The Ultimate

# RUN/ALTERNATE AEROBIC APFT Improvement Guide: 

How to Crush Your Run, Swim, Bike, or Walk Event



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## Chapter 1 | Set Your Goals

## RUN AND ALTERNATE AEROBIC EVENTS REQUIREMENTS

Soldiers with permanent medical profiles or long-term temporary profiles who cannot perform the 2-mile run may take one of the
 alternate aerobic events as determined by their commander and medical professional.

The following chart shows the minimum requirements to pass the APFT for the run event and three alternate aerobic events-swimming, cycling, and walking-based on age and gender. There are no points received when the running portion of the APFT is replaced with an alternate event. Soldiers will receive a GO (pass) or NOGO (fail) mark on DA Form 705.

Want to max your score? Learn more about APFT minimum and maximum scores at www.GYH.Tips/APFTScores.


## Chapter 2 | Cut Minutes Without Adding Miles to Your Run

## MIX YOUR WORKOUTS

Mixing your workouts will increase your muscle strength, lung capacity, and muscle mass. Changing up your runs each week will build your speed and endurance much more efficiently than running at the same pace each time.

Check out Guard Your Health's full APFT Run Improvement Guide for tips on setting a training schedule at www.GYH.Tips/RunGuide.

AMP UP YOUR FITNESS BY:


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## PRO TIPS <br> FOCUS ON YOUR RUNNING FORM

Taking time to perfect your running form, from head-to-toe, will not only save you time and energy, but will also spare your body from injuries as you train and during the APFT run.

## Time your breathing

Breathe in for 3 seconds and out for 2 . Repeat.

## Move your arms

Bend arms at the elbow to form a 90-degree angle. Move arms straight, not side to side. Keep wrists straight, and hands loosely cupped.

## Conserve energy

Do not bring knees up too high. Point feet directly forward.

## Avoid Injury

Injuries can set you back and significantly impact your running performance. Avoid getting sidelined with these tips:
GRADUALLY INCREASE YOUR MILEAGE
This will help avoid shin splints or other injuries. A good rule of
thumb is to increase mileage by no more than 10 percent each week.
TAKE TIME TO RECOVER
Rest is important. Take a day off after a really tough run to recover.
RUN SMARTER
Learn tips to run smarter at www.GYH.Tips/RunSmarter.

For the alternate APFT, depending on your age and gender, you will have between 20-26 minutes to swim the 800-yard requirement.

The first step in building swimming endurance is determining the length of your pool. Standard swimming pools are 25 yards. For this reason, pushing off one wall and swimming to the other end is known as a 25 , or one lap. In a standard pool, you will need to do 32 laps to meet the APFT requirement.

## © MAKE A SPLASH WITH THIS INTERVAL WORKOUT:



00
Get into the pool and slowly swim 12 laps. Take a 10 -second break.


Swim hard, like you're in a race, for eight laps. Take a 30-second break.



If you're a more advanced swimmer, go fast and furious for 12 laps instead of eight. No matter if you're swimming eight or 12 laps, you can take a one-minute break every two laps if needed.

## PRO TIPS

MASTER YOUR SWIMMING FORM

## Keep your head down

Keep your head in the water, in line with your body. This not only cuts down on drag, but also relieves strain on your neck.

## Make each breath count

Exhale deeply before taking a quick, full breath every six strokes. Turn your head no more than 90 degrees out of the water.

Turn your feet into fins
Your legs should be fully extended, scissoring through the water, while your feet remain relaxed.
This form will cause your feet to snap at the downstroke of each kick, adding power and helping twist your torso along the way.

## VARY YOUR INTENSITY

Depending on your age and gender, you will need to complete the 6.2-mile bike ride within 24-34 minutes. If you are using the stationary-cycle ergometer, it will have a resistance setting of 2-kilo pounds. You can work your way up to a 6.2-mile bike ride by cycling 30-40 minutes, four to five times a week.

You can increase your speed by doing interval workouts-a series of low-to-high intensity workouts with periods of rest. Do the interval workout two or three days per week. By pushing yourself with short periods of intensity, you will force your body to quickly adapt and grow stronger.

## EXAMPLE: LOW-TO-HIGH INTENSITY WORKOUT

1

Ride at an easy pace for 5-10 minutes to warm up your legs and muscles.

2

Shift into a higher gear, or add resistance, and pedal at a slower, harder rate.

3

Ride hard for 15 minutes in the higher gear, and then do 7 minutes of easy spinning before riding hard again for another 15 minutes.


# PRO TIPS <br> STRATEGIES FOR CYCLING FASTER AND FARTHER 

## Check your form

Make sure your bike is properly fitted and that you maintain correct form on the bike by pulling your stomach in, lengthening your torso, and keeping your chest slightly raised while riding. For more information on proper cycling posture, visit www.GYH.Tips/CyclingPosture.

## Pace yourself

Save your strength by riding at a moderate pace to start, then build to a faster pace.

## Focus on your legs

Let your legs do all the work, keeping your upper body as still as possible.

## INCREASE YOUR STAMINA

Depending on your age and gender, you will have 34-41.5 minutes to complete the 2.5 -mile walk.


## PRO TIPS <br> BEFORE YOU TAKE OFF wALKING

## Focus on your posture

Stand tall. Keep your head up, stomach in, and shoulders relaxed.

## Choose the right shoes

Fit and flexibility are important. Visit www.GYH.Tips/RightShoes for tips on picking the right workout shoes.

Also make sure your shoes are laced properly. Learn more at www.GYH.Tips/ShoeLaces.

## Stride naturally

With your toes and knees pointed straight ahead, try to land on your heel and roll your weight forward for each step.

## TIPS FOR TEST DAY

Test day can be nerve-wracking, but don't let your anxiety get in the way of all your hard work. Ease your pre-test anxiety by getting a good night's sleep and eating the right foods the day before, and the day of your test.


For examples of what and when to eat before your next APFT, check out this helpful guide at www.GYH.Tips/APFTFood.

Also, be sure to check out Guard Your Health's Ultimate APFT Week-Of Prep Guide. Visit www.GYH.Tips/7DaysAPFT for tips and tricks on how to eat, sleep, and prepare during the final week before your APFT.

Get the APFT scores you've always wanted with Guard Your Health's fitness app, Guard Fit. Download it from
 the Google Play store or go to www.GYH.Tips/GuardFit.


[^0]:    DISCLAIMER: Preparation for the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) can be strenuous. You should consult a trained medical professional before you begin any strenuous exercise program, before making any changes in your diet and/or physical activity levels, and before adopting any of the information contained in this guide. This is especially true if you have or suspect that you may have heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, or any other medical conditions. If you feel faint or dizzy at any time while performing physical training, stop immediately and seek medical evaluation. The United States Government and any service member, civilian, or contractor employed by the United States Government disclaims any liability, personal or professional, resulting from the misapplication of any training procedure, technique, or guidance described in this guide. This guide is for informational purposes only, and does not constitute medical advice or guidance. It is also not meant to replace guidance provided by your physician or a trained medical professional or fitness instructor.

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[^1]:    4 Use or application of the information contained on this page is subject to the disclaimer on the first page of this guide.

