

# USAF Fitness & Sports Newsletter

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## EXERCISE BATTLES DEPRESSION

*For those who deal with depression, a combination of exercise and medication may be the answer to long-term relief.* A series of studies done at Duke University Medical Center has pointed to the conclusion that exercise can help relieve depression and reduce the chances of a relapse.

The first study found that patients who exercised for 30 minutes or more, three times per week, recovered from depression more quickly than those who didn't exercise. In the second study, they found that patients who continued this exercise regimen were less likely to experience severe depression again.

Researchers also suggested that exercise may help because patients must take an active interest in their recoveries. There seems to be a reciprocal effect in that exercise helps them to feel better, and then, as the patients' moods improve, they tend to exercise more.

Talk to your doctor if you believe embarking on an exercise program could help relieve your depression.

## EATING RIGHT DURING THE HOLIDAYS

*They're coming.* The holidays can be wonderful—full of joy and merriment. Unfortunately, they can also be a very difficult time to stick to a balanced diet and exercise regimen.

Beginning in late November, many of us are subjected to an endless round of parties where the tables are laden with vast assortments of goodies. In addition, holiday shopping (along with giving and attending parties) can really cut into workout time. These factors combined are a recipe for serious indulgence without the balance of exercise.

Don't despair. With a little planning and self-control, you can safely navigate the maze of the holidays. Here are some suggestions that might help you get through this difficult time a little more easily.

■ **Enjoy without overindulging.** Don't let the holidays be an excuse to pig out, but do allow yourself to sample some foods that you might normally consider taboo. Enjoy that pie, but make it a smaller slice, and avoid going back for seconds. When you start to feel full, it's time to push the plate away.

■ **Make it lighter.** When you're doing the cooking, look for creative ways to lighten the final result. Choose all-white-meat turkey breasts over a whole bird when possible. Don't cook more than you need.

Put skim milk in the mashed potatoes instead of whole, and cut back slightly on the sugar in recipes where you know the extra sweetness won't be missed.

■ **Fit in the exercise whenever you can.** No exercise regimen can work if you are not consistent. However, when the holidays arrive and the stress level rises, it can be difficult to make your regularly scheduled workout times.

This is a time to be creative in your workout patterns. Continue to make exercise a priority in your schedule, and look for times when you might not normally work out—over lunch or first thing in the morning, for example.



—Physical fitness is not only one of the keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity.—  
 —John F. Kennedy

# EXPECTING?

## Don't quit exercising

*Just because you're expecting doesn't mean it's time to stop working out.*

Continuing an effective exercise program throughout your pregnancy has a number of benefits.

*Exercising while you're pregnant can:*

- relieve constipation
- reduce back pain
- increase circulation
- alleviate swelling
- help you carry the added weight of your condition
- help restore your shape more quickly after you deliver.

*Workouts that are excellent for pregnant women include:*

- light resistance training
- dance aerobics
- walking
- yoga
- swimming
- water aerobics
- jogging.

It's essential to consult with your doctor about your exercise program to be sure the activities you're choosing are appropriate for your stage of pregnancy. Activities in which you might fall and/or be injured are not wise choices. Also, you need to be cautious of conditions that could lead to preterm labor.

*Here are some tips for exercising safely and getting the most out of your workout.*

- Be consistent. Try to exercise on a regular schedule.
- Stay hydrated and avoid exercising outdoors in very hot or humid weather.
- Be aware that your joints and ligaments are looser and more relaxed during pregnancy. This is necessary to relax the pelvis for delivery, but it can also make you more susceptible to injury.

Once you deliver, give your body time to recover before you begin working out again. Once you do, start gradually with light exercise such as walking or stationary bicycling. Gradually build up to your prepregnancy intensity and you'll soon find yourself back in your prepregnancy shape.



## You don't have to hurt tomorrow

*Okay, let's say you don't have to hurt "as much" tomorrow.* Many people find they suffer from "delayed onset muscle soreness" (DOMS) the day after a



workout. While DOMS isn't completely unavoidable, its effects can be lessened by taking a few precautions before you work out.

DOMS occurs about 12 hours after a vigorous workout. It is caused by tiny tears in your muscles. These tears are more common in activities where you have to put on the brakes often, such as basketball or tennis. They can also

occur when lowering weights or doing pushups. In addition to soreness, many people experience swelling in the area of the muscles they were working. This puts pressure on surrounding tissues, causing more pain.

To prevent this problem or lessen its effects, it's best to stick to a regular workout schedule. DOMS often occurs when someone has avoided working certain muscles for a long period of time. If you haven't worked out in a while, start off slowly with some stretching and light aerobic activity. Take your time stretching and pay special attention to the muscles you know you'll be working. Consider your entire workout goal, and do about a third of it the first day. Increase your activity or weight by small increments until you reach your ideal achievement level.

Since you can't completely avoid DOMS, be prepared for a little stiffness the day after your workout. Icing and lightly stretching the sore area can help. Massage the muscles you've injured, and use ibuprofen or aspirin to relieve pain. Wait until all discomfort is gone before working out vigorously. However, continue to do light aerobic activities, such as walking, to keep the muscles supple. Your soreness should subside after about three days. If your DOMS continues for more than a week, see your physician.

### AIR FORCE WINS 2002 ARMED FORCES MEN'S SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

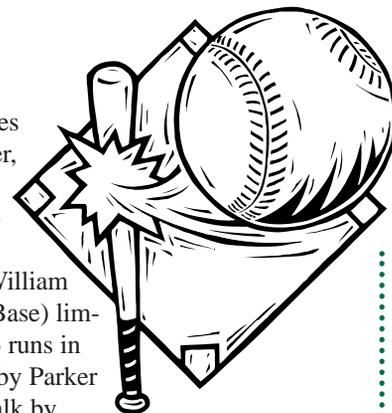
**T**he Air Force Men's Softball Team won first place in the 2002 Armed Forces Men's Softball Championship, hosted by Naval Air Station Pensacola, 19-24 August. The team got off to a slow start, despite Scott Harris's three hits (two home runs) in four at bats, losing the tournament's opening game to the host Navy team, 23-16. The Air Force team did not fare much better in its next game, a 20-12 loss to the Army. The team did start to hit a little better as Master Sergeant Joel Obman (Charleston Air Force Base), Staff Sergeant Daniel Simpson (Lackland Air Force Base), and Technical Sergeant Benjamin Sotomayer (McGuire Air Force Base) each had four hits, while Staff Sergeant Ambrose "Bo" Brewer (Spangdahlem Air Base) added three hits to the team's total. The team then beat the Marine Corps Team, 25-17, behind Obman's and Staff Sergeant Anthony Patrick's (Kadena Air Base) five-hit games, as well as Master Sergeant Albert Daniels (Dyess Air Force Base) and Airman First Class Joshua Wiggs' (Hickam Air Force Base) four hits each. Technical Sergeant Jason Parker (McGuire Air Force Base) started the Air Force off well in the second round of the tournament by belting three homers and going four for five from the plate. The final score was Air Force 27, Navy 13. After a close 28-26 loss to the Army in its fifth game, the Air Force went on to win its next three games in the tournament.

The last game had the 5-3 Air Force team pitted against the 6-2 Marine Corps team, with the winner assured of the Armed Forces Championship Title, based on the established tie-breaking system. This game turned into one of the most exciting games ever played in the Men's Armed Forces Championships. A 17-run fourth inning by the Marine Corps team placed the Air Force behind 22-3, within a run of losing the game on the 20-run rule. Daniels started a rally with a solid base hit, followed by Staff Sergeant Manuel Gonzalez' (Tyndall Air Force Base) towering home run over the 300-foot fence. Three more hits by Obman, Simpson, and Parker were followed by consecutive home runs by Harris, Wiggs, and Patrick, bringing the score to a much closer 22-11 after four innings. After the Marine Corps scored five runs in the top of the fifth inning, and following a leadoff out, Staff Sergeant Dexter High's (Kadena Air Base) timely single initiated a key rally. Sotomayer hit a three-run homer in the inning to knot the score at 27-27. Staff Sergeant Mike Horton (Tyndall Air Force Base) effectively used his knuckleball and defense from the mound to limit the Marine Corps to three runs in the top of the sixth and three runs in the seventh. Down by six runs in the bottom of the seventh, Parker's three-run homer brought the Air Force to within three

runs. After consecutive singles by Wiggs, Patrick, Sotomayer, and Gonzalez, Obman tied the game with a two-run single. Key defensive plays by Horton and Senior Airman William Mitchell (Patrick Air Force Base) limited the Marine Corps to two runs in the eighth. Consecutive hits by Parker and Harris, followed by a walk by Wiggs, loaded the bases. Fleet-footed Staff Sergeant Roger Stewart (Tyndall Air Force Base) ran for Harris and scored from second on a critical single by Patrick. Sotomayer then ended the game with a single up the middle to score Wiggs from second.

Air Force players selected to the All-Tournament Team included catcher Scott Harris, who batted well over .700 for the tournament, second baseman Tony Patrick, third baseman Ben Sotomayer, and outfielder Chris Simpson.

Air Force players, in addition to the All-Tournament Team members, advancing as part of the Armed Forces Men's Softball Team to the Amateur Softball Association's Major Level National Tournament in Johnson City, Tennessee, 30 August, include shortstop Joel Obman, first baseman Joshua Wiggs, head coach Steve Shortland (Randolph Air Force Base, and trainer Staff Sergeant Toby Urenda (Eglin Air Force Base). The Air Force assistant coach was Chief Master Sergeant Randy Raper (Malmstrom Air Force Base), and backup extra hitter was Staff Sergeant Sam Pursley (Robins Air Force Base).



# The benefits of core strength training

**C**ore strength training is a program that helps you develop the muscles in the trunk of the body and the pelvis. Unlike the muscles of the extremities, these muscles don't usually get the necessary attention. With the exception of the abdominal muscles, core muscles may be left out of many workouts.

This is unfortunate, since the core muscles stabilize the posture and balance of the body. These are the muscles that support the spine and pelvis. They help to move energy from the core of the body to the extremities during times of great exertion.

Proper core training makes you aware of these muscle groups and how they affect your overall performance. The main muscles that are affected by this type of program are the hamstrings, inner and outer thighs, hip muscles, upper and lower back muscles, abdominals, and obliques.

Core training exercises should comprise the first part of each workout. Exercises that you do should always be safe, but they should also be challenging. When you first begin core training, exercises such as lunges, crunches, back extensions, squat lifts, and pull-ups, among others, are a good place to start.

As always, exercises should be done in a controlled manner. Start with little resistance and gradually progress to more complex exercises and greater resistance.



Training in this way should help you to slowly build muscle while avoiding injury.

As with any exercise program, variety is good for your muscles and your psyche. However, always do the exercises carefully and appropriately. Sloppy workouts leave you open to injury and work against your fitness goals.

Don't ignore any muscle groups, either. To improve the stability of your spine and pelvis, you need to work all the muscles that support them. Flexibility training should be done in conjunction with core training workouts. And, as with any exercise program, consistency is essential.

As you progress, look into doing exercises on less stable surfaces. Balance boards and foam mats can help you improve balance and increase stability.

Control of core muscles is important to any strength-training program. Developing strong core muscles can prepare you for all types of physical activity while decreasing your chances of injury. Improvements in balance, agility, and posture can all be traced to a good core-strength-training program. Don't ignore some of your muscles while overworking others. Consider the benefits of core strength training and discover what this workout can do for you.

## Air Force Space Command introduces WarFit

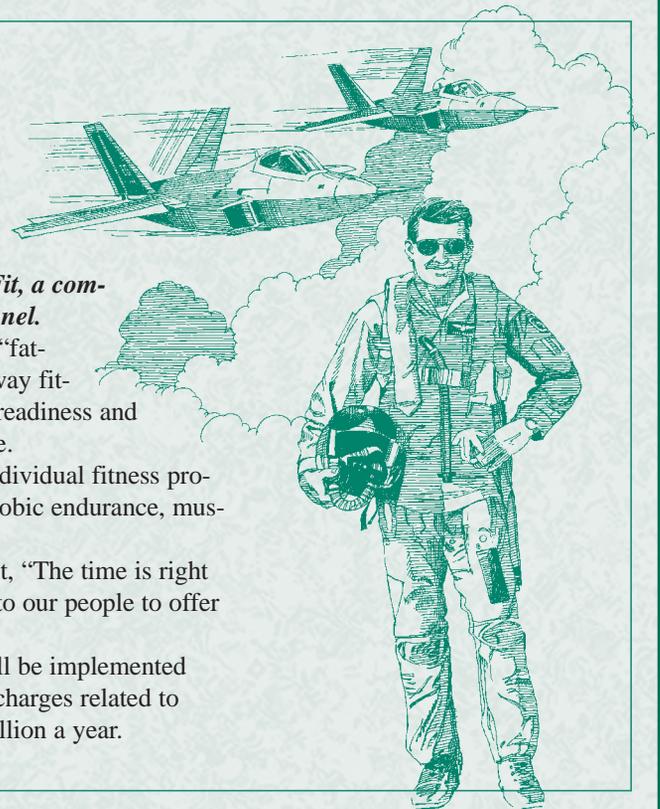
*AF Space Command (AFSPC) has recently developed WarFit, a comprehensive fitness and wellness program for active duty personnel.*

Using a multidisciplinary team to focus on "fitness" rather than "fatness," it is a step out to change the Air Force mindset as to the way fitness programs are implemented. WarFit is designed to improve readiness and create a cultural change—where physical activity is a way of life.

The tactical approach is to establish unit-level oversight of individual fitness programs, duty time for exercise, and a fitness test that includes aerobic endurance, muscular endurance, and body fat.

According to Ms. Deena Ellin, AFSPC coordinator for WarFit, "The time is right for us to effect change in the way we look at fitness. We owe it to our people to offer them the means to improving their health."

Currently, WarFit is being tested at two AFSPC bases and will be implemented commandwide by January 2003. By reducing the number of discharges related to weight management, there is a potential savings of up to \$59 million a year.



# An epidemic of inactivity

*Children today aren't getting the exercise that their parents did at a similar age.* Statistics show that the number of children who are overweight has tripled since the late 1900s. Even those who are within their ideal weight range get little daily exercise and do not eat balanced diets.



## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO "SANDLOT BASEBALL"?

There are many reasons why children these days don't get the exercise that their parents did while growing up. On average, children spend more than five hours a day in front of a television or computer. In addition, many schools have cut back on daily physical education programs and have deleted recess times, decreasing a child's opportunity for vigorous activity.



## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO "EAT YOUR VEGETABLES"?

Today's vegetables are likely to come in the forms of French fries and corn chips. Even if children are presented three nutritious meals a day, they are likely to be snacking on fat and sugar-laden treats when they get the chance.

Also, convenience foods that fit our busy lifestyles may not offer the best variety of vitamins and nutrients for growing bodies.

## WHATEVER CAN WE DO?

Don't fret. Changing the wellness outlook for your child isn't that difficult. After the toddler years, your child can eat a diet very similar to an adult's with regard to low-fat foods and plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. The main thing is to look for ways to enrich your child's diet with foods

that he or she enjoys and which offer vitamins and nutrients that are necessary for health and growth.

In addition, a child can do many of the same types of exercise but on a slightly different scale. Spend time walking, jogging, or playing ball together. Look for classes your child can take or sports activities he or she might enjoy. Inactivity among the young may be an epidemic, but it's one with an easy remedy if we're willing to encourage our children to get up and go.



## FEEL GOOD!

*More and more research is pointing to the benefits of regular exercise.*

You've probably heard about the physical rewards of working out, but the emotional benefits haven't received quite as much press.

There is now evidence that regular exercise can decrease your stress levels while having a positive effect on your

- energy
- self-esteem
- confidence
- body image
- sleep habits.

Studies have found that people who exercise on a regular basis say they feel better about themselves. They also found that these people had more mental energy and more stamina for other activities they enjoy. In addition, many people who exercise regularly feel that they look better, which helps increase their self-esteem and self-confidence.

One of the benefits of regular exercise is the sense of accomplishment many people experience when they start working out. Some make shedding a certain number of pounds their goal. Others want to develop or tone their muscles. Still others set a goal of walking, running, or bicycling for a certain number of miles or length of time. Whatever the goal, making steps toward achieving it boosts your self-esteem and lends to an improved emotional state.

Do you want to feel good? Exercise can help you feel better about yourself and improve your outlook on life.

## Why are you wearing that weight belt?

**U**nless you are a competitive power lifter, you probably don't have a good reason for using a weight belt. For power lifters who are lifting extremely heavy weights on a one-time basis, weight belts can be effective; otherwise, they may actually work against your weight-lifting goals.

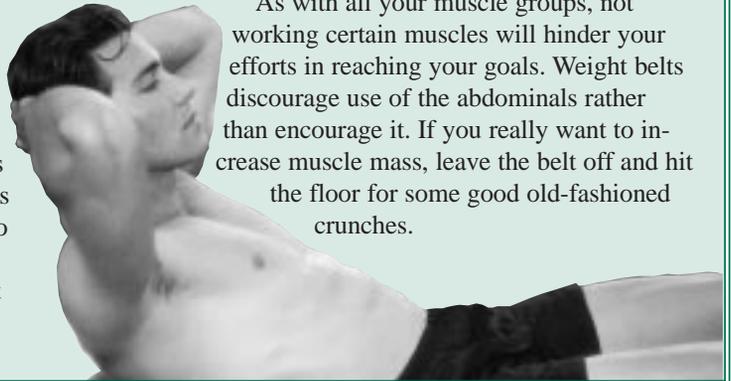
The purpose of the abdominal muscles is to help you maintain good posture to protect the spine and pelvis during certain activities. They tend to contract whenever you do difficult activities, such as lifting a shovelful of snow.

A weight belt generates pressure on the abdomen, but this doesn't stabilize the spine or pelvis as the abdominal muscles do. Using a belt regularly while lifting will only cause you to rely on it rather than building the abdominals or muscles in the back. Muscle imbalance can result that will work against your workout goals.

Rather than depending on a weight belt, do the crunches

that will help build the muscles of the abdomen, and hyper-extensions for the back. Learning to do these exercises properly and using them to develop these areas will only aid you in your other lifting.

As with all your muscle groups, not working certain muscles will hinder your efforts in reaching your goals. Weight belts discourage use of the abdominals rather than encourage it. If you really want to increase muscle mass, leave the belt off and hit the floor for some good old-fashioned crunches.



## In search of... **TRIMMER ABS**

**I**f you're satisfied with most of your body but never quite happy with your stomach, you may be wondering if there are specific exercises you can do to tone that area. The answer is a qualified "no."

First of all, there is no one exercise that will give you the washboard abdominal muscles you're dreaming of. Attaining a stronger, firmer abdomen requires effort that combines exercise, diet, and resistance training. That's because developing a thin, toned stomach involves losing body fat as well as performing exercises that tone the tummy.

**DIET.** A low-fat diet that eliminates fried foods, oils, and butters but increases proteins and fresh vegetables is important. Watch your carbohydrate intake too—especially at the end of the day.

**EXERCISE.** When you embark on a quest to tone your body, you need to concentrate on burning fat through regular workouts. Many people find three times per week is enough; others need to work out five times per week. Vary your workout so that you don't become bored with it and so your body doesn't become accustomed to it. Each session should last 30 to 40 minutes.

**RESISTANCE TRAINING.** Crunches that work your lower abs should be done, as well as crunches for upper abs. Work with a trainer to be sure you are doing them correctly. It's important to use the proper technique so that you get the maximum effect and avoid hurting your back or neck in the process. Holding each crunch will do more for you than trying to do hundreds of them. They should be part of an overall training program rather than your sole focus.

### USAF FITNESS AND SPORTS

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