

CORE TRAINING TIME

PART 1 OF 2

By SGT KEN

The new fitness buzzword is “CORE Training!” Over the next couple of *GX* issues, Stephanie and I are going to provide you exercises that will help you strengthen your core. But, the question that we often receive is, “What is your core?”

A dictionary may define core training as a training regimen that focuses on strengthening the body’s trunk muscles, especially the stomach and lower back. Another way of looking at it is to strengthen the muscles that support your spine. Bottom line is that core

training begins with the transverse abdominus, a deep abdominal muscle group connected to the inner surface of cartilage of your lower six ribs, and the lumbar fascia.

I believe that core training is the most important fitness training anyone can perform! When I was in high school, my sports activities came to a screeching halt when an aggressive move on the football field ended with a serious back injury. Because of the core training that I received in boot camp, I have not had a problem since then.

Photo by Jonathan C. Miller



ABOVE: (L-R) Stephanie and SSG Ken Weichert

The START (Strategic Army Training) Fitness™ program incorporates the same exercises that are used annually to test the strength and endurance of the National Guard. START Fitness is a program created for Soldiers by Soldiers.

SGT Ken Weichert, six-time Soldier of the Year and veteran of both Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm, began the START Fitness™ program in 1997. Now partnered with his wife Stephanie, Strategic Director of START Fitness and a certified personal trainer, the Weicherts are conquering the fitness industry. START Fitness™ has been profiled in *Backpacker Magazine*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Washington Post*, and now you can expect it in the pages of *GX*.

For more information, visit:

 startfitness.com

You can work out with SGT Ken™! Purchase all three of their workout videos (VHS & DVD) on their website.



FLUTTER KICK

Start the exercise by lying on your back with your palms on the ground and your hands against the sides of your buttocks. You can look toward your legs or keep your head down against the ground. First, bring your legs straight in the air together and lower them approximately 10-20 inches from the ground with your feet flexed.



The movements begin by shifting your legs vertically up and down approximately 12 inches. Your legs move opposite of each other and your feet remain flexed. The lower your legs are positioned, the more back muscles you engage. Warning: If it feels uncomfortable in your lower back, your legs may be positioned too low for this training session. Never drop your legs on the ground.

FOUR-POSITION PUSH-UP

Start the exercise in the push-up position with a normal or wide grip. Your hands should line-up underneath your chest and not above your shoulders. Tighten your rear end muscles and look slightly forward. Your feet can be together or up to twelve inches apart. Slowly move to the second, third, and fourth positions by bending your arms at the elbows slightly until your body lowers a few inches each time. Hold these positions for a few seconds each and then return to the first position. The normal grip is intermediate and the wide grip is advanced. Your body armor can be used to increase the intensity of this exercise. You may reduce the intensity by going to your knees.



Product photo by Raye Dene Berry

**GOT A QUESTION?
ASK SGT KEN**

✉ askthetrainer@startfitness.com



Illustration by Seamas Gallagher

Dear SGT Ken,™

I'm TDY again and had the pleasure of reading previous additions of *GX* magazine on the flight over. I LOVE your fitness column.

What kind of yoga do you teach at your studio? Since they have Bikram's Hot Yoga in SFO I'd be curious to see what you thought of this particular yoga. I've heard in NY they can make the room 120 degrees plus!

When you sent this I was TDY and brought the Bikram's tape and got 5 people to do it with me. I've turned lots of soldiers from the NMNG onto Bikram's. Our TAG even went five times! I hope you can try it and let me know what you think - especially with your fitness background.

I'll look forward to reading your columns in future *GX* editions. HOOAH!

MAJ Kimberly Lalley, NMARNG
State Public Affairs Officer

Dear MAJ Lalley,

Hello. Stephanie, the *GX* staff, and I would like to thank you for the encouraging remarks you made! We have had hundreds of emails expressing positive support of the START Fitness columns in *GX* magazine! I particularly liked your recent email regarding Bikram Yoga.

The three main components of physical fitness are Strength, Stamina, and Flexibility. Good fitness programs must present the opportunity to experience all three components in a weekly routine. Great fitness programs should include all three components in the same hour-long session each time.

What has worked immensely for our START Fitness students is to end the last ten minutes of our sixty-minute indoor sessions with intense Yoga and Pilates exercises. This way the students leave the sessions with better posture and loosened muscles.

Using heat during Yoga activities is a great way to get deep tissue muscle groups to release earlier in fitness sessions. Bikram Yoga is a great program! We always recommend that everyone should consult his or her physician prior experimenting in new fitness routines. It sounds like you're doing exactly what your body needs. My only advice is to remember not to sacrifice

strength and stamina building routines during your weekly fitness schedule. I realize that Bikram Yoga includes strength and stamina characteristics. However, at START Fitness we stress diversity of fitness styles. If your body gets use to the routine, you may stop to achieving results. Great work, Major! Hooah!

Dear SGT Ken,™

I was wondering if you could give me some tips on the best way to improve my run. Also, for weight training I am doing 3 sets of 15 reps. Is this sufficient (if by the time I'm getting to the 13-15 rep it's harder to do)?

Thank you,

SGT Jodi Fleckenstein, NDARNG

Dear SGT Fleckenstein,

Hello. Thanks for contacting us. It seems that seeking methods to improve run times are the most popular questions that we receive. In our first START Fitness column published two issues ago, I told a man named SGT Dustin Loftis to use Interval Training. I believe that is exactly what will help you as well. We'll make certain that we send you a back issue so that you can use our fitness guidelines.

As far as whether or not you are performing the correct amount of repetitions per set in the weight room, I can help you with that. When a person endures 3 sets of 13-15 repetitions of a weight training exercise, the person is achieving a mass reducing quality. Some people in gyms refer to it as 'toning' or 'sculpting'. The theory is that heavy weight training with 3 sets of 4-6 repetitions per set will help you achieve more mass. Lighter weight training with 3 sets of 13-15 repetitions per set will help you maintain strength and keep you from gaining mass. If you wish to perform greater mass reducing efforts, simply reduce the weight and increase the repetitions per set.

Keep in mind that weight training may not help you to achieve better results in the physical fitness test. For example, the only

thing that will help you to achieve more push-ups is to train harder with different styles of push-ups. Although the bench press exercise may make you stronger, it will not help you to achieve more push-ups. Also, remember to let your body rest a day before pushing specified muscle groups to total exhaustion or "muscle failure." In other words, if today is the day that you are going to perform the most push-ups that you can until muscle failure, then tomorrow should be a rest day for that exercise.

Great question, SGT! Let your colleagues know that START Fitness and *GX* magazine are ready to answer any of their Health and Fitness questions!

Got a fitness question? Email SGT Ken:™

✉ askthetrainer@startfitness.com