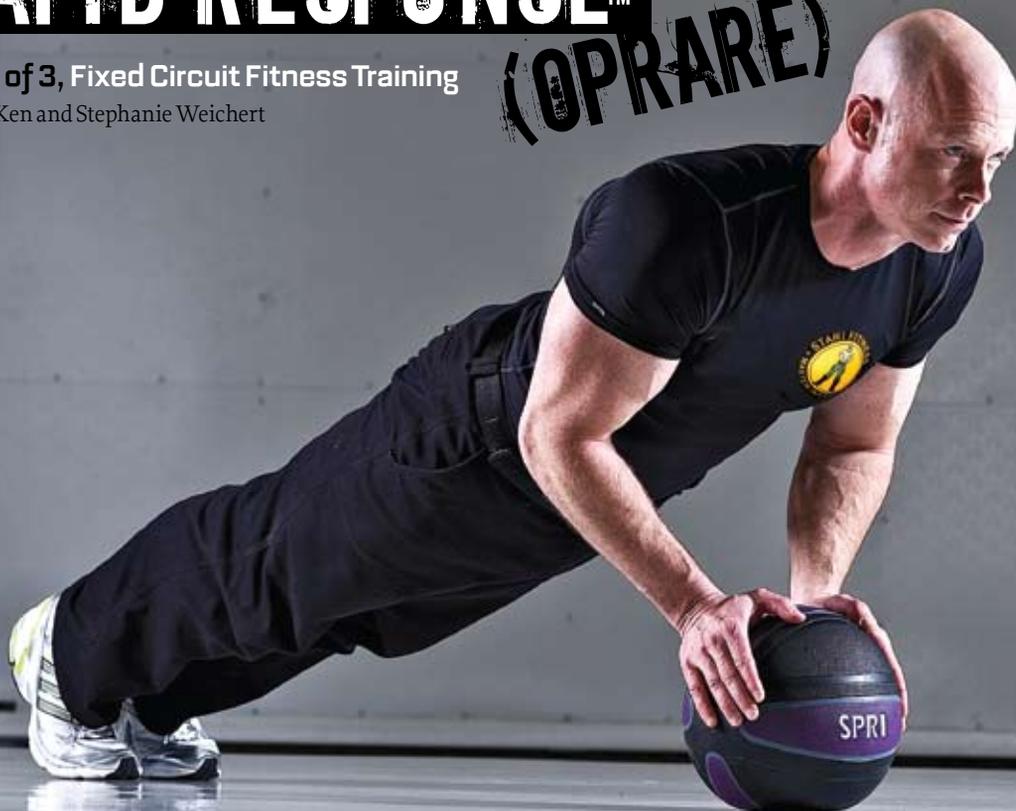


OPERATION RAPID RESPONSE™

Part 1 of 3, Fixed Circuit Fitness Training

By SSG Ken and Stephanie Weichert

(OPRARE)



RECEIVED

DEAR SGT KEN AND STEPHANIE,

Hello, there! I have been following your workouts for a while. They are great! I am currently stationed in Balad, Iraq. I am looking to strive for a 300 on my next APFT. I am wondering if you can give me some tips on how to reach a 300 and help with losing about 10 lbs. I am 25 years old. My goal is to get ready for both Warrant and Jump schools when I get back to the U.S. Thanks!

—SGT James Ruks

DEAR SGT RUKS,

Hello! Thanks for the compliment! Your question is one of the most popular we receive: "How do I lose weight and get in better physical condition in a short period of time?" One way to accomplish this is by fitness circuits. We find that circuits are a great way to breathe new life into your workout routine. Operation Rapid Response (OPRARE) is a three-part answer to your question. In this issue, you will endure a full-body, military-style, 25-, 35- or 45-minute fixed circuit with no equipment that you can perform in a small space with other people or by yourself. We recommend adding OPRARE, part 1 of 3, to your fitness schedule at least twice a week for the next 30 days. OPRARE part 2 of 3 will include a free circuit performed with exercise equipment. OPRARE part 3 of 3 will include another fixed circuit with many aerobics exercises. OPRARE is the perfect workout for the times when you don't have the luxury of a full hour at the gym. Keep in mind that you can also add cardiovascular exercises to the end of this workout to put in a full hour of exercise.

HOOAH!

SSG Ken and Stephanie Weichert

“Champions aren’t made in the gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them—a desire, a dream, a vision.”

—Muhammad Ali, American boxer

WARM-UP PHASE

1. Aerobics (5 minutes)

EXAMPLES: Running in place; side-straddle hops (jumping jacks); high steps/knees

2. Stretching (5 minutes)

“Fitness circuits should be performed with little or no break between stations. Perform each exercise consecutively in order to achieve optimum effect.”

—SSG Ken Weichert

MUSCLE TARGET PHASE

3. Jump rope drill (1 minute)

START: Stand upright as if you were going to jump rope without the rope.

ACTIONS: Begin hopping, letting your feet leave the ground by only a few inches. Rotate your shoulders slightly to create the effect of jumping rope with no equipment.

4. Squats (2 minutes)

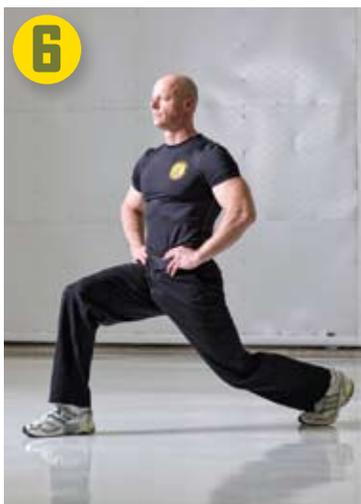
START: Stand in a neutral position, with your toes pointing forward, legs placed hip-width apart and arms at your sides.

ACTIONS: Lower your body, bending both knees and moving your hips back as if you were sitting on a chair. Maintain your weight directly over the heels or mid-foot. Lower to approximately 90 degrees of knee flexion.

STATIC SQUATS (Basic-Intermediate): Slowly return to the start position.

LEAPING SQUATS (Advanced): Jump in the air and land in the lower position.

Warning: Do not let your knees bend beyond your toe line.

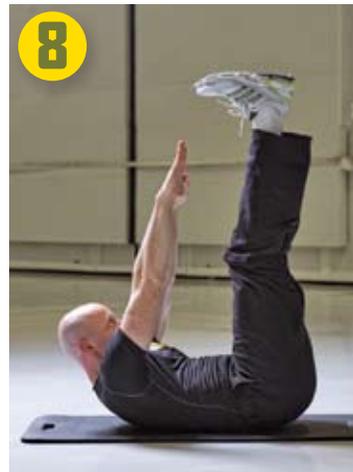


5. Left leg lunges (30 seconds)

START: Stand with your left leg on the ground directly in front of you with your left knee slightly bent. Place your right leg directly behind you, balancing on the ball of your right foot. Your upper body should be upright with your shoulders lined up over your hips.

ACTIONS: Lower your body, bending both knees until your forward leg achieves 90 degrees of knee flexion. Maintain your balance in the center. Return to the starting position.

Warning: Do not let your knees bend beyond your toe line.



6. Right leg lunges (30 seconds)

START: Stand with your right leg on the ground directly in front of you with your left knee slightly bent. Place your left leg directly behind you, balancing on the ball of your right foot. Your upper body should be upright with your shoulders lined up over your hips.

ACTIONS: Lower your body, bending both knees until your forward leg achieves 90 degrees of knee flexion. Maintain your balance in the center. Return to the starting position.

Warning: Do not let your knees bend beyond your toe line.

7. Flutter kicks (1 minute)

START: Lie 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 up in the air together, then lower them approximately 10-20 inches from the ground with your feet flexed.

ACTIONS: Your legs will move opposite of each other vertically up and down approximately 12 inches.

Warning: Remember, the lower your legs are positioned, the more back muscles you engage for this exercise. Keep your back flat against the floor with your arms supporting the sides of your body. If you experience discomfort in your lower back, raise your legs higher. Keep your feet flexed at all times.

8. Dying Cockroach drill (30 seconds)

START: Lie on your back with your palms on the ground and your hands against the sides of your buttocks. Bring your legs straight up in the air together so your feet line up over your hips when flexed. Raise your arms and point your fingers toward your toes.

ACTIONS: Tighten your abdominal muscles and raise your upper body upward so your fingers come close to touching your toes. Return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached.

Warning: Never lock your knees.

9. Box and Reach drill (30 seconds)

START: Lie on your back with your palms on the ground and your hands against the sides of your buttocks. Bring your legs straight up in the air together so your feet line up over your hips when flexed. Raise your arms and point your fingers toward your toes.

ACTIONS: First reach over the outside of your left thigh with both arms. Next return to the start position and reach over the outside of your right thigh with both arms. Reaching on both sides completes one repetition of this exercise.



10. 1/2 sit-ups, crunches (1 minute)

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, then return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached.

Warning: Do not pull on your neck with your hands. Keep your elbows wide and your chin pointing toward the sky during the entire exercise.



11. Modified lower back bends (30 seconds)

START: Lower your body to the ground with your arms stretched outward and bent at the elbows, and your hands slightly above your shoulders, your palms on the ground and your feet shoulder-width apart touching the floor.

ACTIONS: Slowly arch your lower back by tightening your rear end and lower back muscles until your legs and arms move upward. Return to the start position.

Warning: Do not jerk your body during this exercise. Perform the actions slowly.

“You are never a loser until you quit trying.”

—Mike Ditka

12. Push-ups (1 minute)

START: Balance your body on your hands and feet (or knees) with your back forming a straight line. Look forward and keep your feet together or up to 12 inches apart.

Note: Different arm positions engage different arm, chest and shoulder muscles. The closer together your hands are, the more tricep muscles you engage.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, drop your body straight down by bending both elbows. Return to the start position.

Warning: Do not look down toward the ground during this exercise. Maintain a forward focal point at all times.

13. Dive Bomber push-ups (30 seconds)

START: Assume the standard push-up position. Now widen your feet and point your rear end in the air.

ACTIONS: Lower your body to the ground slowly by bending at the elbows. Slightly drag your chest across the ground and press your body upward until your arms are straight and your lower back is arched backward. Return to the start position by reversing the steps.





14. Squat thrust jumps [1 minute]

START: Stand upright and ready.

ACTIONS: Lower your body, bending both knees until your hands reach the ground. Next straighten your body until you assume the push-up position. Quickly bring your knees into your chest, switch your balance to your feet and leap in the air. Repeat.

Stamina Stopwatch

Operation Rapid Response: 1 full set = approximately 10 minutes

Operation Double Tap: 2 full sets = approximately 20 minutes

Operation Max Load: 3 full sets = approximately 30 minutes

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

COOLDOWN PHASE

17. Stretching [5 minutes]

Total workout time is approximately 25, 35 or 45 minutes.

Equipment Needed:

None

“Never, never, never give up.”

—Winston Churchill



WORKOUT WRAP-UP

“The only way around is through.”

—Robert Frost

From SSG Ken Weichert

Muscle Targeting Theory:

Working from head to toe, each station in this circuit includes exercises that connect muscle and joint tissue. While primary muscle target focus switches to the next set of muscles in the next station in the circuit, the muscle group from the previous station is still targeted while serving as secondary muscles for the next planned exercise. Therefore, while more muscles are active at one time you burn more calories.

Note: Pay close attention to your target heart rate while performing each exercise with little or no break in between each station.

From Army Field Manual (FM) 21-20, Physical Fitness Training, Sept. 30, 1992, Chapter 7, Fitness Circuits

Free Circuit:

In a free circuit, there is no set time for staying at each station, and no signal is given to move from one station to the next. Soldiers work at their own pace, doing a fixed number of repetitions at each station. Progress is measured by the time needed to complete a circuit. Because Soldiers may do incomplete or fewer repetitions than called for to reduce this time, the quality and number of the repetitions done should be monitored. Aside from this, the free circuit requires little supervision.

Fixed Circuit:

In a fixed circuit, a specific length of time is set for each station. The time is monitored with a stopwatch, and Soldiers rotate through the stations on command.

Reference note: FM 3-22.20 Army Physical Readiness Training (Dec. 2007) supersedes FM 21-20 Physical Fitness Training (Sept. 30, 1992).

Got a question? Email SGT Ken at SGTKen@GXonline.com.



SSG KEN AND STEPHANIE WEICHERT

A six-time Soldier of the year and Veteran of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm, SSG 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.

CHRIS KISSLING

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.