COMBAT CONDITIONING
B1Y0476
STUDENT HANDOUT
Combat Conditioning

Introduction and Importance

This lesson will cover the integration and synergy between training and physical fitness that can be achieved by the use of drills and exercises that enhance Combat Conditioning. It will provide you the leader of Marines, with the tools for executing a Combat Conditioning Program at the unit level.

In This Lesson

This lesson will give you a framework of how to develop and maintain a sound combat conditioning program. The overall fitness of your Marines is a key to success in today’s demanding environments. Functional fitness developed through a good combat conditioning program will greatly enhance combat effectiveness and help to provide the framework to ward off combat stress.

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Terminal Learning Objectives

1. Given Marines and individual field equipment, conduct combat conditioning in order to prepare for the rigors of combat. (MCCS-COND-2101 )

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Given individual field equipment, perform combat conditioning stretches to prepare for the rigors of combat. (MCCS-COND-2101a)

2. Given individual field equipment and field expedient weight materials, perform combat conditioning exercises to prepare for the rigors of combat. (MCCS-COND-2101b)
3. Given individual field equipment, field expedient weight materials, and while serving as a unit leader, supervise combat conditioning to ensure Marines know proper nutrition, injury prevention, and are prepared for the rigors of combat. (MCCS-COND-2101f)

**Method/Media** This class will be taught by lecture, demonstration, and practical application.

**Evaluation** Topics from this lesson will be evaluated by student participation, written exams, and performance evaluation.

**Combat Conditioning**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

   a. **Purpose.** The Marine Corps exists to make Marines and fight our Nation’s battles. This means that everything we do as Marines is centered around our preparation for combat. For this reason the Marine is the ultimate cross trainer who must be prepared for any uncertainty. Unlike the professional athlete, a Marine cannot afford to peak. A Marine must maintain the optimal fitness level at all times. A Marine’s training combines strength and speed to create power that is applied at the optimum moment because combat is not fought by units of equal size and numbers. A Marine combines aerobic and anaerobic fitness to create endurance for the battlefield knowing combat has no quarters or halftime and is not a timed event. A Marine combines flexibility and coordination to create agility knowing that combat does not take place on a level playing field. A Marine combines all of these attributes with mental toughness and an iron will to overcome any foe or obstacle. The knowledge that combat is the most physically, mentally and spiritually demanding activity that a human will ever face motivates the MAIT to ensure that the physical development of all Marines is based upon combat conditioning and not simply being fit.

   b. **Program Philosophy.** A key element of the physical discipline is combative conditioning. A program that goes a level beyond our current physical fitness program. It combines the physical fitness dividends of martial arts training with those of traditional physical fitness, water survival training, rough terrain skills training, and the Semper Fit program. It is designed to mitigate the human factors experienced during combat that have a physically debilitating effect on the human body, allow a Marine to fight in any terrain and under any climatic condition, and face the rigors of the dispersed battlefield encountered in modern combat. It consists of the various components of fitness as well as the numerous disparate programs that are part of the Combat Conditioning Program.

2. **COMPONENTS OF PHYSICAL FITNESS.**

   a. Cardio-respiratory is the body’s ability to sustain physical activity in an aerobic state by oxygenating the muscles enough to continue the exercise for a sustained period of time.
b. Muscular strength is the body’s maximum ability to exert enough force to move an object to do an exercise for one repetition only.

c. Muscular Endurance is the body’s ability to repeatedly sustain an exercise at sub-maximal effort.

d. Flexibility is the body’s ability to move a joint through a full range of motion.

e. Nutrition is the fuel used by the body to perform any physical task.

3. PRINCIPLES OF FITNESS. The principles of fitness are the roadmap to improve upon physical fitness.

a. Progression is finding the level of a Marine or unit’s fitness principles and improving upon it based on the commanders intent and timeline of execution.

b. Overload is the principle of progressively introducing muscles to an advanced workload and allowing the body to adapt to it.

c. Variety is the principle of constantly confusing the body to stimulate growth and increased performance. Also, to constantly engage the mind to prevent boredom and complacency.

d. Recovery is the principle of allowing your body the necessary time to rest and repair itself.

e. Balance is the principle of providing a fitness regiment that encompasses all the components of fitness.

f. Specificity is the principle of training focused on working recognized weaknesses, a specific need in an aspect of fitness based on the commanders intent, or the needs of a mission.

g. Synergy of Training is the principle of working all aspects of fitness together to improve overall conditioning, strength, and muscular endurance.

4. FITT FACTORS. FITT factors are the ways to implement the principles of fitness in a fitness program.

a. **Frequency** is the factor that refers to how often you conduct physical training.

b. **Intensity** is the factor used to determine the rate of exertion used while conducting physical training. By increasing the weight, repetitions, or time you also increase the intensity of the workout.

c. **Time** is the duration allotted for each physical training session.

d. **Type** is the exercises chosen in each physical training session
5. **COMBAT CONDITIONING CONSIDERATIONS.** First and foremost the safety of the training conducted needs to be considered. Each drill should be run by a Marine with the knowledge of how hard to push the Marines. Along with safety, the conditioning, physical limitations, and physical condition of the Marines executing the exercises must be accounted for. To show relevance in combative situations and thereby bring credibility to the drills, the realism of the exercises also needs to be taken into consideration. Last, the improvement of the mentality for combat needs to be implemented by the introduction of tough training.

6. **TYPES OF DRILLS**

   a. There are four types of drills commonly used in the Marine Corps.

      (1) **Martial Arts Drills.** Martial arts drills and exercises such as the bull-in-the-ring drill focus solely on the martial arts technique that you have learned. They allow you to practice the techniques repeatedly, against opponents of different sizes and weights. This is a way a training session during which new martial arts physical discipline techniques are introduced can be done to provide a measure of physical training.

      (2) **Physical Training/Integration Training.** This is the blend of a task performed by and individual or group of Marines and realistic physical activities. A simple example of this is an orienteering at speed.

      Bear pit drills, bayonet exercises, bayonet assault courses and trails all enhance muscular and cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, strength and speed. These combine techniques with realistic physical exercises. The key is to conduct well rounded programs that stress all components of physical fitness. Start each PT session with stretching that can be done not only during martial arts training but as part of the daily seven (or daily sixteen) for any type of PT. This in fact has been introduced at recruit training with the implementation of the program. Martial arts training can be combined with speed marches, running of the obstacle course or as part of Fartlek training. These are all examples of integration training.

      (3) **Field Exercise.** This includes not only normal field and live fire training but also rough terrain skills and adventure training. Physical training should be combined with field and live fire training in order to enhance this training as well as to better equate the realism of the combat environment. Specialized skills such as rappelling, fast roping, mountaineering, over-snow travel and steep earth climbing, all require and further enhance physical fitness. This ensures that Marines will continue to be capable of responding in every clime and place.

      (4) **Deployed Drill.** We find ourselves under unique constraints when deployed. Whether it be on ship or in a far off distant land, we often have to tailor our program to the resources we have available to us. Safety and creativity are the two most important aspects when we adapt our program to new environments. Incorporating ramp sprints, flight deck P.T., well-deck swimming, martial arts drills and activities of these types, takes coordination with ship personnel and is a lot of work, but well worth it for the training the Marines will receive.
7. **SPECIFIC CALISTHENICS AND MOVEMENT.**

   a. “Individual Conditioning Exercises” consists of any exercises that can be conducted without the use of equipment or another Marine.

   b. Buddy Conditioning is the use of another Marine’s body weight to introduce the overload principle to enhance Marines capabilities with a load.

   c. Buddy Carries are used to introduce real relevance to the exercises by applying a realistic load that might have to be moved in a certain way to a certain destination under certain conditions.

   d. Movement Exercises are used to increase a Marine’s tactical capabilities by improving on general movements. Used to improve flexibility and speed of each movement.

8. **CONSTRUCT AND SUPERVISE COMBAT CONDITIONING.** To construct and supervise a Combat Conditioning Program you will need planning, command participation and support, and knowledge of the stage of program needed. In planning, you need to have an understanding of the general conditioning of a unit. Once you have knowledge of the starting point, and with the commander’s intent, you can implement a schedule to improve combat capabilities. To implement a given program, you will need to find out the support allotted to you i.e. corpsman, secondary instructors, equipment, facilities, and destination for each of the events. Once you gather all information and begin training, you need to determine whether you need to be in the developmental stage, meaning Marines still need improvement to achieve commander’s intent, or the maintenance stage, meaning the Marines are at the goal required and now just have to maintain the standard of fitness and combat readiness.

   When creating a unit’s program be sure to use all of the components of physical fitness, principles of fitness, safety considerations, and command’s support. Aside from the physical requirements of the commander’s intent be sure to implement mental and character aspects of training by use of tie-ins, warrior studies, and tough realistic training.

9. **MANAGING YOUR PROGRAM.** To manage your program make sure to keep records of the condition of each Marine’s physical fitness levels as well as type of activities conducted. Ensure you constantly improve on the Marines fitness level by increasing intensity and sustainment time. To ensure everything is going as planned make sure to supervise as much training as possible.

10. **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES.** For each of these four types of activities you will be required to be able to review, implement, and supervise the drill. As a leader you may create new combat conditioning drills, however it is very important to have these reviewed by a Martial Arts Instructor Trainer(MAIT) or a Combat Conditioning Specialist, and conduct in-depth ORA/ORM. For a new drill the ORM must be signed and a review of the drill completed prior to conducting the drill.
a. **Review.** This is the first step you will take in running any type of training. You provide a second set of eyes and ensure your understanding of the training by doing this. You must review the following elements of the drill;

   (1) **Conduct of Drill.** You need to know the where, when, who, what, why, and how, to run a well organized drill. “I don’t have the whistle, do you have the whistle?”, or asking the Marines being trained to borrow their watches can create an avoidable, unprofessional distraction.

   (2) **Safeties and safety personnel.** Before running a drill you should have a list of the necessary safeties and brief your Marines. If safety personnel such as a corpsman or another observer are needed make arrangements before beginning training.

   (3) **ORM.** Because of the types of training involved it is important that all leaders ensure that an adequate operational risk assessment has been conducted, a safety plan developed and safety requirements briefed. This is extremely important when conducting drills involving dissimilar types of training, i.e., a martial arts drill combined with water survival and/or live firing. While exist safety procedures for both bayonet training and live fire training exist, when the two are combined new variables are added that require additional safeguards.

   (4) **Drill Brief (for those executing the drill).** The Marines need to understand all of the aspects of the drill. It is important to demonstrate all phases of the drill so the Marines understand what is expected of them. They must also know where to find the corpsman and any other safety personnel (the five-paragraph order is your friend).

b. **Implement.** This is simply making it happen. Having everything written out on a piece of paper is one thing, getting all of the assets together and getting it going on time in a professional manner is altogether a different thing.

c. **Supervise.** When supervising there are a number of factors you will be looking for and evaluating:

   (1) **Safety.** is always paramount, a concern of everybody in the chain of command. You serve as an immediate supervisor, the first to be able to step in and interrupt or totally avoid an unsafe situation. You are responsible for the health and well being of the Marines that you train.

   (2) **The Plan.** You make sure that everything is going to plan and make the small adjustments necessary to keep things moving along.

   (3) **Fault-Checking.** You provide immediate feedback to the participants of the drill. If they are performing techniques incorrectly you make the corrections without interrupting the flow of the drill.

d. **Accountability.**
(1) If Marines are not putting out or getting lazy, hold them accountable for their actions. If repeating stations that are not done correctly is part of the drill, hold the Marines to that standard. If the Marines are supposed to accomplish stations as a team, enforce that as well, with the proper warnings and consequences. Remember, you are not there to haze anybody, but to provide tough, realistic, military-oriented type training.

**SUMMARY**

Today we have discussed the purpose and philosophy of Combat Conditioning, components of physical fitness, principles of fitness, F-I-T-T factors, Combat Conditioning considerations, drills and exercises, calisthenics and movements, constructing and supervising a Combat Conditioning Program, and participation. With the physical discipline we develop a union between the physical fitness, combative conditioning, and individual as well as unit combat skills. It is battlefield oriented; combat equipment based and develops in the Marine the ability to overcome physical hardship and physical obstacles under any circumstance. It will develop a physical toughness in every Marine that will translate into mental toughness. It will produce a Marine who possesses combat fitness and the ability to handle any situation that confronts him.

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