

# CORE TRAINING TIME

PART 1 OF 2

By SGT KEN

In the last GX issue, Stephanie and I began our CORE TRAINING TIME program focusing on military-style exercises that are designed to strengthen the mid-section of your body. This type of training will not only help you with the exercises in the APFT, it will help you with overall limb support and posture.

## GROUND THUMPER

Start the exercise by lying on your belly with your palms on the ground and your hands against the sides of your chest. Face your head straight in front of you and tuck your elbows into the sides of your body.

The movements begin by pushing your chest away from the ground by straightening your arms nearly to a locked position. Use your arms as much as you can for the actions of this exercise. Continue by bending your elbows and returning to the start position. Perform three sets of 30–40 repetitions of this exercise with 90 seconds between sets.



## FOUR-COUNT REVERSE CRUNCH

Start the exercise by lying on your back with your palms on the ground and your hands against the sides of your buttocks. You can look toward your legs or keep your head down against the ground. First, bring your legs straight in the air together and lower them approximately 10–20 inches from the ground with your feet flexed.

The next set of movements begin by bending your knees and raising them over your hips. Your feet will remain parallel with your knees and flexed at your ankles. Continue the exercise by straightening your legs so that your feet will line up over your knees and hips. **Warning: Never lock your knees.** Return to the start position by bending at the knees, temporarily stopping at the second position, and ending at the first position. Perform three sets of 20–30 repetitions of this four-count exercise with 90 seconds between sets.



Background photo by CPT Jon Eisberg

Photos by Jonathan C. Miller

Photos by Gavin Smith

**GOT A QUESTION?  
ASK SGT KEN™**



Illustration by Seamas Gallagher

Dear SGT Ken,™

I am an older female, I am short and carrying some extra weight. I have been jogging about 3 miles 3 times a week but when I get on an elliptical machine, I am only on there for several minutes before it tells me to slow down my heart rate (under the cardio setting). What is the best way to lower my heart rate?

Linda Jones, CMS, 183FW, SVF

Dear Linda,

Hello. First of all, advisory statements that scroll across the screens of many athletic machines are of great value if the machines are set specifically for the person using it. As far as lowering your heartrate, you can practice deeper breathing during your workouts by inhaling through your nose and exhaling slowly through your mouth. Let me know how that works for you, and keep up the good work! HOOAH!

Dear SGT Ken,™

I read your last article in *GX* magazine regarding improving your time on the PT test. I have a few questions for you. The technique of running around a track while running fast on the straight-aways and slowly on the turns (or vice versa) is very reminiscent of the FARTLEK training a coach had us do in high school. You recommend a 20 to 30 min warm up. After the first 20-30 min warm up, then how long does one run the intervals? Should it be 10 min, 15, or 20? Or should it be based upon distance? My second set of questions involves how often to run. My current schedule is something like this M, W, F (weight training), T, TH, SU (cardio). In the summer, this usually means jumping on the Elliptical once a week, and swimming a little over a kilometer the other two days. Saturday is my off day. So, when should I run? Thanks for your help. I really enjoy swimming in the summer time and it is way more fun for me than running.

CPT Vic Artiga  
(SGT Ken's Commander while in Iraq)

Dear Captain Artiga,

Glad to hear that you are enjoying the magazines! As far as the length of each interval is concerned, I left it blank in that *GX* issue intentionally. You see, like the Presidential Physical Fitness program (<http://www.fitness.gov/>), our first goal is to get people to simply take our fitness strategies and workout 30 minutes per day for five days per week. It's a short and simple way to make fitness a part of your life. Stephanie and I were able to determine from several email responses that this running plan is working for everyone that is trying it. Now, let's go one step further with this plan. I use this running plan three to four miles in distance each time. This makes the two-mile run as part of the APFT easier to achieve for distance. The interval training strategy prepares me for the speed necessary to achieve optimum results. I run two to three times per week with a different type of fitness training between my running or cardio days. Sir, I think that twice a week is great for your body composition and age range. Swimming? Good idea. Simply remember, swimming will not help you with the APFT. One must always train with the events that will be on the test. HOOAH!

Dear SGT Ken,™

I have 11 days to get ready for my annual APFT; can you recommend a course of action? I know I should have been training up to this point, but my job works me between 60 to 80 hours a week as a private investigator, most of which is spent in a car conducting surveillance for hours on end. I realize it's my fault that I got into a rut, but what will give me the best chance? Especially, since they bumped up the APFT by two months. I'm 30 years old.

SPC Ian Cunningham

Dear SPC Cunningham,

Ten years ago I was working as a restaurant manager while serving in the National Guard. I deleted fitness training from my schedule in order to keep up with the work load. As a result, I developed serious health problems

that eventually required physician assistance. After recovering from that situation, I vowed to never get in that rut again. No matter how busy you get with your work load, you have got to figure out where 20-30 minutes of your day can be dedicated to fitness training. Just 20-30 minutes a day and you will find that the APFT will not be that difficult in the future. Eleven days, however, is only enough time to perform what I call, "Maintenance Workouts." Maintenance workouts keep you from growing weaker but do little more to make you stronger and faster. With the remaining time that you have I suggest that you train 20-30 minutes every day for ten days and rest the day before the test. Do not train to muscle failure as there is not enough time for you to recover. Good luck! HOOAH!