

160th SOAR(A) Combat Skills Train-up program

Green Platoon/Combat Skills, is a six-week assessment and training program that teaches basic soldiering skills, i.e. advanced first aid techniques, combatives, land navigation, and weapons training. However, throughout the six weeks you will be challenged with intense physical conditioning sessions. As with any challenge you face within your military career, preparation is the key to success. This train-up program will help you to prepare.

Here are some of the challenges you will face:

- APFT
- 4-6 mile runs
- 4-10 mile road marches w/ 45 pound rucksack
- Rope climb/pull-ups

APFT Improvement

Push-up and sit-up improvement

Find the maximum number of repetitions, that you are able to perform in one minute for push-ups and sit-ups. Do this once a week. Once you find your max, subtract ten. Three times a week perform that number of repetitions for three sets with a full rest period in between sets. Example: your max set is 40 push-ups/sit-ups. Subtract ten. You would do three sets of 30 with a full recovery rest period in-between sets for a total of 90 repetitions. After a week, find your max again for one minute. This is your new starting point.

2-mile run improvement

Interval training- Start with a known quarter mile distance (most Posts and schools have a quarter mile track) with a stop watch. Divide the time you want to run one mile in by four. This will be your target work/fast lap pace. The interval will be one work/fast lap to one slow lap. Example: your target is a six-minute mile, this divided by four would be 1 ½ minutes. Your work/fast lap pace would be 1 ½ minutes. Therefore, the workout would be one work/fast quarter-mile lap with one slow recovery lap. Do this for a total of four work/fast quarter-mile laps and four rest laps. On the slow lap, it's alright to walk but try to do a slow jog. Once you can consistently stay at your target lap pace decrease the distance on your rest lap.

Continue this over a period of time until your running at least one mile at your target pace. **The APFT is a crucial event for success at Green Platoon.** Do a diagnostic APFT and do these workouts for a month then do another APFT. You will see an improvement.

4-6 mile runs

Most of the distance runs in Green Platoon are performed at the Army standard pace of nine-minute miles. If you are not used to running distance it is best to increase your mileage by only 10% per week, for example: start with a two-mile run, then the following week you would run 2.20 miles. Try to work up to at least 4-5 miles. By gradually increasing the distance, you will lessen the chance of over-use injuries.

Shoes are an extremely important part of running. Most of the running we do in the Army is on roads which provide little to no impact absorption. Therefore, depending on how fast you are running it equates up to seven times your body weight each time your foot strikes the ground. It is paramount that you select the right shoe for your activity and body type. There are several good websites that can point you in the right direction. One of them is: <http://www.runnersworld.com>. This site offers a lot of good information, not only on shoes but on other training tips that are very helpful.

The importance of stretching cannot be over emphasized. It's best to do light stretching before running then during cool-down a more in-depth session. The reason being most runs are in the morning. Muscles contract as we sleep and if stretching is the first thing do, you are more apt to tear something. Do not: stretch if you feel pain, bounce, or hold a stretch beyond 20-30 seconds prior to your run. The main muscles you want to concentrate on are your calves, hamstrings, quadriceps, and hip muscles. As with shoes, the best resource is the internet. A search done under "stretching for runners" will net a lot of useful information.

4-10 mile road marches w/ 45 pound rucksack

All road marches performed in Green Platoon are to the Army standard of 15-minute miles. As with running, a gradual build-up with both distance and rucksack weight is recommended. If you have not rucked in a while start out with a short distance and with a 20-pound rucksack. Gradually increase both distance and weight (one at a time, but not both at once) to lessen the chance of overuse injuries.

The most important factor in road marching is the care and maintenance of your feet. There are numerous ways and tricks on this subject. Here are some proven techniques. This is by no means all-inclusive, the best teacher is experimentation. Again, by gradually increasing distance and weight you will be able to find what works best for you without tearing your feet up.

Boots- Ensure the boots you bring to Green Platoon are well broken in. Boots with a good broken in upper will lessen “hot spots.” However, as important as it is to have a broken in upper you need to ensure that the soles of your boots are in good shape. If your soles are worn, you can get them re-soled relatively cheap (about \$40). A good way to break in a new pair, or condition an older pair, is the use of saddle soap. With a new pair: thoroughly soak the boots. Take a brush and laundry detergent and scrub them. This will remove many of the protectants that make the leather of your boots stiff. With the boots still wet apply a coat of saddle soap and wear them around until dry. **DO NOT ROAD MARCH WITH WET BOOTS.** Wearing them around the barracks or doing yard work will be enough for the leather to conform to your feet as they dry. Once they dry, apply several more coats of saddle soap. Let each coat dry before adding a new coat. It’s best to do this over a period of several days. Older boots over time build up not only polish but sweat and dirt as well. So, start out by cleaning them with a scrub brush and then apply saddle soap. Repeated use of saddle soap will not only soften the leather but will ensure that they stay waterproofed.

Socks- Many swear by wearing two pairs of wool socks. The friction is absorbed between the socks and therefore kept away from your foot. You can substitute the inner pair of socks (closest to your foot) with dress socks or even nylons. Experiment and see which works best for you.

Mole skin- If you prefer a single pair of socks, or still get hot spots with two pairs, moleskin can be used not only when blisters form but also on known hot spots prior to a road march. Again, experiment and see what works best for you.

Rope climb/pull-ups

Rope climbing and pull-ups are both awesome for upper body development. You will be required to climb a 20’ rope and do pull-ups as part of organized physical training.

Pull-up improvement

If you can do pull-ups, there are several good workouts to increase the number of repetitions you can perform. Here are two:

- Find the number of repetitions you can perform comfortably. Then pick the number of repetitions you want to be able to do consecutively. The workout is to do a set of the number of pull-ups you do comfortably, with a minute rest, until it totals the number that you want to do consecutively. Example: you can do a comfortable set of five pull-ups and want to do a set of consecutive 50 pull-ups. Workout would be 5 reps, 1 minute rest for a total of 10 sets. As you get stronger, decrease the rest between sets.
- Ladder sets. Perform one repetition then drop from the bar for a short rest. Then remount and do two repetitions, short rest then three repetitions. Keep going until you reach muscle failure. The rest should be brief, not more than 30-60 seconds. As this workout becomes easier, you can work your way back down once you hit failure. Example: You reach failure at ten. The next set would be nine repetitions, then eight, and so on.

If you cannot do pull-ups at all, a good way to start is by doing negatives. A negative pull-up is performed by grabbing the bar while standing on a crate or chair until it is about eye level. Jump from that platform until your chin is above the bar. Slowly let yourself down until your arms are locked out. Remount the platform and repeat. The key is to let yourself down as slowly as you possibly can. Do as many repetitions as you can.

Rope climb improvement

Rope climbing is not just a great upper body exercise; it is a tremendous confidence builder as well. If you can do five pull-ups, you will have no problem climbing a 20' rope. Climbing a rope is more technique than strength. There are several techniques for rope climbing, find what works best for you. As a rule of thumb start at the bottom of the obstacle and grab the rope as high as you can. Holding on with your hands pull your legs up as high as you can "inch worm" style. Grasp the rope with your feet by either squeezing the rope between your legs or wrapping the rope around your feet. Once you have "anchored" yourself in, climb hand over hand with your hands as high as you can reach. Continue this technique until you reach the top. Once at the top, you can descend the rope FAST rope style by holding the rope between your feet and doing a reverse hand over hand technique until you reach the bottom of the obstacle.

Bottom-line

If you know that you are on assignment to the 160th, the time to prepare is now. If you do this, or any training, for a month or so you will have no problem completing the physical demands of Green Platoon. Good luck.