

# Military Fitness

Fitness for the Special Tactics Operator

Issue # 1

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## First Issue of Military Fitness!

Comrades, welcome to Military Fitness, a monthly fitness newsletter for [www.specialtactics.com](http://www.specialtactics.com). In coming issues I will bring you functional fitness tips, routines, advice, market information, and other pertinent information concerning fitness and the special operations operator.

Is there something you want to know more about? Burning questions, or inputs? Feel free to drop me a line at [MilitaryFitnessRKC@yahoo.com](mailto:MilitaryFitnessRKC@yahoo.com) ENJOY!

## What is Military Fitness?

In this country and many others, most people equate muscle size with strength. This is incorrect. For the tactical operator in both the military and law enforcement, extra bulk can be a serious hindrance. It is well known that bodybuilders do not do well in special operations. Operators are lean and powerful with a high strength to weight ratio.

The term Military Fitness refers to the entire spectrum of fitness and health aspects that an operator must focus on to ensure maximum physical performance. It is in fact a way of life. Such factors include the pursuit of maximum strength and endurance in a lean frame. Total body health is also a vital area of interest, which means strong bones, tendons, ligaments and vital body systems. Working out with an unsound and unbalanced body is not Military Fitness. You must develop the entire body!

By that token, workouts must develop the entire body in a manner that is foreign to most Americans. Imagine that two days ago you worked legs really hard. Today you are so sore that you can barely walk. Do you honestly think you will be able to perform at your maximum potential in that condition? I've been there and the answer is no. So you must exercise in a manner that does not leave you so sore that it impedes performance.

The operator's goals are unique and many. You constantly strive to run and swim faster and further. You try to carry more weight faster and further. You always strive to increase your strength and endurance. There is a lot implied by those goals. The ability to run 10 miles at 7 minutes per mile has little to do with your ability to carry an 80lb pack for 20 miles over steep terrain other than general cardiovascular fitness. This separates Military Fitness from sport and sport specific training. Military Fitness must be tailored to the demands of the job just as a sprinter trains specifically for the 100m.

For the Pararescueman or Combat Controller this can mean carrying a buddy on your shoulder up a mountain or running the length of a 5,000-foot dirt runway with 80lbs on your back, rifle in hand in the middle of the night. There are so many combat skills that the operator must know and practice that you will never run out of training variations.

As a training NCO or officer, always take into account these tasks. The ability to perform combat tasks is the important thing. The ability to bench press three times your weight will not help the operator. Be sure your men are building functional Military Fitness.

## General Physical Preparedness (GPP), The Overlooked Step

When people start looking at ways to get into shape they are often misled into believing that they must jump straight into most demanding exercises or straight into tough three-hour workouts. What often follows is injury, loss of motivation, malaise, fatigue, and sickness. We've all heard the tales of some buddy's new routine. At first he says its awesome, then he says its OK, then he's injured, and then he never goes back to the gym because working out isn't all that. People get frustrated by lack of results and turn to supplements to help them make the gains they want. Others jump from workout to workout while making very little progress. Why does this happen?

Until recently, we in the United States had forgotten the ways of old time physical culture. Across the old Iron Curtain there was a lot of research being done during the cold war. In particular there was an Olympic Coach by the name of Dr Tudor Bompa. Bompa is the founder of Periodization. A scientific

method or plan for increasing and maximizing physical performance. Periodization realizes that a human being cannot simply go from zero to eighty overnight. Instead you must start by building a base of strength by increasing joint mobility, strengthening the tendons and ligaments, strengthening the core muscles, and then the extremities or moving to sport specific training.

Coach Scott Sonnon, head of the Russian Martial Art (RMA) here in the United States has made some of the Periodization concepts easier to understand and apply by defining four phases of physical development. Those phases are General Physical Preparedness (GPP), Specific Physical Preparedness (SPP), Physical Skills (PS), and Mental/Emotional Skills (MES).

GPP is the step that most people skip over in their zeal to perform at the PS level. Sorry boys, you don't just jump into the NFL! Behind these great players is a long list of coaches, most notably John Davies who specialize in training athletes and others by building their GPP, then SPP, and then PS. It takes years, not weeks or months! The dangers of skipping GPP are real and have been recognized by strength athletes and soldiers since the Spartans dominated the battlefield in ancient Greece.

The Spartans began training boys at the age of ten, understanding that the boys must progress through GPP, SPP, into PS. Many times the boys would do this by an early age, say 14 or 15. It is important to note that the Spartans were well aware that while many had the physical skills, they did not possess the mental and emotional skills until the age of 17-19. And so we see that these principles are not merely the work of a clever salesman but instead have been in existence for thousands of years.

How does this affect you? Very simply, do not think that you are going to walk into the Smolov squat routine and come out unscathed if you haven't got the proper training history and the core strength to back it up. Arnold Schwarzenegger recalls this process in the early bodybuilding days when there were few benches or machines. The aspiring bodybuilder had to train as a power lifter to gain a basis of strength and size before refining his body for competition. That was their GPP.

For the operator, you have to build general core strength as well as running and swimming. The pace has to equal the ability of your body to adapt. Selection doesn't necessarily prepare you in this way. The only way to build the strength required to carry loads is to work out with weight. In the next few issues I will outline some methods of GPP training for the operator. Stay tuned!

## The Limbo Lunge

The Limbo lunge is the invention of Renegade Coach John Davies and it's an excellent exercise for building strength in the legs and hips. It can be performed with or without weight, with or without a partner.

Start standing with a Kettlebell or Dumbbell held in two hands in front of you. Have a partner hold a broom handle at waist height. Squat down and lead with one leg, crossing under the bar, standing up on the other side. Then reverse and return to the starting position. That's one rep. Be sure to keep your back straight and your head straight or up. Avoid looking down as this may stress your back. Have your partner lower the bar on each set to get the most hip flexibility and mobility from this exercise. Do three to five sets of three to five reps and call it a day. This is an excellent exercise to begin a workout with.

Living By The Motto,  
Nathanael Morrison