

Periodical Physical Condition Evaluation of Active Personnel in the Armed Forces

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Realistic, evidence-based physical fitness programs to sustain individual Soldier combat readiness and health are important to the United States Military. Although definitions for “physical fitness” vary in the general literature and popular press, they describe a set of characteristics that are related to the ability to execute physical activity. Thus, athletes and Soldiers must both develop and maintain high levels of physical fitness to endure the physically demanding tasks they perform. The main components of physical fitness are muscle strength, muscle endurance, aerobic capacity (cardio-respiratory endurance), and body composition. The Army Physical Fitness Program has continued to undergo evaluation and incorporate improvements based on emerging scientific findings. Currently, a 2 mile run, sit-ups, and push-ups are three tasks that are used to evaluate physical fitness in the United States Army bi-annually. Although, the other branches of the United States Military (Navy, Marines, and Air Force) did not use the same assess tasks, physical fitness is assessed periodically. Thus, this presentation will discuss the current literature regarding 1) the relevance of these physical assessment tasks as they relate to occupational tasks, 2) the scientific basis of these components of physical fitness, and 3) trends in physical fitness of US Military Recruits and Active Duty Personnel.