

# “Battle-Focused Physical Training: A Career-Long Commitment”

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## ABSTRACT (330 WORDS)

From the day an American soldier begins Basic Training to the day he or she retires or separates from the Army, Physical Training is a fundamental reality of military life. To many, Physical Training will long remain the highlight of their military experience. Traditionally, the goal of unit level Physical Training has been “high achievement on an Annual Physical Training test.” These tests emphasized sit-ups, push-ups, and short distance runs. But with today’s diverse missions, it is essential for every soldier to be fully ready to deploy on day one, and have the stamina to fight and win follow-on battles well.

Physical Training programs can develop stamina, but they can also contribute to mental alertness, soldier skill development, unit cohesion, and many other benefits as a bonus. Therefore unit commanders must see in fitness program the means to many ends – physical fitness is the battle link. The Battle-Focused Physical Training process focuses on the primary way to develop physical performance to execute Mission Essential Tasks for the unit. Included in the process are the secondary benefits the commander wants to get from Physical Training.

No matter how well a commander plans physical training, a support network must be in place in order to realize success. We have a solid framework for fitness in the US Army that gives our program legitimacy and top-down emphasis. Soldier’s physical readiness is measured upon entry into the unit and periodically with the Health Risk Appraisal Program. Aggregate results of the Health Risk Appraisal are use by commanders to make decisions on allocation of resources and to close any “readiness gaps” effectively.

The US Army Physical Fitness program faces many challenges including shrinking resources, increasing OPTEMPO, emphasis on high technology, all- volunteer force, and deckling fitness in the general population. To meet these challenges, we rely on the experiences, techniques, and expertise of not only our own fitness experts, but those of the civilian community, our sister services, and armies from around the world.