Two weight-loss workouts for home or the road

By Ken and Stephanie Weichert

DEAR SGT GAYDOSH,

This story is a superb testimony of how frequent fitness and a well-balanced diet can change an entire life for the better. You did not quit, and the results were that you advanced in your career and in your life overall. You are a great role model for your peers!

We are pairing up your story with a program called “Operation Back to Basics.” It includes two same exercise strategies that help you lose body fat, and increase muscle strength and aerobic endurance. Each exercise includes step-by-step instructions followed by performance level standards.

BEGINNERS who have not worked out in a long time should follow the standards marked “Basic.” Advanced athletes who wish to follow the standards marked “Advanced” may choose to hold a medicine ball, kettlebell, dumbbell or any bodyweight exercises. Beginners may choose to hold a medicine ball, kettlebell, dumbbell or any bodyweight exercises.

We hope that your story moves others as much as it moved us!

HOOAH!

Sgt Ken

Four Russian Twist

Primary Muscles Targeted: Erector Spinae, Obliques, Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus

START: Sit on the ground, knees bent at a 90-degree angle, and heals on the ground, and legs approximately 6 inches apart. Position your arms at chest level, elbows out and knuckles together. Relax your shoulders, maintain a neutral spine and lean back until your torso is at a 45-degree angle with the ground.

ACTIONS: Tighten your abdominal muscles and raise your upper body, reaching your fingers toward your toes. Return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you reach upward, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

Basic: 1-15 repetitions (each side)
Intermediate: 16–30 repetitions (each side)
Advanced: 31–50 repetitions (each side)
Extreme: 50–80 repetitions (each side)

ADVANCED athletes may choose to hold a medicine ball, kettlebell, dumbbell or any kind of light to medium weight in their hands while performing the exercise.
5. Push-up

Primary Muscles Targeted: Anterior and Medial Deltoids, Triceps, Pectorals

START: Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, legs and arms straight.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, lower your body straight down by bending both elbows until your upper arms become parallel with the ground. Return to the start position and repeat. Inhale through your nose as you lower your body, and exhale through your mouth as you return to the start position.

Male standards:
Basic: 10–20 repetitions
Intermediate: 21–40 repetitions
Advanced: 41–60 repetitions

Female standards:
Basic: 2–8 repetitions
Intermediate: 7–20 repetitions
Advanced: 21–60 repetitions
Extremes: 51–80 repetitions, or 10–20 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest

6. Prone Hold

Primary Muscles Targeted: Erector Spinae, Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus, Obliques

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: 61–120 seconds
Extremes: 121–180 seconds

7. Squat

Primary Muscles Targeted: Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius

START: Stand upright, feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing forward and hands at your sides.

ACTIONS: Lower your body by bending both knees until you reach 90 degrees of knee flexion with your hips moving backward as if sitting on a chair. Maintain your weight directly over your heels or mid-foot. While you lower your body, raise your arms upward until level with your shoulders, palms facing inward. Return to the start position position. Continue until your goal is reached. Inhale through your nose as you lower your body, and exhale through your mouth as you return to the start position.

Basic: 10–20 repetitions
Intermediate: 21–40 repetitions
Advanced: 41–60 repetitions
Extremes: 81–120 repetitions, or 41–80 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest

Note: Advanced athletes may choose to hold a medicine ball, kettlebell, dumbbell or any kind of light to medium weight in their hands while performing the exercise.

8. Knee Thrust Drill

Primary Muscles Targeted: Transversus Abdominus, Hip Flexors

START: Assume a guard position with your feet shoulder-width apart, right foot a half step behind the left foot, knees clamped and level with your chin, both feet pointing slightly to your right, knees slightly bent and elbows tucked in at your sides.

ACTIONS: Tighten your abdominal muscles and thrust your right knee upward toward your chest. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and repeat. Exhale through your mouth as you thrust, and inhale through your nose as you return to the guard position.

Basic: 10–20 repetitions (each leg)
Intermediate: 21–40 repetitions (each leg)
Advanced: 41–80 repetitions (each leg)
Extremes: 61–120 repetitions (each leg)

CORE TARGETING PHASE

9. Front Kick Drill

Primary Muscles Targeted: Transverse Abdominus, Hip Flexors

START: Assume a guard position.

ACTIONS: Tighten your abdominals and bring your rear knee up into the "chamber," the ankle should be flexed downward. Pivot your [forward] foot by balancing on the ball of the foot and thrust your rear leg forward at your target, striking with the ball of the foot. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and continue.

Program 2

WARM-UP PHASE

1. Aerobics: Perform 6–8 minutes of aerobics exercises, such as Running in Place, Side-Stretches, Hops ("Jumping Jacks") or High Stairs/Kneels.

2. Stretching: Perform 4–6 minutes of flexibility exercises.

COOL-DOWN PHASE

Perform the flexibility exercises from the Warm-up Phase.

5. Modified Back Bend

Primary Muscles Targeted: Erector Spinae, Obliques, Anterior and Medial Deltoids, Gluteus Maximus

START: Lie down on the front side of your body on a soft, flat surface with arms bent 90 degrees at the elbows, allowed aligned with your shoulders, palms down and feet 12 inches apart.

ACTIONS: Tighten your lower back muscles and slowly arch your lower back, raising your arms, chest and legs off the ground, holding for a few seconds at the highest point. Return to the start position and repeat. Exhale through your mouth as you arch, and inhale through your nose as you lower your body.

Basic: 5–15 repetitions
Intermediate: 6–20 repetitions
Advanced: 41–80 repetitions
Extremes: 81–120 repetitions

PROGRAM 3

WARM-UP PHASE

1. Aerobics: Perform 6–8 minutes of aerobics exercises, such as Running in Place, Side-Stretches, Hops ("Jumping Jacks") or High Stairs/Kneels.

2. Stretching: Perform 4–6 minutes of flexibility exercises.

COOL-DOWN PHASE

Perform the flexibility exercises from the Warm-up Phase.

COOL-DOWN PHASE

Start: Lie down on your back on a soft, flat surface, arms straight and against the sides of your body, palms on the ground. Elevate your legs, and align your feet and knees with your hips, feet flexed. Raise your arms and point your fingers toward your toes. Note: Keep a slight bend in your knees.

ACTIONS: The box and reach drill is a four-count exercise where you reach over the outside of your left thigh with both arms with palms facing your legs, return to the start position, reach over the outside of your right thigh with both arms with palms facing your legs, and return to the start position. Performing all four movements once is one repetition. Continue until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you arch, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

Basic: 5–10 repetitions (each side)
Intermediate: 11–30 repetitions (each side)
Advanced: 31–60 repetitions (each side)
Extremes: 61–120 repetitions (each side)
6. T Push-up
Primary Muscles Targeted: Anterior and Medial Deltoids, Triceps, Pectorals, full body integrated

START: Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, legs and arms straight.

ACTIONS: While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, lower your body by bringing both elbows until the upper parts of your arms becomes parallel to the ground. Return to the start position. Maintain balance, rotate your torso counterclockwise, raise your left arm and point your fingers upward until your body forms a leaning “T.” Return to the start position and repeat the actions, rotating your torso clockwise and raising your right arm. Performing the actions on both sides once is one repetition. Exhale through your mouth as you push up, and inhale through your nose as you lower your body. Note: Do not let your hips sag or arch upward.

Male standards:
Basic: 5–10 repetitions (each side)
Intermediate: 12–20 repetitions (each side)
Advanced: 21–40 repetitions (each side)

Female standards:
Basic: 2–4 repetitions (each side)
Intermediate: 5–9 repetitions (each side)
Advanced: 10–20 repetitions (each side)

7. Lunges
Primary Muscles Targeted: Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius, Hip Flexors

START: Start with your left leg on the ground straight in front of you with your left knee slightly bent. Place your right leg straight behind you, balancing on the ball of your right foot. Your upper body is perpendicular to your right leg.

ACTIONS: Lower your body, both knees bending until your front leg achieves 90 degrees of knee flexion. Maintain your balance in the center. Return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached. Switch sides and continue. Exhale through your mouth as you lower your body, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position. Warning: Do not let your forward knee bend beyond your toes line.

Basic: 5–15 repetitions (each side)
Intermediate: 30–40 repetitions (each side)
Advanced: 45–60 repetitions (each side)
Extreme: 81–120 repetitions, or 45–50 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest (each side)

8. Speed Skater Drill
Primary Muscles Targeted: Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius

START: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent and palms facing inward.

ACTIONS: Shifting your balance to your right, thrust your left leg to the left, several inches, right leg following and crossing behind your body, left arm extending to the left, right elbow bending and hand moving to upper chest, left foot landing on the ground before the right. Land and balance your body on your left leg, arms level with your shoulders. Quickly, switch directions and repeat. Continue until your goal is reached. Performing the actions on each leg once is one repetition. Exhale through your mouth as you push up, and inhale through your nose as you lower your body. Note: Do not let your hips sag or arch upward.

Basic: 5–15 repetitions (each side)
Intermediate: 30–50 repetitions, or 30–40 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest

9. Squat, Push-up and Vertical Jump Drill
Primary Muscles Targeted: Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius

START: Stand upright with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing forward, hands at your sides, and palms facing inward.

ACTIONS: Lower your body, both knees bending until your front leg achieves 90 degrees of knee flexion. Maintain your balance in the center. Return to the start position. Maintain your weight directly over the middle of your feet and heels. Keep your knees aligned with your feet. Bend downward with your arms and place your hands on the ground slightly in front of your feet. Thrust your legs back to a “push-up” position, back and legs forming a straight line, arms straight and head facing forward. Lower your body by bending both elbows until your upper arms are parallel with the ground. Extend your arms and return to the start position. Jump vertically as high as you can, arms extended overhead. As you land on the ground, go immediately to position #1 (squat). Continue until your goal is reached. Inhale through your nose, and exhale through your mouth.

Female standards:
Basic: 2–5 repetitions
Intermediate: 8–15 repetitions
Advanced: 16–30 repetitions
Extreme: 31–50 repetitions, or 15–25 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest

Actions:
A. Squat until your knees bend 90 degrees and hips move back as if sitting on a chair. Maintain your weight directly over the middle of your feet and heels. Keep your knees aligned with your feet. B. Reach downward with your arms and place your hands on the ground slightly in front of your feet. C. Thrust your legs back to a “push-up” position, back and legs forming a straight line, arms straight and head facing forward. Lower your body by bending both elbows until your upper arms are parallel with the ground. Extend your arms and return to the start position. D. Jump vertically as high as you can, arms extended overhead. As you land on the ground, go immediately to position #1 (squat). Continue until your goal is reached. Inhale through your nose, and exhale through your mouth.

Cool-down Phase

Perform the flexibility exercises from the Warm-up Phase.

Equipment needed:
• Basic
• Intermediate, Advanced = none
• Extreme = see each exercise for equipment needs

Nutrition advice:
1. To lose additional body fat, try reducing your intake of breads, pastas, dairy products and sugar. 2. Check with your physician before making any changes to your diet or exercise plan.

The Stamina Stopwatch includes the estimated time it will take to complete each set of the fitness program.

Quick Fix: 1 full set = approximately 20 minutes
Fast and Furious: 2 full sets = approximately 40 minutes

Combat Ready: 3 full sets = approximately 60 minutes

Note: The Warm-up and Cool-down Phases are performed only once.