

Primal Fitness (PF)



“Functional fitness = Combat ready”

Warning:

For maximum effect, these strategies are best used in combination with Controlled Response, Mind Tactics, Performance-Based Nutrition, Recharge, Purpose, and the Code Modules.



Primal Fitness (PF) Module

Introduction:

The Primal Fitness Module is for how to maintain optimal physical fitness in and out of the combat environment. Inspired by multiple leading combat-fitness programs, specific emphasis is placed on the importance of functional fitness and anaerobic loads without the need of high-tech equipment or facilities. The role of physical fitness in injury prevention and advancements in military fitness are covered.

Description:

Rapid changes in combat operations have drawn service-wide attention to the need for modifying garrison physical-fitness programs so warrior populations are adequately prepared for the challenges of new combat environments. Some of these changes include:

a **Change in Combat Load**



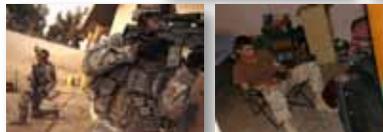
a **Change in Combat Requirements**



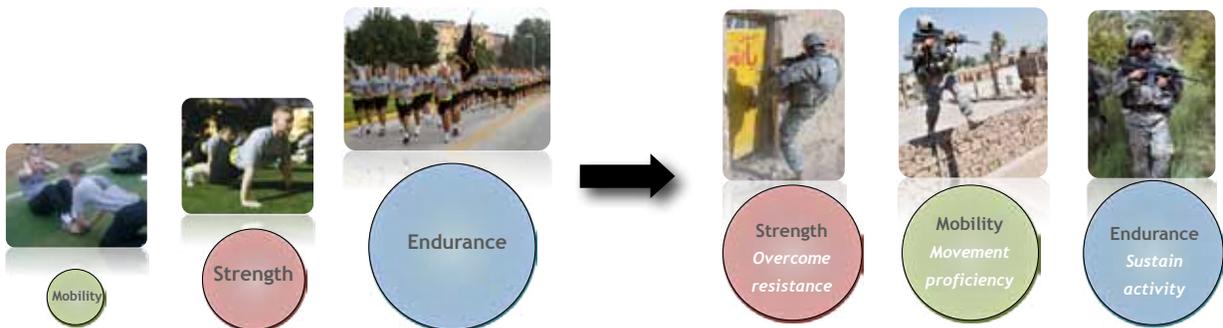
a **Change in Combat Environment**



a **Change in Lifestyle**



As a result, more groups have supplemented traditional garrison fitness programming with functional fitness and anaerobic conditioning activities that closely resemble the combat environment.



Functional Fitness:

Functional fitness is a term used to describe exercise programs that allow warrior athletes to perform tasks that replicate movements found in their occupations, combat, and real life.



Mission Essential Task List (METL):

It is important to spend some time figuring out what tasks are important to your warriors and the mission. A functional fitness program should incorporate movements that will functionally prepare your unit for its tasks in garrison and combat.



Functional Fitness Domains & Strategies:

Functional fitness covers a wide range of fitness domains to include: cardiovascular and respiratory endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, power, speed, coordination, mobility, balance, accuracy, and stability. These domains are all important when developing a well-rounded program for warrior athletes.

Strategy #1: No Gym? Not a Problem

The functional fitness format allows warriors—no matter where they are—to maintain their fitness. Sandbags, ropes, tires, ammo containers, and sledghammers can easily replace nautilus equipment.



Strategy #2: Aerobic and Anaerobic Conditioning

An emphasis on anaerobic and aerobic endurance training is essential, as both are important in combat. Aerobic endurance is needed for long patrols while wearing body armor and gear (“getting you to the fight”). Anaerobic endurance is needed for short, intense activities such as sprinting under fire or carrying a wounded buddy to safety (“sustaining you in the fight”).



Strategy #3: Recalibration Exercises

Along with Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) and Autogenic Training (AT), Recalibration Exercises can assist warrior athletes in resetting/recalibrating efforts. Stretching and range-of-motion-based exercises combined with visual imagery and controlled-breathing strategies enable the warrior athlete to fine tune mind/body connections, deactivate engaged muscles, improve mobility, and refine CR modulation controls.



Strategy #4: Form and Scalability

Paramount to functional fitness are form, progression, and scalability. In many fitness programs, most injuries occur as a result of combining too much weight with poor form and/or progressing too fast into new and/or difficult movements with minimal rest. Due to the intensity and nature of the Primal Fitness Module, it is recommended that warriors start with fundamental movements under supervision with minimal weight, then increase the weight incrementally as form becomes set in the memory bank.

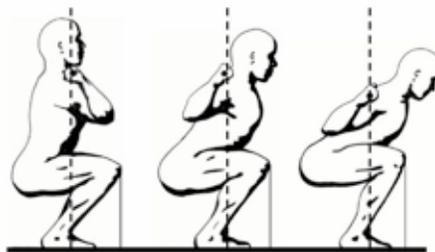
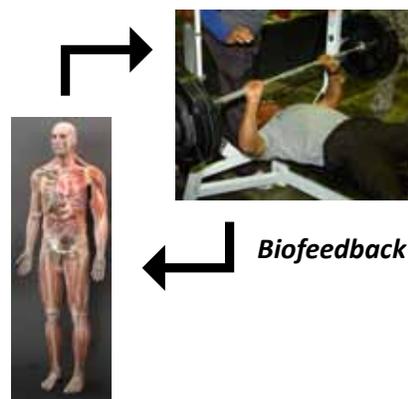


Figure 2-38. Bar position ultimately determines back angle, as seen in this comparison of the front squat, the high-bar squat, and the low-bar squat. Note that the bar remains balanced over the mid-foot in each case, and this requires that the back angle accommodate the bar position. This is the primary factor in the differences in technique between the three styles of squatting.

Strategy #5: Imprinting

Warriors are also encouraged to “imprint,” which calls for recognizing the correct form (spot checked by instructor/coach) through muscle memory. Once you assume the correct form in a movement repeatedly, your body position is recorded into memory. Later you will be able to assume various positions without visual cues or prompting. By practicing correct form with intentional memory, you can improve communication between the mind and body.



Additional Strategies:

⇒ **Mind Tactics:** The mind can directly affect physical performance and experience. For example: A conditioned response can be established by repeatedly pairing a particular song with a fitness activity. Do you have running music, lifting music, etc.? Why do people throw a towel over the display of their treadmill to avoid seeing the display counter? These are just a few examples of how mental tactics can boost your fitness level (see Mind Tactics Module).



⇒ **Controlled Response:** The ability to survive a primal fitness session (anaerobic load/functional fitness) depends in part on your ability to regulate your breathing pattern and muscle control. Shifting from one exercise to the next (e.g., sprinting to pull-ups, etc.) calls for a shift in breathing pattern and muscle activation (see Controlled Response Module).



⇒ **Recharge:** Because of the intensity of the Primal Fitness Module, achieving a restful pattern of sleep is very important. Internal resources shift to repairing tissue and building muscles during sleep. The process of total body rejuvenation begins during sleep, which promotes preparation for the next event (see Recharge Module).



⇒ **Performance-Based Nutrition:** Certain foods can help to sustain energy demand during a primal fitness session, and others can assist with recuperation and muscle repair. Still, other foods can sabotage all fitness attempts. The use of supplements too can complicate progress and gains when unaware of their effects (see Performance-Based Nutrition Module).

