

# START Fitness™

## OPERATION HEAVY OR NOT



Part 1 of 3  
By SSG Ken Weichert

**SGT Ric Merrill,**

*Hello. Thanks for your email, SGT! Judging from recent emails, Stephanie and I have noticed that many Soldiers and family members stationed all over the world desire to acquire the same information — “How do we put it all together, gym and no gym?” When is the best time to use weights or no weights? How do I bulk up? How do I tone up or sculpt down?*

### Heavy or Not, here are some answers.

**HEAVY OR NOT RULE #1:**

Weight training alone will not help you get a better score on the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT).

Exercise example: Bottom line is that Push-up training will help you with the APFT Push-up event. Although there are great chest and triceps weight training exercises to develop upper body strength and endurance, some are often counterproductive to the APFT. I add weight training to my fitness routines after the scheduled APFT in order to strengthen slightly different muscle groups and to change my fitness patterns for a while. This way my body is forced to react to change. The theory is that if you maintain identical fitness patterns for a long period of time your body will adapt and stop progressing.

I stop weight training six-weeks prior to the next scheduled APFT and intensify my Push-up, Sit-up and Crunch, and Running program in order to be properly prepared for the APFT exercises.

**HEAVY OR NOT RULE #2:**

Weight training will help you develop mass muscle tissue if you perform a few full sets of high weights for low repetitions for each set.

Exercise example: If I wanted to bulk up my chest muscles, I would perform three sets of the highest weights possible, as long as I could perform 4-6 repetitions for each set.

**HEAVY OR NOT RULE #3:**

Weight training will help you develop lean muscle tissue (sculpt down) if you perform a few sets of low weights for high repetitions for each set.

Exercise example: After I bulked up my shoulders and chest a bit I changed my routine by gradually lowering the weights and increasing the repetitions. I noticed that this helped me to develop a great deal of muscle definition. At the peak of this strategy I was performing three sets of a weight where I could achieve 15-20 repetitions for each set.



**RECEIVED**

SSG Ken Weichert a.k.a. ‘SGT KEN’,  
I am currently doing two full body workouts a week and running. I want to incorporate weightlifting into my program. What kind of schedule and exercises for weights do you recommend? What is the best way to incorporate weightlifting into my schedule without jeopardizing my body weight only exercises and running? Also, what are the best exercises I should do for weightlifting? I want to get stronger not bulk up. I want all my exercises to compliment each other without over loading myself.

Thanks, Hooah!

- SGT Ric Merrill

**HOOAH!**  
Let us hear from you.

[askthetrainer@startfitness.com](mailto:askthetrainer@startfitness.com)



SGT KEN AND  
STEPHANIE WEICHERT

SSG 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.

**SAFETY NOTE:** It is best to have someone to spot you for weight training exercises.

**SPECIAL REMARKS:** We encourage you to request additional information by emailing us at [askthetrainer@startfitness.com](mailto:askthetrainer@startfitness.com) or to exercise with us while watching our FIT TO FIGHT DVD series. If you are ever in San Francisco, come to our studio where Military and Family members are always FREE. Our new Military line of tubing by SPRI Products is now available at [www.startfitness.com](http://www.startfitness.com).



ILLUSTRATION BY SEAMAS GALLAGHER, NICOLE SYLVESTER

## After the APFT: Weight Training Time

### PECTORALS AND TRICEPS

In that period after the APFT, ending six-weeks prior to the next scheduled APFT, I add weight training, yoga, kickboxing, and hiking to my fitness program. I like to perform whole body weight training workouts with aerobics for most of the each week and to focus special attention on one specific muscle group twice a week. I switch the focus to other specific muscle groups each week while performing this strategy for several weeks. I schedule one or two days off from performing any intense fitness activities each week for proper recovery.

### MUSCLE EXPLOITATION DAY

Here is one of my chest and triceps fitness plans that I perform in the following order:

1. **Warm-up** (6-Minutes Jump Rope and 30 Pushups)
2. **Bench Press** (Flat—No Incline or Decline)
3. **Bench Press** (Incline)
4. **Bench Press** (Decline)
5. **Tubing Push-ups**, Normal Grip
6. **Push-ups without tubing**, Normal and Wide Grips
7. **Standing Chest Fly with tubing**

*Start:* Stand hip width apart, knees slightly bent. Grasp the handles of the Ultratube or Xertube folded in half and place behind back below shoulder blades, hands just outside shoulder width, palms facing down.

*Finish:* Press arms forward, rotating shoulders, arms fully extended and palms facing down. Return to start position and repeat.

*Bulk Up*—3 sets of 8 repetitions each with high resistance

*Sculpt Down*—3 sets of 15-30 repetitions each with Light to Moderate resistance

8. **Standing Overhead Triceps Press with tubing**

*Start:* Stand in a staggered lunge stance, place Xertube under back foot and soften knees. Grasp the handles and position hands behind head, palms facing inward, thumbs down, and elbows above shoulders. Keep upper arms as close to your head as possible.

*Finish:* Slowly straighten arms upward while rotating forearms outward. End with your arms straight, hands above the head, elbows slightly bent, and palms forward. Return to start position and repeat.

*Bulk Up*—3 sets of 8 repetitions each with high resistance

*Sculpt Down*—3 sets of 15-30 repetitions each with Light to Moderate resistance

9. **Triceps Extensions** (Pictured in issue 3.2, page 72) with tubing
10. **Triceps Push-downs with tubing**
11. **3-Minutes Crunches**
12. **5-Minutes Aerobics** (Treadmill or Elliptical Machines)

### REPEAT CYCLE TWICE MORE

TOTAL TRAINING TIME = 75 MINUTES (Depending on Repetitions per set and Rest Periods)

**DO NOT PERFORM THIS FITNESS PLAN FOR ANOTHER 36-48 HOURS (Recovery Time)**

Pectorals and Triceps Muscle Exploitation Day is an aggressive approach to a chest and arms strength training plan that incorporates weight training with APFT preparation (see START Fitness in GX issues 2.6, 3.1 and 3.2)

Remember that low weight and high repetition will provide you a sculpting result while high weight and low repetition will provide you a mass building result. I always bring my SPRI Products tubing with me to my workouts.

Tubing requires little weight or space in my gym bag. Notice that I am pictured with a short 'figure 8' piece of tubing in some of the pictures. If you do not have this particular piece available yet, simply hold a long strip of tubing at the same width as seen. If you have no tubing at all, you may perform some of the exercises with Dumbbells or with no equipment.



Tubing Push-ups (above)



Standing Chest Fly with tubing (above)



Standing Overhead Triceps Press with tubing (above)

**UNIFORM REMARK:** SSG Ken Weichert is pictured in the Army Combat Uniform (ACU) with Field Cap and without the ACU Shirt in order to show you what muscles are employed during each exercise.