

# START HIKING™

START Fitness™ Prepares for Operation Summit Whitney™



By SSG Ken and Stephanie Weichert

SSG Weichert and Stephanie,

**RECEIVED**

Hello. I wanted to start by saying, "thanks for what you two do for the Guard!" My entire unit uses your articles for PT every month. Your knowledge in health and fitness is fantastic, and your workouts are easy to follow! Keep the information coming! I wondered if you could give some tips on hiking and camping! With the summer coming along, I thought that we could use some information on workouts that would help us with outdoor activities. Thanks!

—John S., California Army National Guard

John,

Hello and thanks for reading! We are thrilled that the members of your unit are utilizing the workouts from GX! Thank you for asking about hiking. June happens to be National Hiking Month. START Fitness™ uses hiking as a seasonal staple for our physical fitness program. During the warmer months, we regularly perform 13–15-mile hikes and add in at least one expedition each year.

Exercises that prepare the body to endure the rigors of hiking are a phenomenal way to add variation to your fitness routine. Based off of your comments, we are going to give you a workout that will prepare you for the great outdoors! Get ready to climb!

—SGT Ken™

**Towering at 14,496.811 feet** above sea level, Mount Whitney is the tallest peak in the continental United States. START Fitness™ members endure several hikes, fitness tests and an expedition every year. Some excursions are six to eight hours in length, while some are a few days. The advanced expeditions require extra fitness training where some training days are endured with a loaded backpack, first aid and land navigation training and a bit of survival training.

The following is just one of the many physical fitness routines we endured while preparing for Mount Whitney. Not all exercises are photographed. For additional photographs and explanation, please refer to past issues of GX at [gsonline.com/past\\_issues](http://gsonline.com/past_issues):

## WARM-UP PHASE:

**1. Running in place** or 50 side-straddle-hops  
(Jumping Jacks): 5–10 minutes

**2. Rotation exercises:** 2 minutes

**3. Stretching:** 5–7 minutes

It is advised that you repeat steps 1–3 prior to step 4 in order to be properly warmed-up.

**4. High steps:** 2 minutes

**Action:** jogging in-place with your hands at least above your shoulders and your knees as high as your hips.

## BUILD-UP PHASE:

**5. Flutter kick**

- Basic: 10–20 seconds
- Intermediate: 21–40 seconds
- Advanced: 41–60 seconds

Remember that the lower your legs are positioned, the more back muscles you engage. Keep your back flat against the floor with your arms supporting the sides of your body. If you experience discomfort in your lower back, raise your legs higher. Keep your feet flexed at all times.

**6. Crunches on the ground,** or stability ball crunches

- Basic: 1–15 repetitions
- Intermediate: 15–30 repetitions
- Advanced: 30–60 repetitions

**7. Superman/woman**

You can check out standard form instructions in GX 4.1.

- Basic: 1–6 repetitions
- Intermediate: 7–12 repetitions
- Advanced: 13–24 repetitions

**8. Pull-ups**

**Start position:** Place your hands on a pull-up bar, arms shoulder-width apart, and palms facing away from your body.



**Action:** Pull your body upward until your nose reaches the bar. Return to the start position and repeat the steps. If you cannot perform a complete pull-up, simply hang on the bar for 45 seconds with your arms fully extended with a very slight bend in each elbow.

- Pre-basic (hanging on the bar): 45 seconds
- Basic: 1–2 repetitions
- Intermediate: 3–6 repetitions
- Advanced: 7–12 repetitions

**9. Push-ups**

You can check out standard form instructions in GX 4.1.

- Basic: 1–10 repetitions
- Intermediate: 11–30 repetitions
- Advanced: 31–80 repetitions

## MUSCLE TARGET PHASE:

**10. Squats with tubing** (pictured in GX 3.5)

**Start Position:** Grasp the handles of the Xertube,



raise your hands head-high, elbows bent, palms forward, both feet evenly on the tubing hip-width apart. Stand erect with a neutral spine.

**Action:** Slowly lower your body, with your hips moving back as if sitting on a chair. Maintain your weight directly over the heels or mid-foot. Lower to approximately 90 degrees of knee flexion. Pause, then slowly return to the start position. If lumbar curvature cannot be maintained, lower less than 90 degrees without causing discomfort in your knee joints. Warning: Do not let your knees bend beyond your toe line.

Bring it on! Try extending your arms straight in front of you while you lower yourself to the 90-degree point with your palms down and arms level with your shoulders. Bend your elbows and return your palms to the start position as you raise your body. Now you've added upper body resistance!

**Bulk up:** 3 sets of 8 repetitions each with heavy resistance  
**Sculpt down:** 3 sets of 15–30 repetitions each with light to moderate resistance

**11. Forward walking lunges** (uphill, if possible)  
 Remember to keep your shoulders over your hips at all times so that your forward knee will not go past your toe line.

- Basic: 10–30 seconds
- Intermediate: 31–75 seconds
- Advanced: 76–120 seconds

**12. Basketball drills**

**Action:** lateral lunges in one direction by lunging slightly forward, returning to the standing position, and jumping straight up in the air as if to perform a jump shot.

- Basic: 10–20 seconds (one side)
- Intermediate: 21–40 seconds (one side)
- Advanced: 41–60 seconds (one side)

**13. Speed skating drill**

**Action:** Imagine that you are on a pair of skates. Perform lateral hops to the left and right. Keep your knees bent, shoulders low and hands free.

- Basic: 10–20 seconds
- Intermediate: 21–40 seconds
- Advanced: 41–60 seconds



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**14. Ski jumpers** (modified)

**Action:** lateral hops with your feet together and hands on your hips.

- Basic: 10–20 seconds
- Intermediate: 21–40 seconds
- Advanced: 41–60 seconds

**15. Charlie Chaplains**

**Action:** While in the ski jumper position, simply raise your body by extending feet. Slowly lower your heels to the ground and repeat.

- Basic: 10–20 seconds
- Intermediate: 21–40 seconds
- Advanced: 41–60 seconds

**SUMMIT PHASE:**

**16. Bend, squat, thrust and jump**

**Start position:** Stand erect with a neutral spine.

**Action:** Lower your body into a squat position, with your hips moving back as if sitting on a chair. Maintain your weight directly over the heels or mid-foot. Lower to approximately 90 degrees of knee flexion. Place your hands on the ground and shoot your legs out straight into the push-up position. Quickly return to the Squat position and jump. Repeat the steps quickly without compromising form.

- Basic: 1–5 repetitions
- Intermediate: 6–15 repetitions
- Advanced: 16–30 repetitions

**17. Climbing stairs or on a Stairmaster** (with, or without a backpack on): 8–10 minutes  
 “HOOAH! Now do it, again!”

- Basic: 1 full set = approximately 25 minutes\*
  - Intermediate: 2 full sets—approximately 50 minutes\*
  - Advanced: 3 full sets—approximately 75 minutes\*
- \*Depending on initial warm-up time, repetitions per set and rest periods

**COOL-DOWN PHASE:**

**18. Rotation exercises:** 2 minutes

**19. Stretches:** 5–10 minutes

Suggestion: Try the seated trunk stretch.

**Start position:** Sit on the ground with your legs straight and arms at your sides. First, bend the right leg 90 degrees at the knee and move your foot over your left knee. Balance your body by placing your right hand on the ground behind you. Extend your left arm straight in the air.

**Action:** Exhale and bring your left arm downward by bending your left elbow. Balance your left elbow across the right side of your right knee. Extend your left arm and grasp your left leg. Twist your trunk slightly clockwise and look behind

you. Breathe normally, in through your nose and out through your mouth and hold for 30 seconds. Change positions and stretch.

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During the last Mount Whitney expedition two teams of 12 each did their best to summit and finish 22 miles of steep terrain and high elevation. A few members in each team experienced altitude sickness at Base Camp (12,002 feet) and returned to the trailhead. In the end, two teams of nine each made it to the summit—one team performing the expedition in two days while the other in one day. All remarked that the extra fitness training prior to the expedition was necessary and helped develop teamwork. It was the teamwork that made it possible for them to achieve their absolute best while enduring some of the highest trails in the United States!

For more hiking information, such as what we packed for this expedition and what type of gear that we used, simply email [sgtken@startfitness.com](mailto:sgtken@startfitness.com). HOOAH! **GX**

**UNIFORM REMARK:** SSG Ken Weichert is pictured in the Army Combat Uniform (ACU) without the ACU Shirt in order to show you what muscles are employed during each exercise.

**WARNING:** Always seek the advice and guidance of a qualified health provider with any questions or concerns you may have prior to commencing a fitness program. This article should not be relied on or substituted for professional medical diagnosis or treatment. The exercises presented are for suggestion only. Participate at your own risk. Stop if you feel faint or short of breath.

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