

USARAK – May 19, 2020

Return to Unit PT Guidelines

❑ General PT Guidelines

- Always perform a good warm-up and cool-down.
- Perform strength training 2-3 days per week.
- Perform cardio (run/ ruck) 2-3 days per week.
- Alternate weekly which type of workout is performed 3x, or dedicate one day per week active recovery (yoga, mobility, moderate intensity cardio circuit, etc.).

❑ Return to run/ ruck

- It is safe to increase running distance by 5-10% per week.
 - For very deconditioned Soldiers, this may mean starting with 1-2 miles, or even walk-run intervals (e.g. run 5 minutes, walk 1 minute, repeat 5 rounds).
- Limiting rucking to every other week will minimize related injuries while still allowing progress.
 - Return to ruck march program should start with a strict weight limit (20% body weight or 35 lbs.).
 - Time/ distance, speed **or** weight can be safely increased with each session. Increasing multiple variables in a single session increases risk of injury.
 - Plan to build up to longer ruck march distances accordingly.

❑ Overuse injuries increase when cumulative volume (running and ruck marching) exceeds 20 miles per week.

❑ Strength Training: Form FIRST

- Do not attempt to test a previous max lift in your first month back at consistent training
- Perform movements with light weight to start, then progressively increase load: 3-5 progressively heavier warm-up sets for each compound lift you will perform (squat, deadlift, bench press, overhead press).
- Strength is built by adding resistance (weight), reps, or sets: **increase only one at a time** to progress safely.
- HIIT-type workouts where the intent is to perform a lot of reps in quick succession, maintain a very high heartrate or “smoke” participants is **not** an effective way to build strength.
- Know that it will take some time for some Soldiers to safely return to pre-COVID physical condition: that is OK!

❑ Rest and recovery are crucial to building/ rebuilding fitness.

- This includes adequate sleep, good nutrition and hydration.
- Prolonged soreness is a sign of either overtraining or poor recovery. It is not an indicator of a good workout.
- If Soldiers are sore for days after a workout they will not be able to perform well in subsequent workouts, and will not progress optimally with strength training or conditioning programs.