Q: How can I get ready to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT)?

A: This is the question we most frequently receive. To excel at any military fitness test, you must train safely and intensely with the exercises in the test. While weight training is great for muscular strength development, it is also a good example of what not to do while conditioning your body to perform better at the APFT or any other fitness test that includes body resistance exercises.

We have had an overwhelming positive response to several parts of this program that we have released to the public. Here is a comment from an actual participant who used our Push-up Improvement Plan video on www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com:

“I’m shipping out for BCT in around four weeks and my push-ups were my one worry. This has really helped me improve, and I’m feeling physically prepared. Thanks, SGt Ken.”

In this issue, you will receive a whole month of exercises. We challenge you to use this program to strive for 300 points in 30 days! Are you ready for the challenge?

HOOAH! Let’s get started!

—SSG Ken and Stephanie Weichert
**30-DAY WORKOUT CALENDAR**

**MONDAY:**
- Push-up Improvement Plan #1
- Crunches, sit-ups

**TUESDAY:**
- Running long distance
- Crunches, sit-ups

**WEDNESDAY:**
- Push-up Improvement Plan #1
- Crunches, sit-ups

**THURSDAY:**
- Running interval training
- Crunches, sit-ups

**FRIDAY:**
- Push-up interval training
- Crunches, sit-ups

**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY:**
- Light stretching and rest

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**Aerobics:** Examples: Running in place; side-straddle-hops; jumping jacks; high steps/knees

**Stretching**

**Foam Rolling:** Use a foam roller to help stretch tight areas of the body. Example: If your calves are tight, put the foam roller under your calf and gently press it into the roller. Move your leg so that the foam roller massages the entire length of your calf.
Fighting Spirit

PUSH-UP IMPROVEMENT PLAN #1

STRATEGY:
• Begin the push-up exercise in the close grip position.
• Continue as long as you can before assuming an authorized rest position.
• Slide your hands outward to the normal grip position.
• Continue as long as you can before assuming an authorized rest position.
• Slide your hands outward to the wide grip position.
• Continue as long as you can before assuming an authorized rest position.

WARNING: Do not let your back sag. Do not lift your hands or feet off of the ground. Do not perform this program on your knees.

*Want to listen to it or watch it on video? Go to www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com, GUARD FITNESS, GET FIT, UPPER BODY, PUSH-UP IMPROVEMENT PLAN #01.

-push-up standards
START: Balance your body on your hands and feet 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 arms, chest and shoulder muscles. The closer your hands are together, the more tricep muscles you engage.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, drop your body straight down by bending both elbows until the upper part of your arms become parallel to the ground. Return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached.

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

Basic: 1 set of 1 minute
Intermediate: 1 set of 2 minutes
Advanced: 2 sets of 2 minutes each
Extreme: 2 sets of 3 minutes each

RUNNING LONG DISTANCE

Basic: 2 miles
Intermediate: 4 miles
Advanced: 6 miles

“The best way to condition your body for the 2-mile run as part of a fitness test is to become accustomed to running longer distances.” —SSG Ken Weichert

Running interval training
Running interval training is where you mix your running training with sprints and jogging. For example, choose to run on a treadmill, track or well-known route. After jogging for the first 30 seconds, sprint 30 seconds and jog 30 seconds. Repeat this sequence for the remainder of your run. Or, if on a track, sprint the stretch and jog the curve.

Basic: 1 mile
Intermediate: 2 miles
Advanced: 3 miles

*Want to listen to it or watch it on video? Go to www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com, Guard Fitness, Get Fit, Aerobics, Running Interval Training.

“Be certain to time your sprint drills. That way, you can challenge yourself to sprint for longer periods of time each week.” —SSG Ken Weichert

Push-up interval training
Push-up interval training is where you complete the most push-ups possible in 20-second intervals. Perform the push-ups for 20 seconds and rest 20 seconds. Repeat this sequence for the required amount of time.

Basic: 4 sets of 20 seconds
Intermediate: 6 sets of 20 seconds
Advanced: 8 sets of 20 seconds

Dive Bomber push-up
START: Assume the standard push-up position. Now widen your foot position and point your rear end in the air, positioning your head between your arms.

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. Return to the start position by reversing the steps. Continue until your goal is reached.

Basic: 1–2 repetitions
Intermediate: 3–8 repetitions
Advanced: 9–16 repetitions

*Want to listen to it or watch it on video? Check out www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com, Guard Fitness, Get Fit, Upper Body, Dive Bomber Push-Up.

Uneven push-ups
START: Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back forming a straight line. First place your left hand on a platform 4-12 inches higher than the ground. Look forward and keep your feet together or up to 12 inches apart.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, drop your body straight down by bending both elbows. Slowly return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached. Switch arm positions, continuing until your goal is reached.

Basic: 1 set of 30 seconds (each side)
Intermediate: 2 sets of 30 seconds (each side)
Advanced: 3 sets of 30 seconds (each side)

*Want to listen to it or watch it on video? Go to www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com, Guard Fitness, Get Fit, Upper Body, Uneven Push-Up.

Staggered push-ups
START: Assume a modified push-up position by placing your left arm slightly higher than your left shoulder and your right arm slightly lower than your chest. Bend your left leg at the knee and keep your right leg straight. Balance on your toes or on the balls of your feet.

ACTIONS: Lower your body to the ground slowly by bending at the elbows. Slowly return to the
8-MINUTE ABS

**STRATEGY:**

1. **Flutter kicks**
   - Begin the exercise routine with Flutter Kicks.
   - Continue for 50 seconds.
   - Freeze your legs together for 20 seconds, approximately 12 inches above the ground. Keep your feet flexed.

2. **Straight leg pulses**
   - With both legs together, pulse your legs up and down, from 12 to 18 inches off of the ground for 30 seconds.
   - Freeze your legs together for 20 seconds, approximately 12 inches above the ground. Keep your feet flexed.
   - Raise your legs straight until your feet line up over your hips.

3. **Straight leg drops**
   - Drop your legs down to 12 inches above the ground.
   - Raise your legs straight upward and continue for 50 seconds.
   - Freeze your legs in the upward position.
   - Point your arms toward your toes.

4. **Vertical leg crunches (Dying Cockroach)**
   - Crunch your upper body toward your toes for 60 seconds.
   - Point your arms toward your toes.
   - Drop back slightly and reach over your left thigh.

5. **Box and reach**
   - Reach and point your arms over your left thigh, drop back slightly and reach over your right thigh.

6. **Crunch**
   - Crunch your lower and upper body sections for 30 seconds.
   - Flip over, on your belly, and squeeze your rear end and back muscles. Bend your elbows and tuck them in toward your side and keep your hands level with your shoulders.

7. **Modified back bends**
   - Slowly perform back bends for 30 seconds.
   - Relax into a modified “child’s pose” for 30 seconds.
   - Roll your back up to a seated position.
   - Elevate to your knees and stand up.

**Intermediate:** 1 set
**Advanced:** 2 sets

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**FULL SIT-UPS**

**Intermediate:** Perform the Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA). Rest 20 minutes. Repeat the entire assessment.

**Advanced:** Perform the entire assessment three times, resting 20 minutes between sets.

**Reference:** IET Standardized Physical Training Guide (JAN05).

**Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT)**

**Intermediate:** Perform 2 minutes of push-ups, rest 5 minutes, 2 minutes of sit-ups, rest 5 minutes and run 2 miles.

**Advanced:** Perform 3 minutes of push-ups, rest 10 minutes, 3 minutes of sit-ups, rest 10 minutes and run 3 miles.

**Note:** We challenge you to perform the advanced strategy on week four of this program to achieve best results. Be certain to rest 48-72 hours prior to taking the fitness test for “record” purposes. Some people may need less or more time for their rest period. Try not to exceed 96 hours of rest before taking the fitness test.

**Reference:** FM 21-20 (SEP92), FM 3-22.20 (DEC07), and DA Form 705 (JUN99).

**Equipment Needed:**

None

**Forms Needed:**

DA FORM 705

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**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.

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**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.