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**Maximize your APFT score**, pages 16-17  
By SGM Robert S. Rush

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# Maximize your APFT score

*By SGM Robert S. Rush*

Many soldiers can increase their physical fitness beyond their present level if they're willing to concentrate on deficiencies instead of just trying to run faster.

The individual PT program revealed here was developed for soldiers with little time to devote to PT.

The program was validated using 40 students in an ROTC program. Students exercised three times per week for 20-25 minutes, not including the run. The following results were achieved: after one month the average score for students increased by 15-20 points from an average of 192 to 212; at the end of three months, students went from their average of 212 to 243; the second three months saw average scores climb to 267 with the low score 242 and the high score 300. Since this is an individual program, it is designed to fit each soldier's physical ability. The program takes a soldier gradually to a higher level of physical fitness.

Take a look at your last APFT. From your scores you can determine where the starting point for your Individual Fitness Program should be. If you haven't taken an APFT in the last three to four months, you may want to conduct an assessment of your physical abilities before beginning.

To conduct a self-assessment, do as many correct pushups and sit-ups as you can in a one-minute period, and then run as hard as you can for a timed one-half mile. Multiply your pushup and sit-up scores by 1.25 to find an entry point into the charts. Multiply your one-half mile time by four.

## The Program

If done correctly, the program will bring you to muscle failure. This exercise regime is designed to be done every other day, as your muscles need from 24 to 48 hours to recover from hard usage.

To get your starting numbers, look at the charts. The numbers along the top of the charts are the number of pushups or sit-ups you performed. Follow the number down the row to give you the number of repetitions for each exercises you're to begin with in your individual program.

### Pushup and Sit-up Improvement

1. Regular pushups: Do three sets with one-minute rests between sets. Form is important. If you can't do the pushups properly, go to your knees and continue until you've finished the sets. After three workouts, add three pushups to each set. (Example: you start with 14 pushups on Wednesday, The next Wednesday you go to 17 pushups.)

2. Regular sit-ups: Do three sets with one-minute rests between sets. If you can't do all the sit-ups properly, lower the angle of your legs until they're almost parallel to the ground. After three workouts, add three sit-ups to each set. (Example: you start with 11 sit-ups on Wednesday. The next Wednesday you go to 14 sit-ups.)

3. Diamond pushups: Put your hands together under your chest in a diamond shape. Perform the pushups. Go to your knees if necessary. Add one diamond after every three workouts.

4. Wide-arm pushups: Place hands as far apart as possible. Perform the pushups. Go to your knees if necessary. Add one wide-arm after every three workouts.

5. Crunches: See separate chart.

6. Turn and bounce: Hold arms parallel to the ground. Palms facing up. The exercise is an eight-count movement at a slow cadence. Pivot slowly at the waist to the right for four counts and then to the left for four counts. Add two turn and bounces after every three workouts. (Editor's note: Since this program was developed in 1993, studies have shown that, during the turn and bounce, exaggerated or excessive bouncing at the turn can be harmful. The turn and bounce done more like a *turn and stretch* is much more effective.)

7. Flutter kicks: Put your hands under your buttocks while laying flat

APFT Number of Sit-ups																
Number	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85
Sit-ups	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34
Crunches	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Flutter Kick	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30
Leg Spreaders	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30

APFT Number of Push-ups																
Number	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85
Push-ups	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34
Close-hand	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Widearm	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Turn & Bounce	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30

# SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE and ATTITUDES

on your back. Lift your feet six to eight inches off the ground to start. Begin by lifting legs in sequence six to 18 inches. Keep legs slightly bent to reduce the strain on your back. One repetition equals four counts. Add two flutter kicks after every three workouts.

8. Leg spreaders: Put your hands under your buttocks while laying flat on your back. Lift your feet six to eight inches off the ground to start. Begin by spreading legs 18-30 inches and then bringing them back together. Keep legs slightly bent to

reduce the strain on your back. One repetition equals four counts. Add two leg spreaders after every three workouts.

## Running

Use the running chart to increase your aerobic and anaerobic stamina and to improve your two-mile time. Enter the table using your two-mile time from your APFT or your time from your self-assessment (half-mile times four). For example, your run time is 14:15. Enter the chart at +14. This program is designed to be run every other day, although there is no harm in running more often.

Sprint day: Enter the sprint portion of the chart at your run time now. Do four sprints of each of the distances, alternating your sprints between the distances. Begin with the lower distance for your speed. Attempt to beat the time listed. Rest one minute before you run the longer sprint. Rest two minutes between the longer and shorter sprints. If you feel you are not properly stressed (and as you develop your wind) decrease the amount of rest time between sprints. For those with run times of +17 to +19, when the 220-yard sprint goal is met, move up to the one-quarter mile (440 yards) and one-half mile (880 yards) runs.

Fast run day: Begin with the lower distance for your speed. When you beat the time for the distance, move to a longer distance in the same row. When you surpass the time for the time for the distance at the bottom of

the row, move to the left one row maintaining the same distance. When you move one row to the left on the fast run, also move your sprint goals to the same row.

Long and slow run: Run at least 20 minutes for a good cardio-vascular workout. Run for time during this session, not necessarily distance.

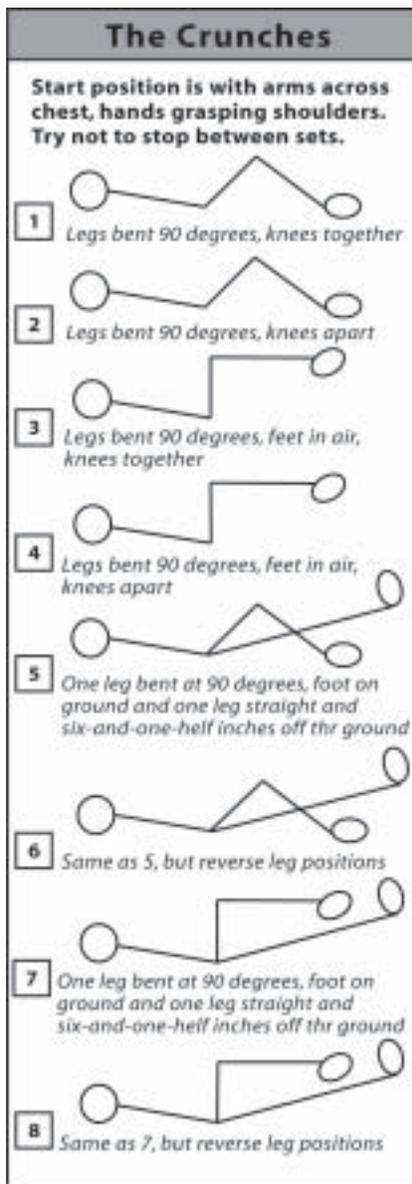
## Using the Program

The program is designed to have very little paper overhead. Each soldier is responsible for his or her pace in the program, which has the additional benefit of exercising the soldier's self discipline.

One technique to start the program would be to give each soldier a packet and have the program explained after an APFT or diagnostic test. Organized PT would still be conducted, but with each soldier doing the amount of exercise determined by his or her specific program. As a check, periodic diagnostic tests could be used to review progress.

As with any program, results are directly attributable to the amount of effort expended. Soldiers who can't keep up on the battlefield are losses just as much as casualties suffered through enemy action. We, as NCOs, are charged with not letting this happen.

*(Rush was the Army advisor to the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Camp Edward, ME, when this article was written. Reprinted from our Summer '93 issue.)*



APFT Run Times								
minutes	+12	+13	+14	+15	+16	+17	+18	+19
220 yards	—	—	—	—	—	:48	:51	:48
440 yards	1:07	1:15	1:23	1:30	1:37	1:45	1:52	2:00
880 yards	2:45	3:00	3:15	3:30	3:45	4:00	4:15	4:30
Fast Run	—	—	—	—	—	+00-4:00	+01-4:15	+02-4:30
	2 mi 11:30	2 mi 12:30	2 mi 6:30	2 mi 7:00	2 mi 7:30	1 mi 8:00	1 mi 8:30	1 mi 9:00
	2 mi 14:30	2 mi 15:30	2 mi 13:30	2 mi 14:30	2 mi 15:30	2 mi 16:30	2 mi 17:30	2 mi 18:30
Long and Slow Run	Run at least 20 minutes, for time and not distance							