
West Point



Fact Sheet

How to physically prepare for Cadet Basic Training

The purpose of this article is to assist you in preparing for the physical challenges of Cadet Basic Training (CBT), the first six weeks of your West Point experience. In conjunction with your current fitness program, this article will provide you with an overview of the physical requirements of CBT and several strategies to prepare for the many physical aspects of the Cadet Basic Training experience.

In CBT, you will be required to exhibit fitness in the five components of physical fitness. Your cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition will be challenged through the daily physical training sessions, foot marches (hiking with a backpack) and obstacle courses.

For developmental purposes, you will be tested both at the beginning and at the end of Cadet Basic Training on three components of physical fitness through the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). The APFT consists of 2 minutes of push-ups (muscular strength and endurance), 2 minutes of sit-ups (muscular endurance) and a 2-mile run (cardiorespiratory endurance). Additionally, you will be tested in a 150-yard swim test to identify your level of swimming expertise. The better you prepare for

the daily physical training sessions and the two required testing events, the more enjoyable the experience will be for you.

Physical Preparation

Daily Physical Training

A typical physical training session will consist of a warm-up, 15 minutes of continuous circuit exercises (calisthenics followed by timed sets of push-ups and sit-ups) and a 30-minute run where running groups are organized based on running ability. To prepare for the rigors of the daily physical training, preparation of overall aerobic fitness and muscular strength and endurance (particularly of the upper-body and abdominals) is essential.

Aerobic Fitness Preparation

You should become involved in an activity/program that closely simulates calisthenics (e.g. high impact aerobics). Set the goal of maintaining continuous movement for at least 25 minutes within this program. If you are not interested in an aerobics program, then design your own program using several calisthenics exercises that involve large muscles (e.g., jumping jacks, jumping rope,

running in place). Change exercises every few minutes and structure your calisthenics program to run continuously for 25 minutes. If you cannot move continuously for 25 minutes in either the aerobics program or the calisthenics program, work to achieve 15 minutes of continuous movement then increase your exercise time by 2 minutes each week until you can sustain continuous movement for 25 minutes.

Running is another aerobic activity that a new cadet must prepare for. You should be capable of running 4 miles at a minimum of 8:00 per mile pace. If you cannot achieve these times, perform the following: determine how long it takes you to run 4 miles, calculate your pace per mile, then subtract 5-10 seconds from your mile pace. You should run this pace for at least the first three miles of your four mile runs, with the ultimate goal of completing all four miles in the 7:30/mile pace. You should run 4 miles two times each week, with a session of 400-meter intervals between each 4-mile session. There should be at least 48 hours rest between these hard aerobic workouts.

The interval training is a method to improve your running speed. To calculate your initial interval time,

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take your current mile time, divide by 4 (Average 400-meter time), subtract 5-10 seconds, and that will be your 400-meter interval training time. For interval training, run this time then jog for a lap in twice the determined time. Repeat this work and rest bout for 4-6 x 400-meter bouts. As your running ability improves, decrease your mile pace by 5 seconds bi-weekly. As conditioning improves with interval training, increase the total number of intervals to 6-8 x 400-meter bouts and as further improvements occur from interval training, reduce the rest time in 10-second increments monthly.

Training on hills will help prepare you for running at West Point. Almost every run route contains large hills that can be difficult to conquer for those who are used to running only on flat surfaces. Prepare yourself by running on routes that have hills to ensure you are ready for the challenging terrain at West Point.

Muscular Strength and Endurance Preparation

For both push-ups and sit-ups you should practice each three times per week, with at least 48 hours rest between workouts. A recommended workout consists of multiple sets of push-ups and sit-ups interspersed with rest periods. The workout should begin with a brief warm-up (slow jogging with stretching of the muscles of the upper body). All push-ups are the same except with different variations of hand placement and feet elevation. For normal push-ups, the start position begins with the hands shoulder width apart, elbows fully extended, body straight and the feet together or up to 12 inches apart (Figure 1A). To complete a repetition, lower your body, maintaining a straight back, until the upper arm is parallel with the ground (Figure 1B), then return to the start position.

Normal Push-up

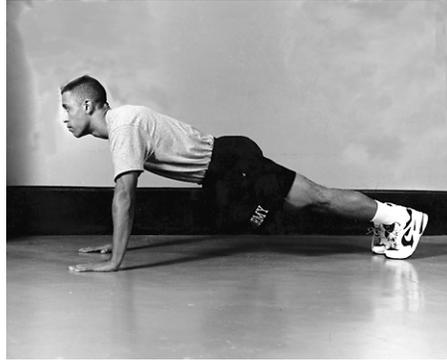


Figure 1A -- Up or Starting Position

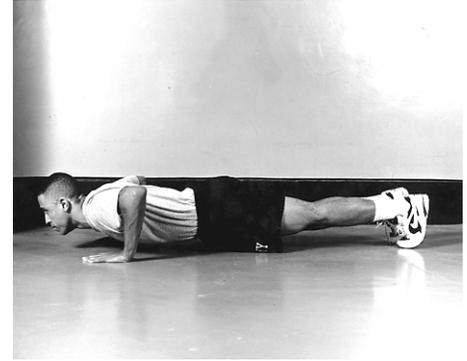


Figure 1B -- Down Position

Feet Elevated Push-up



Figure 2A -- Up or Starting Position



Figure 2B -- Down Position

Wide Out Push-up



Figure 3A



Figure 3B

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The recommended sets follow:

Push-up type	Standardized Spacing	Work interval	Rest interval
Normal	(Figure 1A&B)	30 sec.	20 sec.
Feet elevated	(Figure 2A&B)	30 sec.	20 sec.
Wide outs	(Figure 3A&B)	30 sec.	20 sec.
Normal	(Figure 4A&B)	20 sec.	30 sec.
Close	(Figure 5A&B)	20 sec.	30 sec.
Modified	(Figure 6A&B)	20 sec.	30 sec.

Normal Push-up



Figure 4A



Figure 4B

Close Push-up

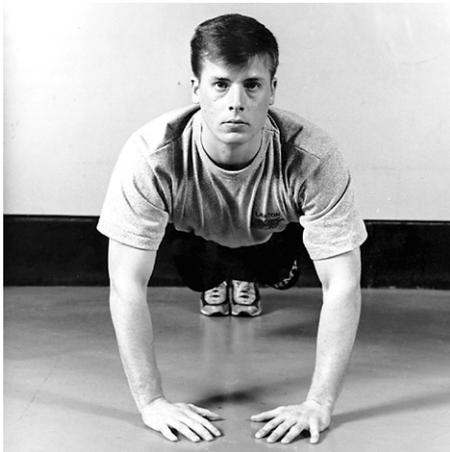


Figure 5A



Figure 5B

Modified Push-up

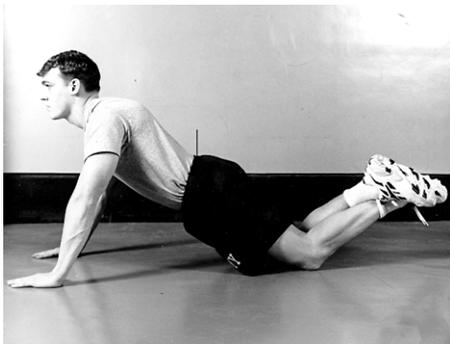


Figure 6A

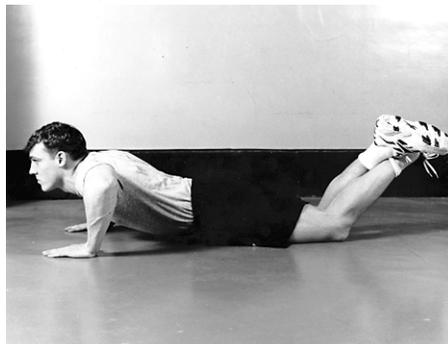


Figure 6B

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For regular sit-ups, the start position is with the back flat on a mat or some soft surface, knees bent at a 90 degree angle with your feet flat on the mat (back, buttocks and feet are all on the same surface), and fingers interlocked behind your head throughout the exercise (Figure 7A). Someone must hold the top of your feet during the exercise or you can secure your feet under a fixed surface. To complete a repetition, raise your upper body forward by curling your torso to the vertical position (back of the neck forms a straight vertical line with your hips, Figure 7B) and then, lower your body until your shoulder blades make contact with the floor (Figure 7A).

A sample abdominal workout is listed below. If you cannot complete this initial workout, reduce the work intervals and increase the rest intervals between sets. As you improve, increase the work interval and either allow the rest interval to remain the same or decrease it gradually. A recommended rate of progression is to increase the work interval by 5 seconds per week for each push-up or sit-up type with the rest interval remaining the same. This progression should be applied approximately every two weeks with muscular strength and endurance improvement. Once your work interval is 40 seconds for the majority of push-up exercises and 50 seconds for each type of sit-up, decrease the rest interval by 5 seconds bi-weekly.

Variation of the normal sit-up and recommended sets follow:

Regular Sit-up



Figure 7A



Figure 7B

Twisting Sit-up

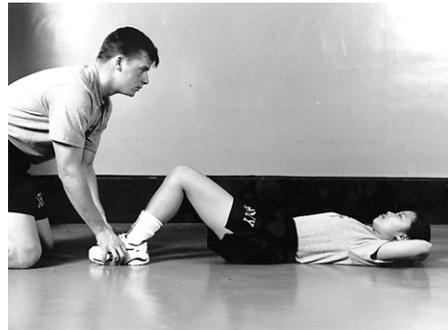


Figure 8A



Figure 8B



Figure 8C

<u>Sit-up type</u>	<u>Standardized Spacing</u>	<u>Work Interval</u>	<u>Rest interval</u>
Regular Sit-up*	(Figure 7A&B)	45 sec.	20 sec.
Twisting Sit-Up*	(Figure 8A-C)	45 sec.	20 sec.
Curl-up*	(Figure 9A&B)	30 sec.	30 sec.
Abdominal Crunch*	(Figure 10A&B)	30 sec.	30 sec.

*Controlling your rate of descent on sit-ups is important in improving your sit-up performance.

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Army Physical Fitness Test

The Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) consists of 2 minutes of regular push-ups, 2 minutes of regular sit-ups, and a 2-mile time run on flat terrain. As stated earlier, you will perform the APFT as a new cadet at the beginning and end of Cadet Basic Training. To improve your overall fitness level before you report to West Point, you should use the recommended guidelines for daily physical training improvements as outlined in this handout. Additionally, you should consider the following points as you prepare to excel specifically on the APFT.

Step 1 — establish correct form. You will be graded and trained to perform all of the calisthenics exercises with technically correct form. (View the exercise example photos for the ideal technique.) Speed is not nearly as important as learning to

perform all of the exercises correctly.

Step 2 — Train push-ups and sit-ups with timed sets allowing 20-30 seconds rest in between varied sets. Focus on your form. Again, be sure to allow for 48-72 hours rest in between training sessions.

Step 3 — Establish a baseline 2-mile run time. Then, select your goal time and run 8 x 1/4 mile intervals with each quarter mile being 5 seconds faster than the goal time. Insert a 1/4 mile jog in between each 1/4 mile run interval for a brief rest period during the workout. Then, be sure to run two other times a week at 70 to 80 percent maximum heart rate (MHR = 220 - your age) for 20 to 30 minutes.

Step 4 — Every 2 to 3 weeks, give yourself a practice APFT. After a warm-up, execute 2 minutes of push-ups, rest for 10 minutes, 2 minutes of sit-ups, rest for 10 minutes, and then

run a two-mile run for time. In order to at least pass the APFT, men 17 to 21 years old will need to perform a minimum of 42 push-ups, 53 sit-ups, and run 2 miles in 15:54. Women 17 to 21 years old will need to perform 19 push-ups, 53 sit-ups, and run 2 miles in 18:54. In order to excel on the test, your performance goals should be at least 60 push-ups and 65 sit-ups for men, or 30 push-ups and 65 sit-ups for women, with a 2-mile run time of 14:30 for men and 17:30 for women.

It is important to remember to apply the principles of FITT to your individualized physical fitness program. Train with regular frequency (F) throughout the week - 2 - 3 times with ample rest in between workouts. Vary the intensity (I) of your workouts - don't always push to the maximum, but cycle your intensities. Workout for an ample amount of time (T), but not so long to create injury or over-training - perhaps 30 minutes to an hour.

Lastly, for well-rounded development, incorporate different types (T) of training into your workout. If you are a lifter, run and do muscular endurance training more often. If you are a runner, balance your endurance work with some safe strength training exercises (lifting). Progressively (slowly) increase the number of sets, repetitions, or weight you use in your program over time for best results. Finally, overload your muscles by pushing yourself to work just a little harder than you did the last time. Importantly, be sure to get clearance from your physician before beginning any exercise program.

Foot Marching

During CBT you will be required to foot march in the following progressive sequence:

- 1) 3 mile walk with load bearing equipment (harness with gear) and Kevlar helmet.
- 2) 3 mile walk with load bearing equipment (harness with gear), Kevlar helmet, 10 pound rucksack (backpack), and weapon.
- 3) 6 mile foot march with load

Curl-up

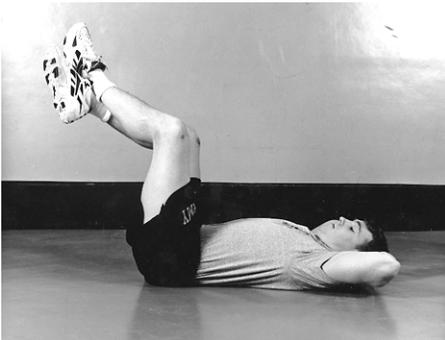


Figure 9A



Figure 9B

Abdominal Crunch

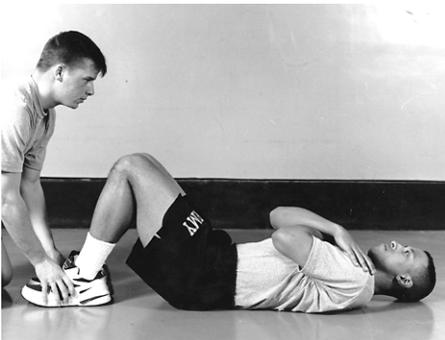


Figure 10A

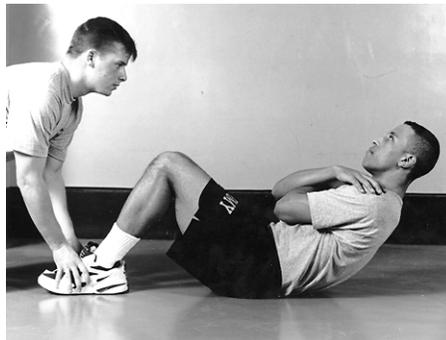


Figure 10B

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bearing equipment (harness with gear), Kevlar helmet, 10 pound rucksack (backpack), and weapon.

4) 8 mile foot march with load bearing equipment (harness with gear), Kevlar helmet, 10 pound rucksack (backpack), and weapon.

5) 12 mile foot march with load bearing equipment (harness with gear), Kevlar helmet, 10 pound rucksack (backpack), and weapon.

6) 15 mile foot march with load bearing equipment (harness with gear), Kevlar helmet, 10 pound rucksack (backpack), and weapon.

In order to train for these foot marching requirements, it is recommended that you footmarch 3 miles with a 10 pound pack once a week at a 4km an hour pace. Then, increase either the distance, weight (load), or pace by no more than 10% a week. Be sure to increase only one of these three training variables at a time. There is no need to go beyond a 25-pound load, faster than a 5 km an hour pace, or longer than 8 miles.

To begin developing calluses on your feet and to minimize blisters, you should wear proper foot gear for hiking/marching. Use a military boot other than the Cochran ("jump boot") style. Ensure that the boot has a moderately padded insole. Wear a thin, smooth, synthetic-fabric sock (poly propylene or nylon) underneath a thicker wool or cotton sock. The thin sock will adhere to your foot, wick moisture away from your skin, and absorb a majority of the friction coming from the wool sock and the boot. The thicker sock provides additional padding.

Swim Testing

During CBT you will also be assessed on your ability to swim 150 yards to classify you into a swim group as part of your plebe (freshman) physical education program. Your goal should be to swim 150 yards in 3 minutes or less using any stroke you desire. If you cannot swim, it is recommended that you take steps now to learn basic strokes. The ability to swim is not required upon admission to West Point;

however, all cadets at the Military Academy must successfully complete the plebe swim course in order to graduate from the Academy.

Sample Program Structures

The intent of this article is not to convince you to quit all other physical training programs and use only those outlined here. If you are involved in an organized program that stresses cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular strength and muscular endurance, continue the program and augment it with aspects addressed in this article that are not a part of your current program. The focus population of the program structure in this fact sheet is for those who do not have a program and are searching for physical preparation ideas.

The sample program presented in Table 1 is conducted 6 days per week with three days for aerobic fitness and three days for muscular fitness. On the aerobic fitness days (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays) an aerobics class or continuous calisthenics exercise should be done followed by a 4-mile run or an interval training session. On the muscular fitness days, (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) both the push-up and sit-up program should be done followed by very light jog (2-3 miles) or a foot march at the recommended pace with the prescribed weight (perhaps once or twice every two weeks).

Each session should include a warm-up of light calisthenics and stretching of the muscles that will be worked in the session. If you are a real beginner, you should go easy the first 2 weeks in order to introduce your body to the program and give yourself ample time to fully recover from muscular soreness. Then, every 2nd or 3rd week you should complete an APFT (push-ups, sit-ups and 2-mile run). This will give you a working assessment of your ability to perform the three test events.

For people who are at an advanced stage of training, a more aggressive workout plan that incorporates weight

training is presented in Table 2. The concept is to incorporate the calisthenics routine around a basic weight-training program. This program would only work push-ups and sit-ups twice a week; however, the workout would be supplemented with various weight training exercises for your chest, shoulders, arms, back, and legs. The danger of this program is overtraining. You must ensure that you allow enough rest between workout sessions to allow your body to fully recover. If you frequently feel fatigued, have frequent headaches, cannot sleep, feel faint or dizzy, or lose motivation to exercise you may be overtraining and need to back off. If you use common sense and the FITT fitness principles correctly, you can continue to improve even if your current state of physical fitness is relatively high.

Summary

Your training efforts for CBT should start no later than 8 weeks prior to reporting to the United States Military Academy. The preparation programs described in this article offer recommendations for those who do not know where to start or desire to improve their current state of physical fitness. Early and adequate preparation will provide you with the confidence and physical abilities necessary to successfully participate in the CBT fitness program.

Finally, the keys to success in any program that you decide to utilize are to start early, be consistent, and ensure the focus of the program prepares you for all of the physical requirements you will encounter at USMA. While the programs recommended in this article provide the means to improve your current level of physical fitness, all of these programs need to be tailored to your individual needs. Be sure you get clearance from a physician before beginning any exercise program. Good luck!

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Table 1: Sample Beginner/Intermediate Fitness Improvement Program

Week 1					
Monday PU1: 25/15* PU2: 25/15 PU3: 25/20 PU4: 20/20 PU5: 20/20 SU1: 45/20 SU2: 45/20 SU3: 30/30 SU4: 30/30	Tuesday AER: 15 min RUN: 4 mi. 8:00/mi	Wednesday PU1: 25/15 PU2: 25/15 PU3: 25/20 PU4: 20/20 PU5: 20/20 SU1: 45/20 SU2: 45/20 SU3: 30/30 SU4: 30/30	Thursday INT: 6x400m** 1:55/.25mi Rec: 3:50 RUN: 4 mi. 8:00/mi	Friday PU1: 25/15 PU2: 25/15 PU3: 25/20 PU4: 20/20 PU5: 20/20 SU1: 45/20 SU2: 45/20 SU3: 30/30 SU4: 30/30	Saturday AER: 15 min Run: 4 mil 8:00/mi
Week 2					
Monday PU1: 25/15 PU2: 25/15 PU3: 25/20 PU4: 20/20 PU5: 20/20 SU1: 45/20 SU2: 45/20 SU3: 30/30 SU4: 30/30	Tuesday AER: 17 min RUN: 4 mi. 8:00/mi	Wednesday PU1: 25/15 PU2: 25/15 PU3: 25/20 PU4: 20/20 PU5: 20/20 SU1: 45/20 SU2: 45/20 SU3: 30/30 SU4: 30/30	Thursday INT: 6x400m 1:55/.25 mi Rec: 3:50 AER: 17 min	Friday APFT: 2 min. PU 2 min. SU FM: 5 mi 2.5 mi/hr 15 lbs.	Saturday AER: 17 min RUN: 4 mi. 8:00/mi
Week 3					
Monday PU1: 30/15 PU2: 30/15 PU3: 30/20 PU4: 30/20 PU5: 30/20 SU1: 50/20 SU2: 50/20 SU3: 35/30 SU4: 35/30	Tuesday AER: 19 min. RUN: 4 mi. 7:50/mi	Wednesday PU1: 30/15 PU2: 30/15 PU3: 30/20 PU4: 30/20 PU5: 30/20 SU1: 50/20 SU2: 50/20 SU3: 35/30 SU4: 35/30	Thursday INT: 7 7x400m 1:50/.25 mi Rec: 3:40 AER: 19 min	Friday PU1: 30/15 PU2: 30/15 PU3: 30/20 PU4: 30/20 PU5: 30/20 SU1: 50/20 SU2: 50/20 SU3: 35/30 SU4: 35/30	Saturday AER: 19 min. RUN: 4 mi 7:50/mi
Week 4					
Monday PU1: 30/15 PU2: 30/15 PU3: 30/20 PU4: 30/20 PU5: 30/20 SU1: 50/20 SU2: 50/20 SU3: 35/30 SU4: 35/30	Tuesday AER: 21 min RUN: 4 mi. 7:50/mi	Wednesday PU1: 30/15 PU2: 30/15 PU3: 30/20 PU4: 30/20 PU5: 30/20 SU1: 50/20 SU2: 50/20 SU3: 35/30 SU4: 35/30	Thursday INT: 7x400m 1:50/.25 mi Rec: 3:40 AER: 21: min	Friday APFT: 2 min. PU 2 min. SU FM 5 mi. 2.5 mi/hr 15 lbs.	Saturday AER: 21 min RUN: 4 mi. 7:50/mi

* PU1: 25/15 indicates that you do 25 seconds of push-ups followed by 15 seconds of rest.

**INT: Run 6 x 400 meter intervals at a pace of 1:55 and recover for 3 minutes 50 seconds. During the recovery you should be jogging.

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Week 5					
Monday PU1: 40/15 PU2: 40/15 PU3: 40/20 PU4: 35/20 PU5: 35/20 SU1: 50/15 SU2: 50/15 SU3: 35/25 SU4: 35/25	Tuesday AER: 23 min RUN: 4 mi 7:40/mi	Wednesday PU1: 40/15 PU2: 40/15 PU3: 40/20 PU4: 35/20 PU5: 35/20 SU1: 50/15 SU2: 50/15 SU3: 35/25 SU4: 35/25	Thursday INT: 8x400m 1:45/.25 mi Rec: 3:30 AER: 23 min	Friday PU1: 40/10 PU2: 40/10 PU3: 40/15 PU4: 35/15 PU5: 35/15 SU1: 50/10 SU2: 50/10 SU3: 35/20 SU4: 35/20	Saturday AER: 23 min RUN: 4 mi 7:40/mi
Week 6					
Monday PU1: 40/15 PU2: 40/15 PU3: 40/20 PU4: 35/20 PU5: 35/20 SU1: 50/15 SU2: 50/15 SU3: 35/25 SU4: 35/25	Tuesday AER: 25 min RUN: 4 mi 7:40/mi	Wednesday PU1: 40/15 PU2: 40/15 PU3: 40/20 PU4: 35/20 PU5: 35/20 SU1: 50/15 SU2: 50/15 SU3: 35/25 SU4: 35/25	Thursday INT: 8x400m 1:45/.25m I Rec: 3:30 AER: 25 min	Friday APFT: 2 min. PU 2 min. SU FM: 6 mi. 2.5 mi/hr 20 lbs.	Saturday AER: 25 min RUN: 4 mi 7:40/mi
Week 7					
Monday PU1: 40/10 PU2: 40/10 PU3: 40/15 PU4: 35/15 PU5: 35/15 SU1: 50/10 SU2: 50/10 SU3: 35/20 SU4: 35/20	Tuesday AER: 27 min RUN: 4 mi 7:30/mi	Wednesday PU1: 40/10 PU2: 40/10 PU3: 40/15 PU4: 35/15 PU5: 35/15 SU1: 50/10 SU2: 50/10 SU3: 35/20 SU4: 35/20	Thursday INT: 8x400m 1:40/.25 mi Rec: 3:20 AER: 27 min	Friday PU1: 40/10 PU2: 40/10 PU3: 40/15 PU4: 35/15 PU5: 35/15 SU1: 50/10 SU2: 50/10 SU3: 35/20 SU4: 35/20	Saturday AER: 27 min RUN: 4 mi 7:30/mi
Week 8					
Monday PU1: 40/10 PU2: 40/10 PU3: 40/15 PU4: 35/15 PU5: 35/15 SU1: 50/10 SU2: 50/10 SU3: 35/20 SU4: 35/20	Tuesday AER: 27 min RUN: 4 mi. 7:30/mi	Wednesday PU1: 40/10 PU2: 40/10 PU3: 40/15 PU4: 35/15 PU5: 35/15 SU1: 50/10 SU2: 50/10 SU3: 35/20 SU4: 35/20	Thursday INT: 8 x 400m 1:40/.25 mi Rec: 3:20 AER: 27 min	Friday APFT: 2 min. PU 2 min. SU FM: 7 mi 2.5 mi/hr 25 lbs.	Saturday AER: 27 min RUN: 4 mi 7:30/mi

Table 1 Legend:

PU 1: Elevated normal	SU 3: Curl-up
PU 2: Wide outs	SU 4: Crunch
PU 3: Close grips	INT: Intervals
PU 4: Normal	Rec: Recovery
PU 5: Modified	AER: Aerobic training
SU 1: Regular	FM: Foot march
SU 2: Twisting	

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Table 2: Sample Advanced Fitness Improvement Program

Sunday	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday
Run according to program recommended on pages 1-2,5	<p>Chest Shoulder Triceps</p> <p>Bench press -3 sets @ 70% 1 rep max 8-12 reps</p> <p>Push-ups As outlined on pages 2-3</p> <p>Military Press -3 sets 8-12 reps</p> <p>Tricep Pushdown -3 sets 8-12 reps</p> <p>Run according to workout on pages 1-2, 5</p>	<p>Back Biceps</p> <p>Pull-ups -3 sets as many as possible</p> <p>Lat Pulldown -3 sets 8-12 reps</p> <p>Dumbbell curls -3 sets 8-12 reps</p> <p>Sit-up workout as listed on pages 4-5</p> <p>Run according to workout on pages 1-2, 5</p>	<p>Legs</p> <p>Squats -3 sets 8-12 reps</p> <p>Leg curls -3 sets 8-12 reps</p> <p>Calf raises -3 sets 10-15 reps</p> <p>Run according to workout on pages 1-2, 5</p>	<p>Calisthenics workout as described on pages 1-2</p> <p>Push-up/Sit-up workout as listed on pages 2-5</p>

NOTE: Tuesdays and Thursdays are active rest days or are open for training in other areas specific to your needs. As always, be wary of overtraining.

