

OPERATION

CRAVING COMPETITION PART I

Training the Tactical Athlete
By Ken and Stephanie Weichert



TRAIN LIKE A PRO
IN 60 MINUTES!

[RECEIVED]

SGT Ken and Stephanie,

I need some advice! I have a competition in two months that includes trail running while carrying my own gear in a backpack for 30 kilometers. Other than hitting the trails, what else do you suggest? Thanks for what you two do!

Best Regards,
1LT Spencer J.,
California Army National Guard

[RECEIVED]

SGT Ken and Stephanie,

I love your workouts! I followed the APFT workout calendar in Pushing for Points and nearly maxed the test. In fact, it was the best score that I have ever gotten in the APFT! Thanks! My question is how to train for Special Forces tryouts? I heard it is really competitive. I want to make sure that I do my best! HOOAH!

Sincerely,
SGT Bill S., Indiana Army National Guard

Dear 1LT Spencer and SGT Bill,

[SENT]

We're thrilled that the fitness programs are working for you! We've had a tremendous response to our 30-day APFT workout calendar in Operation Pushing for Points. By following this program, many Soldiers have achieved the best scores they've ever had.

We're pleased that there is such a huge interest in athletic, competitive training! We believe that in both of your cases, the answer to meeting your goal is to develop functional strength and build a strong core. Too often, we train in one plane of motion and work toward keeping our arms and legs strong without starting with a strong trunk/core. The core is where all movement originates.

This program also will cause you to move in various directions or different planes of motion. Although your body naturally moves across many planes of motion, many of us focus on the frontal and sagittal planes. Some of us simply sit

or stand in one spot while exercising. How effective will this be for you when you need explosive power to get up from a crouched position and run? Will your body have a natural response pattern due to your consistent training?

We call this particular program Operation Craving Competition. Due to the length and volume of information we'll be delivering, we've decided to break it down into two features. In this issue—Part One—we'll focus on intermediate-level exercises choreographed to increase your core strength, agility and stamina. We look forward to watching you progress into highly trained, tactical athletes.

Let's get started!
HOOAH!

SGT Ken and Stephanie



WARM-UP PHASE

Foam Rolling: Perform 3–6 minutes of foam rolling, or self-myofascial release techniques, in order to improve flexibility and sports performance, and to reduce potential injuries.



UPPER BACK FOAM ROLLING

↳ (1-2 minutes)

START: Balance your body on a foam roller aligned against the back of your shoulders, feet shoulder-width apart, hips slightly elevated and palms resting on the ground.

ACTIONS: Maintain a neutral spine and slowly push your body with your legs, allowing the foam roller to massage the area between your shoulders and mid-back. Return to the start position and repeat. Breathe naturally.



LOWER LEG FOAM ROLLING

↳ (1-2 minutes)

START: Balance your body on a foam roller aligned above your ankles, feet 12 inches apart, hips slightly elevated and palms resting on the ground. **ACTIONS:** Slowly push your body with your arms, allowing the foam roller to massage from bottom to top of the calves. Return to the start position and repeat. Breathe naturally. *Note:* An option would be to apply pressure to one leg at a time by bending one leg and positioning it on the ground behind the foam roller.

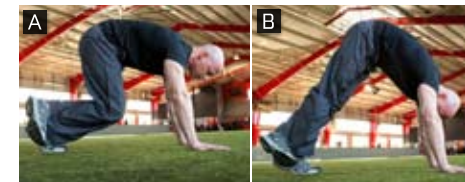
AEROBICS

↳ (not pictured)

Perform 5–8 minutes of aerobics exercises, such as running in place, side-straddle-hops "jumping jacks" or high steps/knees.

STRETCHING

Perform 3-6 minutes of flexibility exercises.

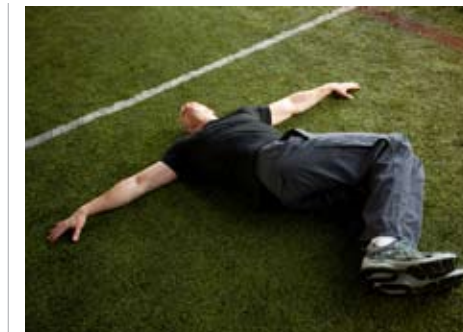


BENT-OVER CALF STRETCH

↳ (30 seconds each leg, 1-2 times each)

START: Balance your body on your hands and feet with your hips slightly higher than your head, hands shoulder-width apart and knees bent 90-degrees. Elevate your left foot and cross it over the back of your right ankle.

ACTIONS: Raise your hips and straighten your right leg. Push your right heel down toward the ground and hold this position until your goal is reached. Return to the start position. Switch legs and repeat. Breathe naturally.



TRUNK TWIST

↳ (30 seconds each leg, 1-2 times each)

START: Lie down on your back, arms extended and level with your shoulders, palms on the ground. Bend your legs 90-degrees at the knees, feet together and placed on the ground.

ACTIONS: Slowly twist your trunk to the left and hold your legs on the ground, or as close to the ground as possible, until your goal is reached. Return to the start position. Switch directions and repeat. Breathe naturally.



UPPER LEG AND HIP FOAM ROLLING

↳ (1-2 minutes each side)

START: Balance your body on a foam roller aligned with your lower left thigh above the knee, left leg straight, slightly elevated and foot flexed. Bend your right leg and position your foot on the ground behind, or in front of the left leg. Turn your body to the left and balance your upper body with your hands on the ground slightly more than shoulder-width apart.

ACTIONS: Slowly push your body with your arms, allowing the foam roller to massage the left iliopsoas and gluteus. Return to the start position. Repeat until you have reached your goal. Switch sides and repeat. Breathe naturally.



SCORPION STRETCH

↳ (30 seconds each leg, 1-2 times each)

START: Lay down on your front side, arms extended and level with your shoulders, palms on the ground, feet together and straight.

ACTIONS: Slowly twist your trunk counterclockwise, bend your left knee, curl your leg behind you and place your left foot on the ground to the right side of your body, or as close to your right hand as possible, and hold it there until your goal is reached. Return to the start position. Switch directions and repeat. Breathe naturally.

“Avoiding the phrase ‘I don’t have time ...’ will soon help you to realize that you do have the time needed for just about anything you choose to accomplish in life.”

—Bo Bennett

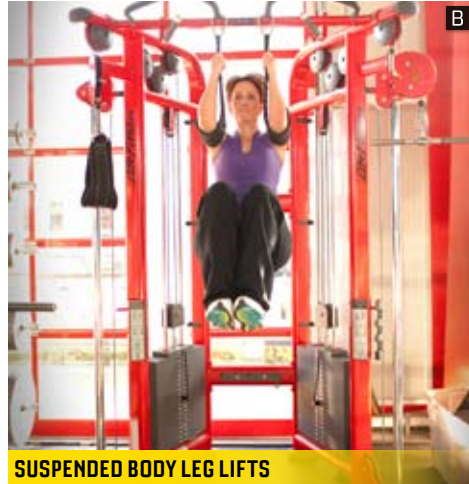
CORE TARGETING PHASE



PLANK HOLD

START: Balance your body on your forearms, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, back and legs straight, chin tilted upward slightly.
ACTIONS: Tighten your abdominal muscles and hold this position until your goal is reached. Breathe naturally.

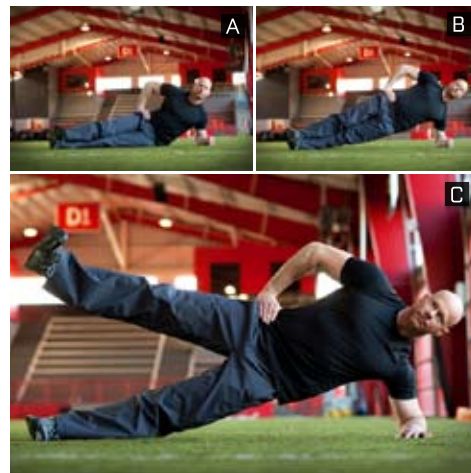
Basic: 10–30 seconds
Intermediate: 31–60 seconds
Advanced: 61–90 seconds



SUSPENDED BODY LEG LIFTS

START: Using a sturdy bench, lift your body up and position your arms through a pair of abdominal straps. Have the bench removed and hang still, with your legs straight.
ACTIONS: Tighten your abdominal muscles, bend your knees and lift your legs until your knees reach or exceed hip level. Return to the start position and repeat. Continue until your goal is reached. Have the bench returned when you have reached your goal. Perform the actions slowly to prevent a rocking action. Exhale through your mouth as you lift your legs and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position. *Note:* This exercise can be performed while suspended against an abdominal bench.

Basic: 10–30 seconds
Intermediate: 31–60 seconds
Advanced: 61–90 seconds



LATERAL PILLAR BRIDGE

START: Balance your body on your left forearm and left leg, right leg on top of your left, right arm bent and placed on your right hip. Feet flexed and left hand made into a fist.
ACTIONS: Tighten your abdominal muscles and raise your hips until your back and legs are straight. Hold this position until your goal is reached. Switch positions and repeat. Breathe naturally.

Basic: 10–20 seconds
Intermediate: 21–30 seconds
Advanced: 5–10 seconds (with top leg elevated)



SWIMMER

↳ (Prone Alternating Arm and Leg Lift)

START: Lay down on your front side, arms extended over your head straight, palms facing inward, legs straight and feet 12 inches apart.
ACTIONS: Tighten your lower back muscles and lift your left arm and right leg. Return to the start position and lift your right arm and left leg. Return to the start position and repeat until your goal is reached. Breathe naturally.

Basic: 10–30 seconds
Intermediate: 31–60 seconds (continuous movements)
Advanced: 61–90 seconds (continuous movements; lower back arched with gluteus muscles engaged)

“

You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt

EVAN BARNES

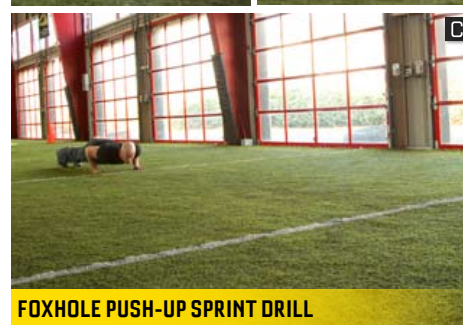
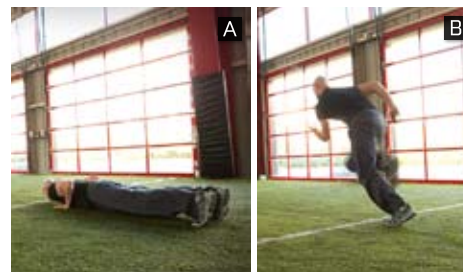


JUMPING PULL-UPS

START: Stand with a neutral spine, arms at your sides, feet shoulder-width apart.
ACTIONS: Squat down until you reach 90 degrees at the knees. Maintain your weight directly over the middle of your feet and heels. Keep your knees aligned with your feet. Jump up and grasp the horizontal bar or hand grips and perform a pull-up, pausing in the “up” position for a few seconds. Return to the start position slowly. Repeat until your goal is reached. *Note:* The objective is to return to the start position as slowly as you can and to jump up quickly.

Basic: 5–10 seconds
Intermediate: 11–20 seconds
Advanced: 21–30 seconds

AEROBIC CONDITIONING PHASE



FOXHOLE PUSH-UP SPRINT DRILL

START: Lay down on your front side, arms bent and hands placed on the ground beside your chest, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, feet flexed.
ACTIONS: Using your arms, push off of the ground quickly, bend your legs and sprint forward 10 yards. Crouch your body, turn toward the direction you came, lower your body to the ground and perform a push-up. Repeat the actions and sprint in the opposite direction toward the start position. Repeat until your goal is reached. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Basic: 30–60 seconds
Intermediate: 61–90 seconds
Advanced: 91–120 seconds



GRAPEVINE AEROBIC DRILL (Karaoke)

START: Stand with arms slightly elevated to the sides, feet shoulder-width apart.
ACTIONS: **Step 1:** Stand with your feet together. Using your left foot, take one step to your left. **Step 2:** Step behind your left foot with your right foot and place your right foot behind and slightly to the left of your left foot. *Note:* Your right foot should be pointing toward your left heel. **Step 3:** Step to the left with your left foot. *Note:* Your feet will be aligned left heel to right toe. **Step 4:** Step in front of your left foot with your right foot and place your right foot across and slightly to the left of your left foot. **Step 5:** Step to the left with your left foot. *Note:* Your feet will be aligned left toe to right heel. **Step 6:** Repeat until your goal is reached. Switch directions and repeat.

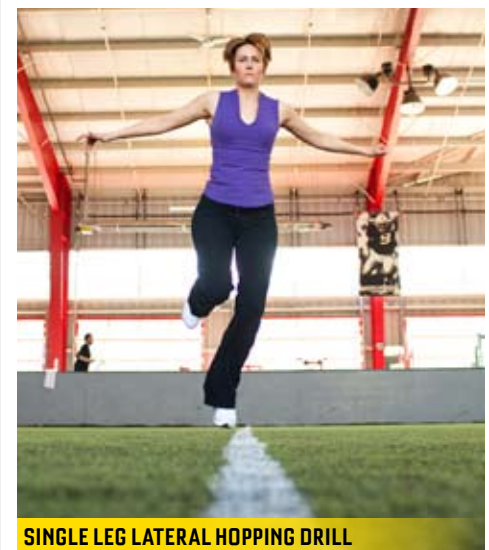
Basic: 30–60 seconds
Intermediate: 61–90 seconds
Advanced: 91–120 seconds



COMPETITIVE SPRINT DRILL

START: Assume a “standing start position” by placing your toes behind the start line with one leg 12–18 inches behind you. Shift your weight on the front leg and bend your lead knee 90 degrees. Bend your trunk forward with opposite arm in front and slightly elevated.
ACTIONS: Run forward 50 yards as fast as you can. Rest 30–60 seconds and repeat. Continue until your goal is reached. Breathe naturally. *Note:* This event is more challenging when running against a more advanced contestant.

Basic: 1–2 sprints
Intermediate: 3–6 sprints
Advanced: 7–14 sprints



SINGLE LEG LATERAL HOPPING DRILL

START: Stand with a neutral spine, elevate your arms slightly to the sides and bend your right knee, elevating your right foot behind you.
ACTIONS: Bend your left knee slightly and jump 6–12 inches to your left. Leap to the start position. Repeat until your goal is reached. Switch legs and repeat. Breathe naturally.

Basic: 20–30 seconds (each leg)
Intermediate: 31–45 seconds (each leg)
Advanced: 46–60 seconds (each leg)



LATERAL LEAPING DRILL

START: Stand with a neutral spine, arms at your sides and feet together.

ACTIONS: Bend your knees 90-degrees and jump up and to the left 24–36 inches, knees and arms raised while in mid-flight.

the tire until it flips forward. Jump forward and repeat until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you stand and flip the tire and inhale through your nose as you squat downward.

Advanced: 60–90 seconds

COOL-DOWN PHASE

Perform the warm-up exercises.

STAMINA STOPWATCH

Bronze Medal: 1 full set = approximately 45 minutes

Silver Medal: 2 full sets = approximately 60 minutes

Gold Medal: 3 full sets = approximately 75 minutes

Note: The warm-up and cool-down phases are performed only once.

Equipment Needed:

1. Foam Roller
2. Abdominal Straps
3. Pull-up Bar
4. Large Tire (if performing the Bonus Exercise)

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.

7-DAY SCHEDULE

MONDAY

Operation Craving Competition

TUESDAY

Running Long Distance 3–6 miles

8-min Abs x 1-2 sets

Note: Download "8-min Abs" on www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness

WEDNESDAY

Operation Craving Competition

THURSDAY

Rest

FRIDAY

Running Interval Training x 2–4 miles

8-min Abs x 1–2 sets

SATURDAY

Operation Craving Competition

SUNDAY

Rest

NUTRITION ADVICE:

1. To lose additional body fat, try reducing your intake of breads and 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.

REMARKS:

1. Repeat 7-day schedule x 4 sets to complete the month.
2. Rest periods may be adjusted, as needed. However, be certain to include 1–2 rest days per week for rest and recovery.
3. Perform no fitness training 24–48 hours prior to a competition.

BONUS EXERCISE



TIRE FLIPPING DRILL (Advanced)

START: Place a large tire 12 inches in front of you and stand with a neutral spine, arms at your sides, and feet shoulder-width apart.

ACTIONS: Squat down until you reach 90 degrees at the knees. Maintain your weight directly over the middle of your feet and heels. Keep your knees aligned with your feet. Bend forward at your hips and grasp underneath the tire with your hands, keeping your arms straight. Stand up and push



EVAN BAINES

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.