (available at GXonline.com/pastissues), and FM 21-20 or FM 3-22.20.

Equipment Needed:

Tubing (short piece), medium to heavy strength, or an Ultra Toner from SPRI

Note: If using a long tube, fold it in half or use half the length. Otherwise, the Ultra Toner is the right length for the assigned exercises.

Bench or platform that is approximately 12–24 inches from the ground for the Dip exercise and 4–12 inches from the ground for the Uneven Push-up

SECTION 2: Putting It All Together

15-DAY APFT WORKOUT CALENDAR

Note: Perform at least 5 minutes of warm-up exercises and 5 minutes of stretching before and after each workout.

DAY 1

- Push-up Improvement Plan #1 x 2 min.
- Bench Dips x 10–20 repetitions
- Half Sit-ups x 2 min.
- Repeat entire series x 2 sets
- Running x 1–2 miles

DAY 2

- Running Long Distance x 2–4 miles
- Half Sit-ups x 2 sets at 2 min. each

DAY 3

- Push-up Improvement Plan #1 x 2 min.
- Tubing Chest Press x 20–30 repetitions
- Tubing Arms Extensions x 20–30 repetitions
- Half Sit-ups x 2 min.
- Repeat entire series x 3 sets
- Running x 1–2 miles

DAY 4

Rest

DAY 5

- Tubing Push-ups x 1 min.
- Bench Dips x 20–30 repetitions
- Tubing Arms Extensions x 20–30 repetitions
- Half Sit-ups x 2 min.
- Push-up Improvement Plan #1 x 2 min.
- Half Sit-ups x 2 min.
- Running Interval Training x 2–4 miles

DAY 6

- Push-up Interval Training x 1 set at 6 min.
- Half Sit-ups x 2 sets at 3 min. each
- Running x 2–3 miles

DAY 7

- Push-up Improvement Plan #1 x 2 min.
- Tubing Chest Press x 20–30 repetitions
- Tubing Arms Extensions x 20–30 repetitions
- 8-min Abs
- Note:** 8-min Abs is available as an audio workout on www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness
- Repeat entire series x 3 sets
- Running x 2–3 miles

DAY 8

Rest

DAY 9

- Tubing Push-ups x 1 min.
- Dive Bomber Push-ups x 1 min.
- Uneven Push-ups x 1 min.
- Push-up Pulses x 1 min.
- 8-min Abs
- Repeat entire series x 3 sets
- Running Long Distance x 4–6 miles

DAY 10

- Push-up Interval Training x 1 set at 6 min.
- Uneven Push-ups x 1 min.
- Push-up Pulses x 1 min.
- Tubing Arms Extensions x 20–30 repetitions
- Full Sit-ups x 2 min.
- Repeat entire series x 3 sets
- Running x 2–3 miles

DAY 11

- Push-up Improvement Plan #1 x 3 min.
- Tubing Arms Extensions x 20–30 repetitions
- Full Sit-ups x 2 min.
- Push-up Improvement Plan #1 x 2 min.
- Tubing Arms Extensions x 20–30 repetitions
- Full Sit-ups x 1 min.
- Running Long Distance x 4–6 miles

DAY 12

Rest

DAY 13

- Push-ups x 2 min.
- Full Sit-ups x 2 min.
- Running x 2 miles

DAY 14

- Push-ups x 1 min.
- Full Sit-ups x 1 min.
- Running x .5 miles

Strategy: Taper your fitness training 24–48 hours prior to the APFT or PRT.

DAY 15

Rest

Strategy: Perform no fitness training 24 hours prior to the APFT or PRT.

REMARKS:

Repeat the entire 15-day schedule in order to accomplish a 30-day APFT workout program.

GLOSSARY:

1. **APFT:** Army Physical Fitness Test
2. **PRT:** Physical Readiness Test

NUTRITION ADVICE:

1. To lose additional body fat, try reducing your intake of breads, pastas, dairy products and sugar.
2. Check with your physician before making any changes to your diet or exercise plan.
3. Want to read more diet advice? Go to www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness, Get Healthy, and read Operation Diet Dissection.

Watch fitness videos and download workouts at www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness or email SGTken@GXonline.com.

Warning: Always seek the advice and guidance of a qualified health provider with any questions or concerns you may have prior to commencing a fitness program. This article should not be relied on or substituted for professional medical diagnosis or treatment. The exercises presented are for suggestion only. Participate at your own risk. Stop if you feel faint or shortness of breath.



KEN AND STEPHANIE WEICHERT

A six-time Soldier of the year and Veteran of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm, Ken Weichert and his wife, Stephanie, a certified personal trainer, founded the START Fitness® program, a San Francisco-based group exercise and hiking business that delivers military-inspired, boot-camp style workouts to Soldiers and civilians. The program now trains and certifies basic, senior and master instructors. Ken is currently a staff sergeant in the Tennessee Army National Guard.