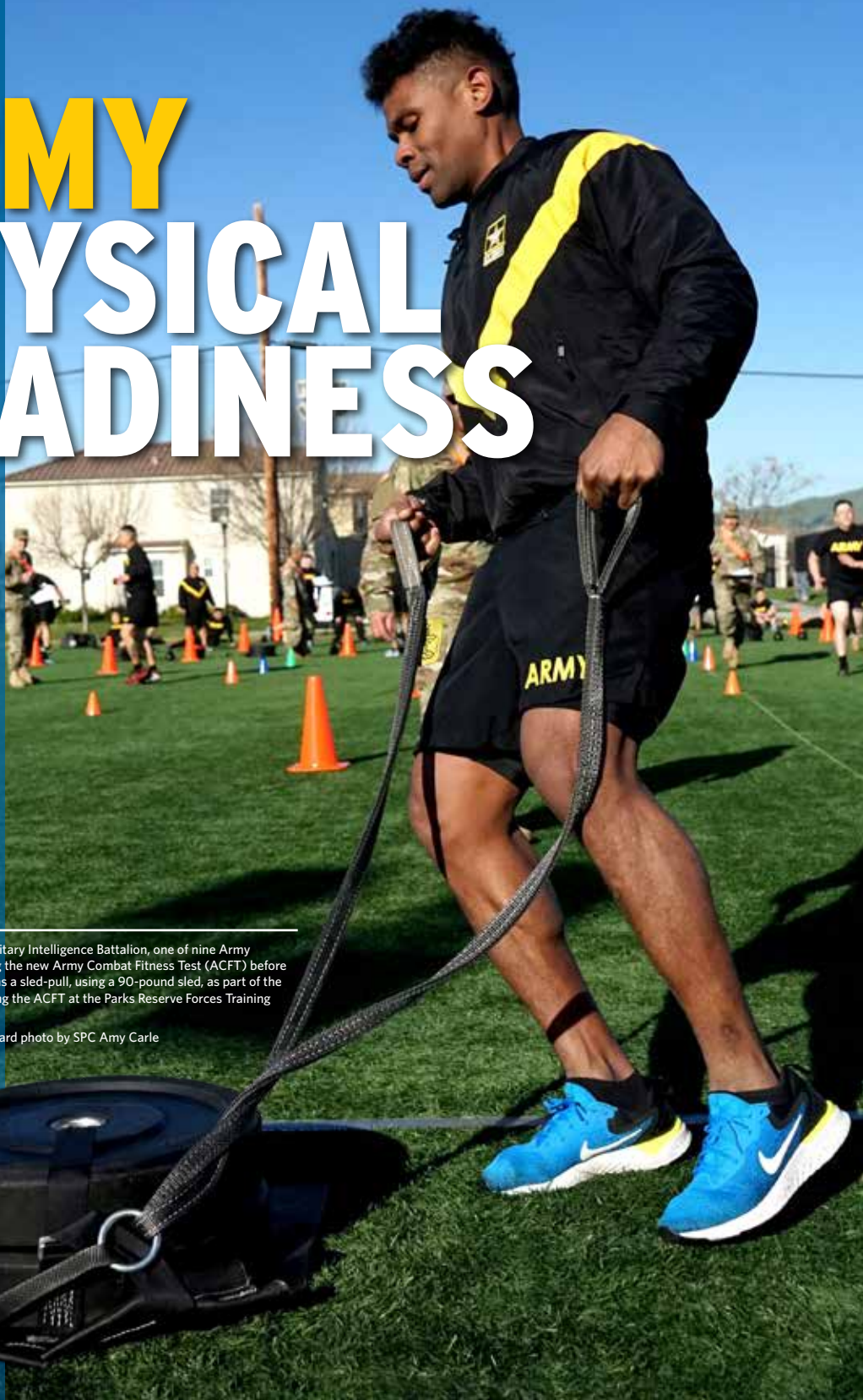


ARMY PHYSICAL READINESS

A Soldier from the 223rd Military Intelligence Battalion, one of nine Army National Guard units piloting the new Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) before it is release in 2020, performs a sled-pull, using a 90-pound sled, as part of the sprint-drag-carry event during the ACFT at the Parks Reserve Forces Training Area in Dublin, California.

California Army National Guard photo by SPC Army Carle



THE NEW STANDARD OF FITNESS

THE ARMY COMBAT FITNESS TEST

By STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Replogle

After nearly 40 years of serving as the standard for determining Soldier fitness, the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) is being retired.

Beginning in October of 2020, all Army Soldiers will be required to take the new gender- and age-neutral Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT). This six-event readiness assessment will replace the three-event APFT.

ACFT is designed to provide a broader measurement of a Soldier's physical fitness. MG Malcolm Frost of the Center for Initial Military Training said the ACFT will help determine the level to which a Soldier will be effective in combat. While APFT focused on muscular and aerobic endurance, the ACFT will focus on combat readiness, measuring individual capacity in all areas of fitness including strength, power, speed and agility.

The overhaul of the Army's fitness test comes on the heels of the 2028 Army vision statement, in which Secretary of the Army, Dr. Mark T. Esper, stressed the need for Soldiers to be physically fit and mentally tough in order to fight and win in high-intensity conflict.

THE SIX COMPONENTS OF THE NEW PHYSICAL TEST ARE:

1. STRENGTH DEADLIFT

The deadlift event is similar to the one found in the Occupational Physical Assessment Test (OPAT) for new recruits. It is meant to assess lower body strength. Soldiers will deadlift between 120 to 420 pounds three times in five minutes. This lift replicates picking up ammunition boxes, a wounded battle buddy, supplies or other heavy equipment.

2. STANDING POWER THROW

This event requires tossing a 10-pound ball overhead and backward as far as possible. Three minutes are given for a practice throw.

The graded throw must be completed in two minutes. This throw measures the muscular explosive power needed to lift oneself, or a fellow Soldier, over an obstacle or to rapidly move across uneven terrain.

3. HAND-RELEASE PUSH-UPS

This test starts with a traditional push-up, then when in the down position, the arms are moved outward like a T and then back in to do another push-up. These push-ups demonstrate a Soldier's ability to push a vehicle when it is stuck or push away during evasive maneuvers. These alternative push-ups are meant to assess the type of upper body strength needed to push away during evasive maneuvers.

4. SPRINT/DRAW/CARRY

In this multi-step dash, Soldiers will have four minutes to complete a sprint, drag a 90-pound sled, run a lateral shuffle, carry two 40-pound kettle bells and then complete a second sprint. Spanning 25 meters, the dash runs five times back and forth and simulates pulling a battle buddy out of harm's way, moving quickly to take cover, or carrying ammunition to a fighting position or vehicle.

5. LEG TUCK

Similar to a pull-up, in this event Soldiers will lift their knees up to their elbows as many times as possible in two minutes. This test measures core muscle strength.

6. 2-MILE RUN

The single holdover from the APFT, the format of the 2-mile run remains unchanged.

According to MG Frost, Soldiers will continue to wear physical training uniforms, rather than combat uniforms or body armor as had been proposed in the past. The time requirement will be a maximum of 50 minutes and minimum scoring ranks will be military occupational specialty (MOS)-dependent.

Unlike the APFT, the ACFT includes no plan for alternate events. Soldiers may be evaluated for disability on an individual basis.

To help units prepare for the ACFT, the Army is developing a certification and training program for all graders – specifically for Master Fitness Trainers (MFTs). MFTs will aid unit leadership in minimizing and mitigating Soldier injury during the transition period. ●

A Soldier carries two 40-pound kettlebell weights during a pilot for the new Army Combat Fitness Test.

U.S. Army photo by Sean Kimmons

PT TIPS—UPPER BODY WORKOUT

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Replogle

HAND-RELEASE PUSH-UPS: As many as possible in 3 minutes



- Start on the floor with your hands slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Keep your legs fully extended and feet together. Keep abdominals and lower body tight. Elbows should be at a 45-degree angle.
- Release your hands and feet briefly from contact with the ground.
- Immediately return your hands and feet to the ground and forcefully push up.
- Return to starting position.

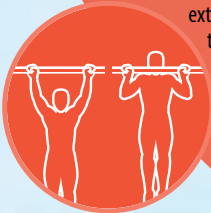
STANDING POWER THROW: 2-3 tosses in 3 minutes



- Grasp a 10-pound medicine ball with both hands at hip level.
- Prepare to throw by bending at the knees and lowering the medicine ball almost to the ground.
- When ready to throw, bend at the knees, lean slightly forward at the hips while lowering the medicine ball almost to the ground. As you begin to stand, toss the medicine ball from an underhanded position over your head.
- Both feet should remain in contact with the ground throughout the entire movement.

PULL-UPS: As many as possible

- Grab the bar with a shoulder-width overhand grip.
- Make sure your arms are completely straight and your feet are off the ground.
- Pull yourself up until your chin clears the bar and your chest is near the bar.
- Be sure to actively contract your back by pulling through your elbows (not wrists) while keeping your eyes forward.
- Lower your body until your shoulders and arms are fully extended to return to starting position.



Maintaining physical fitness is a constant for Army Soldiers. A proper exercise program not only increases Soldier and unit readiness, but can also enhance quality of life, improve productivity, and bring about positive physical and mental change. Soldiers working to sustain a healthy exercise regimen may enjoy incorporating these upper body exercises into their next workout. ●

CHAIR DIPS: As many as possible in 2 minutes

- Hold onto the edge of your chair and slide your butt off the seat.
- Holding yourself up with arms straight, lower your body, bending your arms until your elbows are at a 90-degree angle.
- Hold for 2 seconds.
- Push up until your arms are straight.
- Hold for 2 seconds.
- Return to starting position.



REVERSE PLANK: Hold for 1 minute

- Sit on the floor with your legs extended in front of you.
- Place your palms on the floor slightly behind and outside your hips.
- Press into your palms and lift your hips and torso toward the ceiling.
- Squeeze your butt and thighs as you hold the position.



SPC Kevin Maxey, a Human Resources Specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment, 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, completes the pull-up portion of the French Commando pre-evaluation test at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

Arkansas Army National Guard photo by SPC Victoria Eckert

PT TIPS — LOWER BODY WORKOUT

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Replogle

Without a doubt, one thing Soldiers are sure to do is a lot of walking. To protect the body from potential injuries that result from prolonged walking and other related activities, a solid lower body workout plan is essential. The lower body acts as the base of support as you walk, run and jump. Regular lower body exercise increases bone strength, improves balance and stamina, decreases the odds of injury to knees and hips and reduces the risk of falling.

As a follow-up to the upper body workout plan shared last issue, power up with these lower body exercises during your next workout. ●

SQUATS: As many as possible in 2 minutes

- Stand straight with your feet hip-width apart.
- Lower your body by pushing your hips back and bending your knees, sinking into your heels without bending the knees past the toes.
- While lowering your body, raise the arms forward and above the head, keeping the spine straight.
- Pause.
- Lift up and return to the starting position, then repeat.



DEADLIFT: 3 reps in 5 minutes

- Stand with feet hip-width apart, knees slightly bent and a weight by each foot (or a single bar in front of both feet).
- Hinge at the hips with a slight bend in the knees to lower your body.
- Grab each weight with your arms kept straight.
- Push the buttocks out while keeping the back flat. Your torso should be almost parallel to the floor.
- Keeping your core tight, push through the heels to stand up straight, keeping the weights close to the shins while pulling up.
- Pause at the top, squeeze the buttocks then slowly lower the weight along the shins.



Ssg David Immler, a recruiting and retention noncommissioned officer with the Missouri National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion, measures a recruit's performance during the strength deadlift - one of four events included in the Occupational Physical Assessment Test.

Missouri Army National Guard photo by CPL Samantha J. Whitehead

LUNGES:
As many as possible in 2 minutes

- Step forward with one leg.
- Lower hips until both knees are at a 90-degree angle.
- Be sure the front knee is directly above the ankle and the back knee is not touching the ground.
- Push up through the thighs and hips to return to the starting position.
- Switch legs and repeat.



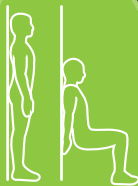
KETTLEBELL SWING:
10 sets of 10 reps with 1-minute rest between

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart with a kettlebell about a foot in front of you on the ground.
- Bend at the waist and grasp the kettlebell handle with both hands, keeping the palms facing the body and the torso nearly parallel to the ground.
- Pull the shoulders down and back, bracing the core before beginning to swing.
- Lift the kettlebell and swing it between your legs, keeping both knees slightly bent, the back flat and neck straight.
- Forcefully drive the hips forward to propel the kettlebell forward and up.
- Control the kettlebell's momentum, without pulling it up and without allowing it to swing higher than the shoulders.
- Allow the kettlebell to swing back down and back through the legs, continuing to control the momentum by keeping the core engaged. Progress to the next rep in a single, fluid motion.



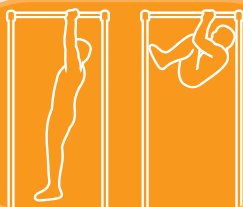
WALL SIT:
Hold for 1 minute

- Press your back against a wall
- Spread the feet shoulder-width apart, about 2 feet in front of you.
- Slide down the wall until the knees are bent at a 90-degree angle.
- Keep the shoulders, upper back and the back of head against the wall.
- Keep both feet flat on the ground.
- Hold the position for 1 minute.
- Return to the starting position.



PT TIPS — TOTAL-BODY WORKOUT

BY STAFF WRITER Ruth Ann Replogle



LEG TUCK: As many repetitions as possible in 2 minutes

Hang from a pull-up bar with feet parallel to the ground, then pull the knees up to meet the elbows. Return to starting position and repeat.

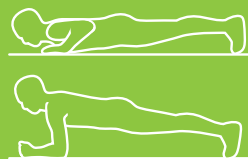
REVERSE CRUNCHES: As many repetitions as possible in 2 minutes

Start on the back with knees bent, arms at sides and palms facing the ground. Bend the legs up to a 90° angle keeping the feet together. Move the knees toward the chest while rolling the pelvis and raising the hips off the ground. The knees should be above the face when in the finishing position. Lower the hips and then knees back to the starting position.



PLANK: Hold for 1 minute. Repeat as many times as possible

Face down on the ground in push-up position. Lean on the forearms, squeeze the glutes and abs and raise the body off the floor while balancing on the tips of your toes. Be sure to keep the body parallel to the floor. Do not arch the back or raise the buttocks above the head. Keep knees slightly bent, being careful not to lock or hyperextend them. Keep the neck and spine steady by looking at a single spot on the ground about a foot beyond your hands. Lower the body back to the starting position.

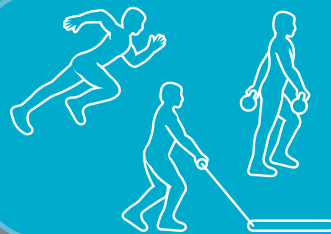


Total-body workouts allow you to build strength and flexibility faster than targeted workouts alone. Full-body exercises call for complex, multi-joint movements that simultaneously engage several muscle groups. For example, while bicep curls may be a sure-fire ticket to the gun show, chin-ups will target the same muscle group, while also working the back and abs.

Whether your goal is building strength and speed or shedding pounds to become compliant with Army physical fitness standards, increasing the complexity of your exercise movements can result in greater muscular and cardiovascular fitness in a comparatively shorter amount of time. ●

SPRINT-DRAG-CARRY: 5 times in 4 minutes

Start by lying in the prone position, then stand up and sprint 25 meters out and back. Take the first lap as a sprint, the second dragging a sled, the third running a lateral shuffle, the fourth carrying two 40-pound kettlebells and finally, the last as a sprint.



BURPEE: As many repetitions as possible in 2 minutes

Stand with arms over the head. Lower the body into a squatting position, until able to place your hands on the ground in front of you. Kick the feet back so you are in push-up position. Do one push-up. Bring the feet back to squatting position, stand up and jump into the air with arms reaching overhead.





Oregon Army National Guard's SGT Dane Moorehead of the 82nd Brigade Troop Command, high-crawls to shore in full battle gear as part of the Omaha Beach event during the 2017 Oregon Best Warrior Competition at Camp Rilea, Ore.
Oregon Army National Guard photo by SFC April Davis

PHYSICAL READINESS is Functional Fitness

Source: Army Public Health Center

Strength. Endurance. Mobility. These are three traits that are key to a Soldier's physical effectiveness and, on a larger scale, their success in the U.S. Army.

Physical readiness is the ability to meet the physical demands of any combat or duty position, accomplish the mission, and continue to fight and win.

The Army's Physical Readiness Training (PRT) system creates a daily opportunity to build the valuable soldiering skills of strength, power, speed and agility required to help Soldiers meet their mission. PRT is rooted in established principles of exercise science designed to build the Soldier Athlete and includes training activities that directly support warfighting tasks within the full spectrum of operations. As a result, the program is essential to individual, unit and force readiness.

Army PRT is guided by three principles of readiness training:

- Precision: ensures all PRT activities are executed using proper technique in order to reduce injury risk
- Progression: gradually increases the intensity and duration of PRT activities to allow the body to properly adapt to the stresses of training
- Integration: includes a variety of training activities (such as conditioning, climbing and movement drills) in the program to achieve a balanced development of strength, endurance and mobility

Deployed Soldiers have identified that the most important tasks related to physical readiness involve:

- Acquiring and engaging targets
- Conducting individual movement techniques in full combat gear
- Walking long distances under extreme conditions in full combat gear
- Sending and receiving communications during physical exertion

Functional Fitness

The Army's physical training doctrine includes training for functional fitness. Functional fitness training uses drills, exercises or activities that are specific to movements, skills and physical demands needed for a given task. For example, performing single leg squats, lunges, crunches and medicine ball throws requires the physical skills needed to react to man-to-man contact. Functional fitness is composed of strength, endurance and movement skills (agility, coordination and balance), which will physically equip Soldiers for their missions and reduce the risk of injury.

Shoot. Move. Communicate.

Army PRT incorporates three components of training:

- Strength: the ability to overcome resistance
- Endurance: the ability to sustain activity
- Mobility: the functional application of strength and endurance for movement proficiency

PRT is designed to:

- Minimize injuries commonly sustained in fitness training
- Prepare Soldiers for the Army Physical Fitness Test
- Train using activities that will increase skills related to warrior tasks and battle drills (such as jumping, crawling, lifting and negotiating obstacles)
- Use aerobic (cardio) and anaerobic (lifting and sprinting) exercises to optimize performance
- Include a four-phase training cycle to move Soldiers from recovery-from-deployment (or extended absence from unit PRT) to deployment and/or combat readiness
- Include a reconditioning program for Soldiers recovering from injury

For more information on the PRT system or to download training materials and/or apps, visit ArmyPRT.com/downloads. Watch PRT videos at [YouTube.com/user/ArmyPhysicalFitness](https://www.youtube.com/user/ArmyPhysicalFitness). ●



Command Sergeant Major of the Army National Guard CSM John F. Sampa joins the Soldiers of the 223rd Military Intelligence Battalion and waits for the signal to begin performing hand-release push-ups during an Army Combat Fitness Test at the Parks Reserve Forces Training Area in Dublin, California.

California Army National Guard photo by SPC Amy Carle

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