



# OPERATION BACK TO BASICS (OPB2B)

Two weight-loss workouts for home or the road By Ken and Stephanie Weichert

SGT KEN,

RECEIVED

At my APFT in 2007, I weighed in at 201 pounds and 49 percent body fat. I could barely squeeze out 10 push-ups and 15 sit-ups.

After Advanced Individual Training, it got worse. I took up smoking and ate too much. As my health sank, I was losing my desire to be a good Soldier.

Even so, my commander had hope for me. He thought I'd make a good leader if I could get it together, and encouraged me to apply for Officer Candidate School. I passed, but barely, because of my poor fitness. I knew I had to get better.

I turned to your column in GX. The advice helped me implement fitness into my daily life. I walked. Then ran. I weight-trained. I did your exercises as best I could.

In March 2008, when I started Officer Candidate School, I weighed in at 169, 31 percent body fat. But I still needed to do more, in order to ship to phase one.

Thanks to your program, on my last APFT during OCS, I knocked out over 50 push-ups, over 70 sit-ups, and ran my 2-mile in 16 minutes flat. I went from being an overweight specialist to a second lieutenant who has a desire to lead by example. My cadre at OCS called me a motivation and an inspiring leader.

Because of your articles, I've improved my career, my health and my life. Thanks.

Respectfully,

**2LT Allison Gaydosh**  
New Jersey Army National Guard  
150th Engineering Company



DEAR 2LT GAYDOSH,

SENT

Your story is a superb testimony of how frequent fitness and a well-balanced diet can change an entire life for the better. You did not quit, and the results were that you advanced in your career and in your life overall. You are a great role model for your peers!

We are pairing up your story with a program called Operation Back to Basics. It includes the same exercise strategies that helped you lose body fat, and increase muscle strength and aerobic endurance. Each exercise includes step-by-step instructions followed by performance-level standards.

Beginners who have not worked out in a long time should follow the standards for "Basic." Advanced athletes might want to follow the standards marked "Advanced." There is also a category for people somewhere in the middle—"Intermediate." For those of you looking for an added challenge, we threw in a category called "Extreme."

Operation Back to Basics includes two different fitness programs. Neither requires equipment, and both can be performed anywhere. Best of all, completing one set of either of the two programs will take less than 20 minutes.

We have also included a Back to Basics fitness calendar. By following our workout calendar, you can lose over four pounds in 14 days. If you or your friends need a good meal plan, use our "Savory Survival Guide" from [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness/healthy](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness/healthy).

Operation Back to Basics should keep you on track and help anyone else achieve the same successes. As my drill sergeant once said, "Total fitness takes more than a gym!"

Thanks for sharing your story with us. We recognize your unwavering courage and unlimited intestinal fortitude. We hope that your story moves others as much as it moved us!

**HOOAH!**  
SGT Ken



## PROGRAM 1

### WARM-UP PHASE

**1. Aerobics:** Perform 6–8 minutes of aerobics exercises, such as Running in Place, Side-Straddle-Hops ("Jumping Jacks") or High Steps/Knees.

**2. Stretching:** Perform 4–6 minutes of flexibility exercises.



Operation Pushing for Points made it possible for me to improve my APFT scores enormously—150 points overall. I was having problems passing the APFT before, now I pass it easily! Thank you, SGT Ken and Stephanie, for all that you do! Hooah!"

> SPC Jose Ramirez, Florida Army National Guard

### CORE TARGETING PHASE

#### 3. Vertical Leg Crunch

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus

**START:** Lie down on your back on a soft, flat surface, arms straight and against the sides of your body, palms on the ground. Elevate your legs and align your feet and knees with your hips, feet flexed. Raise your arms and point your fingers toward your toes. *Note:* Keep a slight bend in your knees.

**ACTIONS:** Tighten your abdominal muscles and raise your upper body, reaching your fingers toward your toes. Return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you reach upward, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

**Basic:** 1–15 repetitions  
**Intermediate:** 16–40 repetitions  
**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions  
**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions



#### 4. Russian Twist

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Erector Spinae, Obliques, Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus

**START:** Sit on the ground, knees bent at a 90-degree angle, and heels on the ground, and legs approximately 6 inches apart. Position your arms at chest level, elbows out and knuckles together. Relax your shoulders, maintain a neutral spine and lean back until your torso is at a 45-degree angle with the ground.

**ACTIONS:** Twist your torso at the trunk of your body to the left until your elbow reaches the ground, and twist your torso to the right until your elbow reaches the ground. Twist slow and continuously. Performing the actions on each side once is one repetition. Continue until goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you twist, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position. *Note:* If you experience discomfort in the lower back, stop and readjust the position.

**Basic:** 1–10 repetitions (each side)  
**Intermediate:** 11–30 repetitions (each side)  
**Advanced:** 31–50 repetitions (each side)  
**Extreme:** 40–50 repetitions, with legs elevated (each side)

*Note:* Advanced athletes may choose to hold a medicine ball, kettlebell, dumbbell or any kind of light to medium weight in their hands while performing the exercise.

“Before using the program I could only do 20 push-ups, 28 sit-ups and a 19:48 two-mile run time. After 30-days of using Pushing for Points I achieved 41 push-ups, 40 sit-ups and a two-mile run time of 16:58. I went from 200 pounds to 188. SGT Ken and Stephanie’s fitness programs ROCK!”  
—SSG Joe LeChuga, California Army National Guard

## TRANSITION PHASE

### 5. Push-up

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Anterior and Medial Deltoids, Triceps, Pectorals

**START:** Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, legs and arms straight.

**ACTIONS:** While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, lower your body straight down by bending both elbows until your upper arms become parallel with the ground. Return to the start position and repeat. Inhale through your nose as you lower your body, and exhale through your mouth as you return to the start position.

Male standards:

**Basic:** 10–20 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 21–40 repetitions

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions

**Extreme:** More than 80 repetitions, or 40–50 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest



Female standards:

**Basic:** 2–6 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 7–20 repetitions

**Advanced:** 21–50 repetitions

**Extreme:** 51–80 repetitions, or 10–20 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest



### 6. Prone Hold

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Erector Spinae, Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus, Obliques

**START:** Balance your body on your forearms, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, back and legs straight, chin tilted upward slightly.

**ACTIONS:** Tighten your abdominal muscles and hold this position until your goal is reached. Breathe naturally.

**Basic:** 10–30 seconds

**Intermediate:** 31–60 seconds

**Advanced:** 61–120 seconds

**Extreme:** 121–180 seconds



### 7. Squat

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius

**START:** Stand upright, feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing forward and hands at your sides.

**ACTIONS:** Lower your body by bending both knees until you reach 90 degrees of knee flexion with your hips moving backward as if sitting on a chair. Maintain your weight directly over your heels or mid-foot. While you lower your body, raise your arms upward until level with your shoulders, palms facing inward. Return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached. Inhale through your nose as you lower your body, and exhale through your mouth as you return to the start position. *Note:* Do not let your knees bend beyond your toes.



**Basic:** 10–20 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 21–40 repetitions

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions

**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions, or 40–50 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest

*Note:* Advanced athletes may choose to hold a medicine ball, kettlebell, dumbbell or any kind of light to medium weight in their hands while performing the exercise.

## AEROBIC CONDITIONING PHASE

### 8. Knee Thrust Drill

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Transverse Abdominus, Hip Flexors

**START:** Assume a guard position by standing with your feet shoulder-width apart, right foot a half-step behind the left foot, fists clenched and level with your chin, both feet pointing slightly to your right, knees slightly bent and elbows tucked in at your sides.

**ACTIONS:** Tighten your abdominals and thrust your right knee upward toward your chest. Return to the guard position and continue until goal is reached. Switch leg positions and repeat. Exhale through your mouth as you thrust, and inhale through your nose as you return to the guard position.



**Basic:** 10–20 repetitions (each leg)

**Intermediate:** 21–40 repetitions (each leg)

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions (each leg)

**Extreme:** 50–60 repetitions on a kicking shield or heavy bag (each leg)



### 9. Front Kick Drill

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Transverse Abdominus, Hip Flexors

**START:** Assume a guard position.

**ACTION:** Tighten your abdominals and bring your rear knee up into the “chamber”; the ankle should be flexed downward. Pivot your forward foot by balancing on the ball of the foot and thrust your rear leg forward at your target, striking with the ball of the foot. Return to the guard position

and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and continue

## PROGRAM 2

## WARM-UP PHASE

**1. Aerobics:** Perform 6–8 minutes of aerobics exercises, such as Running in Place, Side-Straddle-Hops (“Jumping Jacks”) or High Steps/Knees.

**2. Stretching:** Perform 4–6 minutes of flexibility exercises.

## CORE TARGETING PHASE

### 3. Flutter Kick

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus, Hip Flexors

**START:** Lie down on your back on a soft, flat surface with your hands under or slightly outside your buttocks, palms down. Raise your feet 6–12 inches off the ground.

**ACTIONS:** The flutter kick drill is a four-count exercise where you raise your left leg to a 45-degree angle for position one, keeping your right leg stationary. Next, raise your right leg to a 45-degree angle while, at the same time, moving your left leg to the start position. Counts three and four are repetitions of the same movements. Performing all four movements once is one repetition. Continue until your goal is reached. Breathe naturally.

**Basic:** 5–15 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 16–40 repetitions

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions

**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions

*Note:* The lower your legs are positioned, the more back muscles you engage for this exercise. 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 to a higher position.



### 4. Box and Reach Drill

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Erector Spinae, Obliques, Rectus Abdominus, Transverse Abdominus

until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you kick, and inhale through your nose as you return to the guard position.

**Basic:** 10–20 repetitions (each leg)

**Intermediate:** 21–40 repetitions (each leg)

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions (each leg)

**Extreme:** 50–60 repetitions on a kicking shield or heavy bag (each leg)

## COOL-DOWN PHASE

Perform the flexibility exercises from the Warm-up Phase.

**START:** Lie down on your back on a soft, flat surface, arms straight and against the sides of your body, palms on the ground. Elevate your legs, and align your feet and knees with your hips, feet flexed. Raise your arms and point your fingers toward your toes. *Note:* Keep a slight bend in your knees.

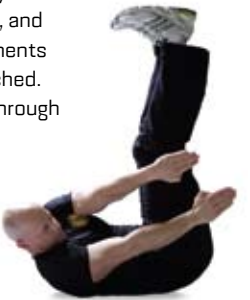
**ACTIONS:** The box and reach drill is a four-count exercise where you reach over the outside of your left thigh with both arms with palms facing your legs, return to the start position, reach over the outside of your right thigh with both arms with palms facing your legs, and return to the start position. Performing all four movements once is one repetition. Continue until your goal is reached. Exhale through your mouth as you reach, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

**Basic:** 5–10 repetitions (each side)

**Intermediate:** 11–30 repetitions (each side)

**Advanced:** 31–60 repetitions (each side)

**Extreme:** 61–100 repetitions (each side)



## TRANSITION PHASE

### 5. Modified Back Bend

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Erector Spinae, Obliques, Anterior and Medial Deltoids, Gluteus Maximus

**START:** Lie down on the front side of your body on a soft, flat surface with arms bent 90 degrees at the elbows, elbows aligned with your shoulders, palms down and feet 12 inches apart.

**ACTIONS:** Tighten your lower back muscles and slowly arch your lower back, raising your arms, chest and legs off the ground, holding for a few seconds at the highest point. Return to the start position and repeat. Exhale through your mouth as you arch, and inhale through your nose as you lower your body.

**Basic:** 5–15 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 16–40 repetitions

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions

**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions



“I lost 15 pounds last month using SGT Ken and Stephanie’s Savory Survival Guide and the tips in Operation Hunting for Health. I sleep better, feel more confident, have more energy, and my workouts are better than they have been in a long time. I recommend every Soldier and civilian to try their nutrition and fitness plans. They work!”  
—SGT Tina Jones, New York Army National Guard

## 6. T Push-up

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Anterior and Medial Deltoids, Triceps, Pectorals, full body integrated

**START:** Balance your body on your hands and feet with your back and legs forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, feet together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, legs and arms straight.

**ACTIONS:** While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, lower your body by bending both elbows until the upper parts of your arms become parallel to the ground. Return to the start position. Maintain balance, rotate your torso counterclockwise, raise your left arm and point your fingers upward until your body forms a leaning “T.” Return to the start position and repeat the actions, next rotating your torso clockwise and raising your right arm. Performing the actions on both sides once is one repetition. Exhale through your mouth as you push up, and inhale through your nose as you lower your body. *Note:* Do not let your hips sag or arch upward.



Male standards:

**Basic:** 5–10 repetitions (each side)

**Intermediate:** 11–20 repetitions (each side)

**Advanced:** 21–40 repetitions (each side)

**Extreme:** 41–60 repetitions, or 30–40 repetitions with a set of 5- to 15-pound dumbbells in each hand (each side)

Female standards:

**Basic:** 2–4 repetitions (each side)

**Intermediate:** 5–9 repetitions (each side)

**Advanced:** 10–20 repetitions (each side)

**Extreme:** 21–40 repetitions, or 10–20 repetitions with a set of 3- to 8-pound dumbbells in each hand (each side)

## 7. Lunge

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius, Hip Flexors

**START:** Start with your left leg on the ground straight in front of you with your left knee slightly bent. Place your right leg straight behind you, balancing on the ball of your right foot. Your upper body is upright with your hands on your hips.

**ACTIONS:** Lower your body, both knees bending until your forward leg achieves 90 degrees of knee flexion. Maintain your balance in the center. Return to the start position. Continue until your goal is reached. Switch sides and continue. Exhale through your mouth as you lower your body, and inhale



through your nose as you return to the start position. Warning: Do not let your forward knee bend beyond your toe line.

**Basic:** 5–15 repetitions (each side)

**Intermediate:** 16–40 repetitions (each side)

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions (each side)

**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions, or 40–50 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest (each side)

*Note:* Advanced athletes may choose to hold a medicine ball, kettlebell, dumbbell or any kind of light to medium weight in their hands while performing the exercise.

## AEROBIC CONDITIONING PHASE

### 8. Speed Skater Drill

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius

**START:** Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent and toes pointing forward, arms at your sides, elbows slightly bent and palms facing inward.

**ACTIONS:** Shifting your balance to your right, thrust your left leg to the left several inches, right leg following and crossing behind your body, left arm extending to the left, right elbow bending and hand moving to upper chest, left foot landing on the ground before the right. Land and balance your body on your left leg, arms level with your shoulders. Quickly, switch directions and repeat. Continue until your goal is reached. Performing the actions on each leg once is one repetition. Exhale through your mouth as you land, and inhale through your nose as you switch directions.

**Basic:** 5–15 repetitions (each side)

**Intermediate:** 16–40 repetitions (each side)

**Advanced:** 41–80 repetitions (each side)

**Extreme:** 81–120 repetitions, or 40–50 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest (each side)

*Note:* Advanced athletes may choose to hold a medicine ball, set of kettlebells or dumbbells or any kind of light to medium weight in their hands while performing the exercise.



### 9. Squat, Push-up and Vertical Jump Drill

**Primary Muscles Targeted:** Gluteus Maximus, Quadriceps, Hamstrings, Gastrocnemius

**START:** Stand upright with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointing forward, hands at your sides, and palms facing inward.

### ACTIONS:

- Squat until your knees bend 90 degrees and hips move back as if sitting on a chair. Maintain your weight directly over the middle of your feet and heels. Keep your knees aligned with your feet.
- Reach downward with your arms and place your hands on the ground slightly in front of your feet.
- Thrust your legs back to a “push-up” position, back and legs forming a straight line, arms straight and head facing forward. Lower your body by bending both elbows until your upper arms are parallel with the ground. Extend your arms and return to the start position.
- Jump vertically as high as you can, arms extended overhead. As you land on the ground, go immediately to position #1 (squat). Continue until your goal is reached. Inhale through your nose, and exhale through your mouth.

Male standards:

**Basic:** 5–10 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 11–30 repetitions

**Advanced:** 31–50 repetitions

**Extreme:** 51–70 repetitions, or 30–40 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest

Female standards:

**Basic:** 2–5 repetitions

**Intermediate:** 6–15 repetitions

**Advanced:** 16–30 repetitions

**Extreme:** 31–50 repetitions, or 15–25 repetitions with a backpack or weight vest



## COOL-DOWN PHASE

Perform the flexibility exercises from the Warm-up Phase.

## STAMINA STOPWATCH

The Stamina Stopwatch includes the estimated time it will take to complete each set of the fitness program.

**Quick Fix:** 1 full set = approximately 20 minutes

**Fast and Furious:** 2 full sets = approximately 40 minutes

**Combat Ready:** 3 full sets = approximately 60 minutes

*Note:* The Warm-up and Cool-down Phases are performed only once.

### Equipment needed:

- Basic, Intermediate, Advanced = none
- Extreme = see each exercise for equipment needs

### NUTRITION ADVICE:

- To lose additional body fat, try reducing your intake of breads, pastas, dairy products and sugar.
- Check with your physician before making any changes to your diet or exercise plan.
- Want to read more diet advice? Go to [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness/healthy](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness/healthy) and download our Savory Survival Guide.

## BACK TO BASICS WORKOUT SCHEDULE

### MONDAY

Program One x 1–3 sets

### TUESDAY

Running Long Distance 2–6 miles

8-min Abs x 1–2 sets

*Note:* Download “8-min Abs” on [www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness)

### WEDNESDAY

Program Two x 1–3 sets

### THURSDAY

Rest

### FRIDAY

Running Interval Training x 2–4 miles

*Note:* Running Interval Training is running at moderate and fast speeds.

*Example:* Run on a treadmill, track or well-known route. After a thorough warm-up, run at a moderate speed (jogging) for 30 seconds and sprint as fast as you can for 30 seconds. Repeat this sequence for the remainder of your run. Or, if on a track, sprint the stretch and jog the curve.

8-min Abs x 1–2 sets

### SATURDAY

Programs One and Two (combined) x 1–2 sets each

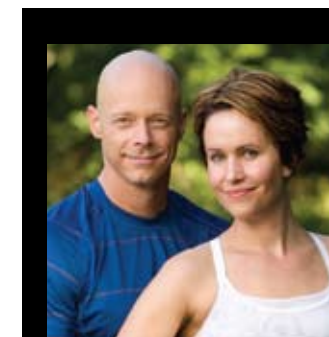
### SUNDAY

Rest

### REMARKS:

- Repeat 7-day schedule x 4 sets to complete the month.
- Rest periods may be adjusted, as needed. However, be certain to include 1–2 rest days per week for rest and recovery. Never perform more than two consecutive rest days at any time.
- Perform no fitness training 24–48 hours prior to a fitness test or competition.

EVAN BAINES



### KEN AND STEPHANIE WEICHERT

A six-time Soldier of the Year and Veteran of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm, Ken Weichert and his wife, Stephanie, a certified personal trainer, founded the START Fitness® program, a San Francisco-based group exercise and hiking business that delivers military-inspired, boot-camp style workouts to Soldiers and civilians. The program now trains and certifies basic, senior and master instructors. Ken is currently a staff sergeant in the Tennessee Army National Guard.

Watch fitness videos and download workouts at

[www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness](http://www.NATIONALGUARD.com/fitness)  
or email [SGTKen@GXOnline.com](mailto:SGTKen@GXOnline.com).