

Preparing for SFAS

The purpose of this information is to assist prospective SFAS candidates in attaining and maintaining a high state of physical fitness prior to attendance at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) SFAS Program and subsequently the SFQC.

USAJFKSWCS Preparatory Training Programs.

This program is physically and mentally demanding. To accomplish physical-related goals set by SFAS, applicants must be in good physical condition upon arrival at Fort Bragg N.C. Soldiers attending the SFAS program will perform physical tasks that will require them to climb obstacles (by use of a rope) 20 to 30 feet high, swim while in uniform, and travel great distances cross-country while carrying a rucksack with a minimum of 50 pounds. The SFAS program requires upper and lower body strength and physical endurance to accomplish daily physical-oriented goals on a continuous basis for 24 days. Below is a recommended 5-week physical training (PT) program consisting of realistic physical and mental goals relative to physical requirements set by the USAJFKSWCS SFAS committee (if you have time, work out more than 5 weeks prior to arrival).

Stages of physical fitness.

Attaining physical fitness is not an overnight process; the body must go through three stages:

- a. The first is the toughening stage, which lasts about 2 weeks. During this time the body goes through a soreness and recovery period. When a muscle with poor blood supply (such as a weak muscle) is exercised, the waste products produced by the exercise collect faster than the blood can remove them. This acid waste builds up in the muscle tissue and irritates the nerve in the muscle fiber causing soreness. As the exercise continues, the body is able to circulate the blood more rapidly through the muscles and remove the waste material, which causes soreness to disappear.
- b. The slow improvement stage is second stage in attaining physical fitness. As the body passes through the toughening stage and continues into the slow improvement stage, the volume of blood circulating in the muscle increases and the body functions more efficiently. In the first few weeks the improvement is rapid, but as a higher level of skill and conditioning is reached, the improvement becomes less noticeable. The body reaches its maximum level of performance between 6 and 10 weeks. The intensity of the program and individual differences account for the variance in time.
- c. The sustaining stage is the third stage during which physical fitness is maintained. It is necessary to continue exercising at approximately the same intensity to retain the condition developed.

Physical workouts.

Physical workouts should be conducted a minimum of 4 days a week; work out hard one day, easy the next. A hard and easy workout concept will allow maximum effort for overloading both the muscle groups and cardiorespiratory system; it will also prevent injury and stagnation in the program. For example: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday--Hard workouts (over-loading of muscles) (Saturday used for extra long workouts). Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday--Easy workouts. This is the time to practice swimming and work on overall fitness; sprints, pull-ups, push-ups, and especially stretching.

Prior to each workout, 10 to 15 minutes should be devoted to performing stretching exercises. Additionally, the USAJFKSWCS Surgeon recommends a well-balanced diet be incorporated with this recommended PT program and that daily fluid (water) intake be increased.

Week 1:

(Only hard workout days are listed here. Make up your own workouts on your "easy" days.)

Day 1: See what you can do. Do the best you can do.

- (a) APFT (maximum performance in all events, see what you can do).
- (b) One hundred-meter swim (nonstop, any stroke, do not touch the side or bottom of the pool).
- (c) Force march with 30-pound rucksack, 3 miles in 45 minutes (along road) or 1 hour if cross-country. (Wear well broken-in boots with thick socks.)

Day 2:

- (a) Three sets of push-ups (maximum repetitions in one-half minute period).
- (b) 3-mile run (moderate 8 to 9 minute mile pace).
- (c) Rope climb or three sets of pull-ups (as many as you can do).
- (d) Forced march with 30-pound rucksack, 5 miles in 1 hour and 15 minutes (along a road) or 1 hour and 40 minutes (cross-country).

Day 3: Forced march with 30-pound rucksack, 5 miles in 1 hour and 15 minutes (along the road) or 1 hour and 40 minutes (cross-country).

Week 2:

Day 1: Repeat of day 3, week 1 (forced march), extend distance to 8 miles with 35-pound rucksack in 2 hours (along a road) or 2 hours and 40 minutes (cross-country).

Day 2:

- (a) Three sets of push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups (maximum repetitions in 35-second period three times).
- (b) Run 5 miles (moderate 8 to 9 minute mile pace).
- (c) Three sets of squats with 35-pound rucksack (50 each set). Go down only to the point where the upper and lower leg forms a 90-degree bend at knee.

Day 3: Forced march with 35-pound rucksack, 10 miles in 3 hours (along a road) or 4 hours (cross-country).

Week 3:

Day 1:

- (a) Four sets of push-ups, pull-ups, and sit-ups (maximum repetitions in 40-second period).
- (b) Run 4 miles (fast to moderate 7 to 8 minute mile pace.)
- (c) Four sets of squats with 40-pound rucksack.

Day 2: Forced march 12 miles with 40-pound rucksack in 4 hours (along a road) or 4 hours and 40 minutes (cross-country).

Day 3:

- (a) Four sets of push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups (maximum repetitions in 45-second period.)

(b) Run 6 miles (fast to moderate 7 to 8 minute pace).

(c) Four sets of squats with 40-pound rucksack.

Week 4:

Day 1: Forced march 14 miles with 50-pound rucksack in 4 hours (along a road) or 4 hours and 40 minutes (cross-country).

Day 2:

(a) Four sets of push-ups, sit-ups, and pull-ups(maximum repetitions in 1-minute period).

(b) Run 6 miles (fast to moderate 7 to 8 minute mile pace).

(c) Four sets of squats with 50-pound rucksack.

Day 3: Forced march 18 miles with 50-pound rucksack in 4 hours and 45 minutes (along a road) or 6 hours (cross-country).

Week 5:

Day 1:

(a) Run 3 miles (fast 6 to 7 minute mile pace).

(b) Five hundred-meter swim (nonstop, any stroke, but not on your back).

Day 2: APFT. You should be able to achieve a score of at least 240 (minimum of 70 points in any one event) in the 17 to 21 year age limit. If not, workout harder.

Day 3: Forced march 18 miles with 50-pound rucksack in 4 hours and 30 minutes (along a road) or 6 hours (cross-country).

Considerations.

a. For forced marches, select boots that are comfortable and well broken-in (not worn out). Wear lightweight fatigues and thick socks (not newly issued socks). Army issue boots are excellent if fitted properly.

b. Utilize map and compass techniques whenever possible during forced march cross-country workouts.

c. Insoles specifically designed to absorb shock will reduce injuries.

d. Practice proper rucksack marching and walking techniques:

(1) Weight of body must be kept directly over feet, and sole of shoe must be flat on ground taking small steps at a steady pace.

(2) Knees must be locked on every step in order to rest muscles of the legs (especially when going uphill).

(3) When walking cross-country, step over and around obstacles; never step on them.

(4) When traveling up steep slopes, always traverse them; climb in zigzag pattern rather than straight up.

(5) When descending steep slopes, keep the back straight and knees bent to take up shock of each step. Dig in with heels on each step.

(6) Practice walking as fast as you can with rucksack. Do not run with a rucksack. When testing, you may have to trot to maintain time, but try not to do this during training, it may injure you.

(7) A good rucksack pace is accomplished by continuous movement with short breaks (5 minutes) every 6 to 8 miles.

(8) If you cannot ruckmarch, then do squats with your rucksack. (One hundred repetitions, five times or until muscle fatigues.)

e. On each day (not listed in training program) conduct less strenuous workouts such as biking and short or slow runs. To compliment push-up workouts, weight lifting exercises should be included (for development of upper body strength) in easy day workout schedule. Swim as often as you can (500 meters or more).

f. Once a high level of physical fitness is attained, a maintenance workout program should be applied using the hard and easy workout concept. Once in shape, stay in shape. Do not stop this 5-week program. If you have met all the goals, then modify program by increasing distance and weight and decreasing times. Be smart, don't injure yourself.

Final notes.

a. Do not expect to get "free" time from your unit to work out so you can come to SFAS. The responsibility to get in shape is yours and yours alone. Work out on your own time if that is all you have. If you go to the field, work on strengthening drills: Push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups, squats (with extra weight) when you can, as often as you can. The mission is to get in shape.

b. Eat things that are good for you and stay away from junk food and fat foods.

c. You need to be in very good shape and able to carry a rucksack day after day for the entire time you are at SFAS. This is an assessment of you. We do not teach or coach you to get through SFAS. You will be challenged.

d. The Army Research Institute (ARI) has been able to closely correlate performance on the APFT and a 4-mile rucksack march with success in SFAS. During fiscal year (FY) 89 and FY 90 ARI evaluated the cumulative APFT score (17 to 21 age group standard) with the percent of candidates who started SFAS and who passed the course. The average PT score for SFAS graduates is 250. The average PT results are depicted below:

<u>APFT Score</u>	<u>Percent Passing Course</u>
206-225	31
226-250	42
251-275	57
276 or higher	78

The higher the APFT score, the better the percent that passed the course. You need to be in top physical condition and you should do well in SFAS.

e. ARI evaluated the ability of SFAS students to perform a 4-mile ruckmarch in battle dress uniform (BDU), boots, M-16, load bearing equipment, and a 45-pound rucksack. The overall average 4-mile ruckmarch time for graduates is 61 minutes. The average PT results are depicted below:

Ruckmarch Time (Min) Percent Passing Course

54 and less	81
55-64	63
65-74	34
75-84	10