

*For Military. By Military.*



*SPECIAL 2023 FITNESS & HEALTH ISSUE*

**FITNESS &  
NUTRITION**

**MEETING WEIGHT  
STANDARDS**

**THE 90-DAY  
PREP GUIDE**

## HOW TO PHYSICALLY PREPARE FOR OCS

The 2023 Fitness Newsletter combines best practices from a variety of sources, including the official USMC Training Command, active-duty service members, and certified fitness & nutrition specialist.

According to TRNGCMD the physical training program at OCS has been designed to teach, test, and evaluate, a very high level of physical fitness in a minimum amount of time. It is built on principles that will test physical courage, willpower, and determination while preparing you for the rigors of future Marine Corps duty.





The primary USMC fitness test is the Physical Fitness Test or PFT, which includes 3 parts: pull-ups or push-ups, crunches or plank pose, and a 3-mile timed run. A secondary evolution is the Marine Corps Combat Fitness Test, or CFT, which measures functional fitness and simulates the demands of battle in full combat utility uniforms. The three parts of the CFT are Movement to Contact, Ammunition Lift, and Maneuver Under Fire.

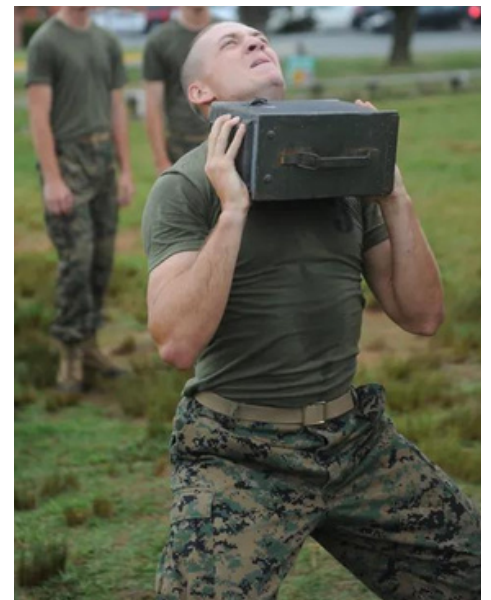
Candidates will also take part in a variety of fitness and strength-building activities;

- UBDs: Upper Body Development Course
- Run Circuit: A circular course in the immediate OCS area consisting of many exercise stations designed to build endurance and overall body strength.
- Fartlek Course: A 3 to the 4-mile trail, consisting of nearly 1 dozen exercise stations, designed to build endurance.
- Obstacle Course: A 100-meter-long series of obstacles that must be negotiated in a prescribed amount of time.
- Confidence & Tarzan, Courses: A series of high obstacles created to build an individual's self-confidence while teaching military skills.
- Combat Readiness Test: Consists of physical events that one could likely face in combat situations.
- Conditioning Hikes: These range from 3 to 15 miles with combat gear.
- Pugil Sticks: Simulates close combat fighting.
- Combat Course: This is a 1.5-mile course that simulates a combat environment by stressing all-around security and noise discipline while negotiating a series of obstacles.
- Endurance Course: A 3.5-mile course testing a candidate's physical endurance & ability to cross and negotiate various obstacles

## What are Fartleks?

Fartleks are 3-5 mile runs, interspersed with workouts every half mile or so. Fartleks are very similar to the Run Course/Mec Weight (or something like that) where you just don't run as far, and do more workouts. An awesome cardio workout.

Example exercises: Pushups, pull-ups, crunches, sit-ups, frog sit-ups (wide knees like you're doing a groin stretch), diamond pushups, body squats, bend and thrusts, burpees, dips, mountain climbers, sprints.







# EAT WELL. RUN BETTER

with Cortney Berling, Dietitian & Running Coach

## DOES RUNNING SLOW MAKE YOU SLOWER?

by Coach Cortney

Easy effort (“slow”) running does not make you slow. Easy effort running helps lay the base of your distance running & improves endurance! By building your endurance & aerobic capacity with easy effort running, you are becoming a more efficient and stronger, fitter runner. Easy running helps improve your mitochondrial & capillary density to deliver more oxygen to your muscles. This is a fancy way of saying, easy running improves your ability to burn fat for fuel and improves your fatigue resistance. When you run easy, you can run more and longer while decreasing your risk for injury and burnout.

So, what is considered “easy running”? You don't have an "easy pace", you have an "easy effort", and the pace will change from day to day depending on what else is going on in your life including training fatigue, weather, stress, menstrual cycle, etc. Take each day as it comes and do not push to reach a pace you think should be your “easy pace”.

It is important to remember that your body doesn't know "pace", it only knows effort. You can use things like heart rate and perceived effort to help you find your easy effort

### Check it out:

Your easy zone is...

- Heart rate: Approximately. up to 75% of your Maximum Heart Rate.
- Perceived effort: A pace that is about 1-3 out of 10. You should feel like you could sing a song out loud at this pace.

### When should I run fast?

“Slow running” should be about 80% of your miles and “fast running” should be the remaining 20%. Running fast is definitely important and should be included in your training. For example, if you are running three days a week, then two days should be easy effort runs and one should be a hard interval run.

Need more guidance and step by step coaching? Reach out to Coach Cortney Berling on Instagram, [@eatwell.runbetter](https://www.instagram.com/eatwell.runbetter) for more information on her training program.





# EAT WELL. RUN BETTER

with Cortney Berling, Dietitian & Running Coach

## MAKING WEIGHT

*by Coach Cortney*

Are you constantly stressing over the USMC weight standards? The most important thing to remember with weight loss is that there are no quick fixes. Don't believe the marketing hype. There are no supplements or diets that lead to healthy, long-term sustainable weight loss. Additionally, weight loss does take time so do not wait until the last minute to attempt a diet.

I only recommend focusing on weight loss while training for OCS if you absolutely have to in order to meet the weight standards. Otherwise, training hard and trying to lose weight at the same time increases your risk of injury and illness.

Here are my 3 tips on how to lose weight safely without hurting your PFT:

- 1. Start early.** As I mentioned, there are no quick fixes. Give yourself plenty of time to make small sustainable changes to your diet and exercise routine. Cutting back on too many calories at once will leave you injured or burnt out before OCS even starts! Likewise, crash diets often lead to more rebound weight gain and continuous weight cycling.
- 2. Focus on nutrient timing.** The timing of your nutrition is very important. Don't skip out on pre/post-workout fuel. This is when your body needs nutrition the most. Skipping pre-workout fuel will result in little energy to work out at your desired intensity. Skipping post-workout fuel will leave you in a catabolic state which means your muscles are in a state of breakdown.
- 3. Be mindful of what you are choosing to eat.** Don't skip meals or cut out whole food groups. Your body needs carbs, protein, and fat to perform at a high level. However, check in with yourself. Are you eating past the point of fullness? Are you distracted while eating? Are you eating to cope with emotions? Are you drinking empty calories such as soda or alcohol? Small changes go a long way!

If you are feeling stuck or confused on how to lose weight while training for OCS be sure to check out the OCS Prep Nutrition Course. I cover all this and so much more to help you be your best at OCS! <https://eatwellrunbetter.podia.com/ocs-prep-nutrition-course>

Questions? Contact: Cortney Berling, MPH, RD @eatwell.runbetter





# EAT WELL. RUN BETTER

with Cortney Berling, Dietitian & Running Coach

## 3 TIPS TO LOSE WEIGHT SAFELY

by Coach Cortney

The most important thing to remember with weight loss is that there are no quick fixes. Don't believe the marketing hype. No supplements or diets lead to healthy, long-term sustainable weight loss.

I only recommend focusing on weight loss while training for OCS if you absolutely have to meet the weight standards. Otherwise, training hard and trying to lose weight simultaneously increases your risk of injury and illness.

If you need to lose weight to meet the USMC weight standards, then here is what you need to know. It is all about consistency and timing.



### Here are my 3 Tips to Lose Weight Safely:

1. Start early. As I mentioned, there are no quick fixes. Give yourself plenty of time to make small sustainable changes to your diet and exercise routine. Cutting back on too many calories at once will leave you injured or burnt out before OCS even starts!
2. Timing of your nutrition is critical. Don't skip out on pre/post-workout fuel when your body needs nutrition the most. Skipping pre-workout fuel will result in little energy to work out at your desired intensity. Skipping post-workout fuel will leave you in a catabolic state, which means your muscles are at a state of breakdown.
3. Be mindful. Don't skip meals or cut out whole food groups. Your body needs carbs, protein, and fat to perform at a high level. However, check-in with yourself. Ask, are you eating past the point of fullness? Are you distracted while eating? Are you eating to cope with emotions? Are you drinking empty calories such as soda or alcohol? Small changes go a long way!

If you are interested in learning more about exactly how many carbs you need to fuel your training be sure to check out the OCS Prep Fitness & Nutrition course:

<https://eatwellrunbetter.podia.com/ocs-prep-nutrition-course>. Reach out to Coach Cortney Berling on Instagram, [@eatwell.runbetter](https://www.instagram.com/eatwell.runbetter) for more information on her training program.





# CARBS ARE KING IN THE RUNNING WORLD

*by Coach Cortney*

Did you know that carbohydrates are your body's preferred source of fuel? Before you even step out the door to run, your body requires about 130 grams of carbs per day to fuel the brain, support the central nervous system, and maintain red blood cell production and immune health. That's the equivalent of nearly 8 slices of bread! In addition, your body can store and use an additional 75-100g of carbs in the liver and 300-600g in the muscles. This is enough fuel to keep the body going at a moderate intensity for about 2 hours.

However, the message society tells us is to cut back on carbs because they are "unhealthy, can cause weight gain, or that they cause diabetes! Well, the truth is, they are an essential part of an athlete's diet for performance. Cutting out too many carbohydrates will ultimately result in low energy, under fueling, and/or injury/illness.



Here are some simple ways to know you are getting enough carbohydrates:

- You are eating simple, easy-to-digest carbs before your run (about 30 grams is a good general goal)
- You are refueling with carbohydrates after your run. This is when your muscles will absorb the most carbohydrates to prepare you for the next workout.
- You are eating carbs with nearly every meal.
- If you are craving sweets, this is likely a sign you need more carbohydrates in your diet.
- You are increasing your carbohydrate intake as your mileage increases.
- Lastly, if you are running out of energy on your run or struggling with mid-day fatigue, you may need more carbs.

If you feel like you are struggling to eat enough carbs try adding some of these to your meals: Whole grains (whole wheat, rye, or sprouted grain, bread, pasta, barley, cereal, and crackers. Gluten-free grains like rice, quinoa, buckwheat, and corn. Don't forget about starchy veggies like sweet potatoes, peas, butternut squash, acorn squash spaghetti, and fruits

If you are interested in learning more about exactly how many carbs you need to fuel your training be sure to check out the OCS Prep Fitness & Nutrition course: <https://eatwellrunbetter.podia.com/ocs-prep-nutrition-course>. Reach out to Coach Cortney Berling on Instagram, [@eatwell.runbetter](https://www.instagram.com/eatwell.runbetter) for more information on her training program.

# 90-DAY PREPARATION GUIDE

CREATED BY TRAINING COMMAND - QUANTICO, VIRGINIA

**Background.** On average, prospective officer candidates spend 90 days with their Officer Selection Officer (OSO). Upon arrival to OCS, the single highest percentage of attrition from the training program is due to physical injuries. This physical training program has been established to assist these officer candidates with their preparation given the time constraints to reduce preventable injuries and to facilitate a successful evaluation.

There is a direct correlation between physical fitness and anticipated success in academic and leadership evaluations required to complete OCS. The physical training program at OCS is dynamic in nature and involves all ranges of motion, total body conditioning, and a holistic approach to physical training. A common mistake that leads to fatigue and stress-related injuries is preparing only for the Physical Fitness Test (PFT). Adherence to this program along with a balanced diet will ensure proper preparation and facilitate a safe and successful evaluation. Special modifications may be necessary for prospective candidates who are not within the Marine Corps height and weight standards.

**Purpose.** The purpose of this program is to assist officer candidates with their physical preparation prior to their arrival at OCS. It has been tailored for prospective candidates who have been with their OSOs for 90 days or less. The focus of this 90-day training program is on total body conditioning and it has been developed to prevent over/undertraining. Adherence to the program, along with a balanced diet, will reduce the chance of fatigue and stress-related injuries. It will also ensure the officer candidates are able to meet the required physical standards and able to achieve peak physical conditioning while in training at OCS.

**Execution.** The 90 day program follows a 12-week plan that gradually increases in intensity and duration. This progressive approach is designed for all standards of physical fitness, and by starting gradually it allows potential candidates to increase their fitness. The 12-weeks are split down into three cycles of 4-weeks, you will steadily increase your times and workouts for 3-weeks of each cycle and then lower the intensity for the fourth week of each cycle. The reduced intensity and duration of the last week of each cycle will allow your body to recover and stop over training, which is a common cause of injury at OCS.

**Sessions.** The PT sessions do not require use of a gymnasium or expensive equipment; all you will need is a good pair of running shoes, access to a pull-up bar, and a watch. Nearly all of the exercises involve moving your own body weight - a key function you will be required to perform at OCS. Ensure that you are properly warmed up, stretched, and hydrated before beginning any physical training event.

# 90-DAY PREPARATION GUIDE CONT.

**Running.** During your time at OCS you will be required to run and hike for long distances. To prepare you for this, run times and distance steadily increase throughout the pre-OCS physical program. The program requires you to run twice weekly and gradually increase your pace (min/mile). The program begins by establishing an 8:30 min/mile pace and steadily increases to a 7:30 min/mile pace at the end of the program.

**Circuit Training.** Circuits are to be conducted twice weekly to improve muscular and cardiovascular endurance using the following exercises which are explained in detail in at the bottom of this document:

- Pull Ups Outboard
- Crunches
- Bends and Thrusts
- Push Ups
- Frog Sit Ups
- Star Jumps
- Diamond Push Ups
- Sit Ups with a Twist
- Plyometric Jumps

All exercises are to be executed in this order. Each exercise should be performed for 10 repetitions except the pull ups which should be completed for maximum repetitions each time. All exercises should be executed with no rest in between each exercise and the rest between each circuit directed as part of the program.

## *Weekly Cycle*

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Session	Run	Rest	Circuit	Rest	Run	Rest	Circuit

## Comprehensive Training Program

Week	Runs	Circuits
1	2x3 mile runs 8:30 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuit to be completed 2 times with 2 min rest between each circuit.
2	2x3 mile run 8:30 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuit to be completed 2 times with 2 min rest between each circuit
3	2x3.5 mile runs 8:30 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuits to be completed 3 times with 2 min rest between each circuit



# 90-DAY PREPARATION GUIDE CONT.

4	2x3 mile run 8:30 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuit to be completed 2 times with 2 min rest between each circuit.
5	2x3.5 mile runs 8:30 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuits to be completed 3 times with 2 min rest between each circuit
6	2x3 mile runs 8:00 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuit to be completed 3 times with 1 min 30 s rest between each circuit
7	2x3.5 mile runs 8:00 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuits to be completed 4 times with 2 min rest between each circuit
8	2x3 mile run 8:30 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuits to be completed 3 times with 2 min rest between each circuit
9	2x3.5 mile runs 8:00 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuits to be completed 4 times with 2 min rest between each circuit
10	2x4 mile runs 8:00 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuit to be completed 4 times with 1 min 30 s rest between each circuit
11	2x3.5 mile runs 7:30 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuit to be completed 4 times with 1 minute rest between each circuit
12	2x3 mile run 8:30 min/mi pace	2xcircuit sessions Circuits to be completed 3 times with 2 min rest between each circuit

# 90-DAY PREPARATION GUIDE CONT.

The OCS pre-entry program is designed to bring you up to the minimum standard required at OCS. The progressive manner of the program enables your body to adapt to the stresses it will encounter at OCS without overtraining prior to entry.

The following exercises should be incorporated into your daily training regimen. Each exercise is accompanied by a description of how to execute each move properly. Do not cheat the proper form - you will be expected to execute these properly for the duration of Officer Candidates School.

- **PULL-UPS.** Inboard- Mount the bar with the palms of your hands facing you. You will start at a complete dead hang; your elbows will be completely locked out with no muscle tension in your arms. From that position, you will initiate your pull up continuing to pull your body upwards until your chin breaks the plane of the bar and then lowering your body back to the dead hang position. Outboard- Mount the bar with the palms of your hands facing towards the bar. You will start at a complete dead hang; your elbows will be completely locked out with no muscle tension in your arms. From that position, you will initiate your pull up continuing to pull your body upwards until your chin breaks the plane of the bar and then lowering your body back to the dead hang position.
- **PUSH UPS.** Start in the up position, with your arms locked out and your hands slightly wider than shoulder width, and your feet together. Roll your shoulders towards the ground to create active shoulders while keeping your body rigid in a straight line with your head up looking forward. From that position lower your body to the ground until your chest touches the desk. As soon as your chest touches, push your body back to the upright position maintaining straight alignment until you once again are in the upright position.
- **TRICEP PUSH-UPS.** Start in the up position with your arms locked out and your elbows close to your rib cage. Your hands should be approximately 12 inches apart and your feet together. Roll your shoulders towards the ground to create active shoulders while keeping your body rigid in a straight line with your head up and looking forward. From that position, lower your body to the ground until your chest touches the deck keeping your elbows in contact with your rib cage. As soon as your chest touches, push your body back to the upright position, keeping that straight alignment until you once again are in the upright position.
- **DIAMOND PUSH-UPS.** Start in the up position with your arms locked out, your elbows close to your rib cage, your hands directly underneath your chest with your index fingers and thumbs touching (creating a diamond), and your feet spread slightly wider than shoulder width. Roll your shoulders toward the ground to create active shoulders while keeping your body rigid in a straight line with your head up and looking forward. From that position lower your body to the ground until your chest touches the deck. Keep your elbows in contact with your rib cage as your body lowers. As soon as your chest touches, push your body back to the upright position keeping that straight alignment until once again in the upright position.

# 90-DAY PREPARATION GUIDE CONT.

- **PLYOMETRIC JUMPS.** Stand behind a sturdy surface approximately 12 inches high with your feet spread in a natural stance. Lower your body by bending at the knees at a 45 degree angle, and then explode upwards with both feet leaving the ground at the same time and landing on top of the surface. The entire soles of both feet should impact the surface at the same time; as soon as contact is made, immediately jump again to travel back to the ground.
- **MILITARY PRESS.** Stand with your back straight and feet spread shoulder width apart, your arms bent at your sides with palms facing forward and the bar touching your chest. Push the bar upwards until your arms are fully extended and locked out above your head. Then proceed to lower the bar back to the starting position.
- **BICEP CURL.** Stand with your back straight and your feet shoulder width apart, your arms fully extended at your sides with the bar touching your legs. Bending your arms at the elbow, pull the weight upwards to your chest while keeping your back straight. Continue upwards until the bar touches your chest. Lower the bar until you are back to your starting position.
- **CRUNCHES.** Lay down with your back flat on the ground and your feet in the air with your knees bent at a 90 degree angle. Your hands should be cupping your ears without your fingers touching. Flex your abdomen and pull your shoulder blades off the ground. When both shoulders blades are off the ground and your elbows come even with your thighs, lower yourself back to the starting position. Note - this is not proper form for crunches on the Physical Fitness Test.
- **FROG SIT-UPS.** Lay down with your back flat on the ground, bend your knees and turn the soles of your feet inboard so that they touch. Place your hands on your chest. Flex your abdomen while pushing your hands forward until you are in the sitting position and your hands are touching your ankles. Lower your torso and pull your hands back to return to the starting position.
- **SIT UPS WITH A TWIST.** Lay down with your back flat on the ground. With your feet flat on the ground, bend your knees and cup your ears with your hands. Flex your abdomen so that you come to a sitting position. As you are coming up, rotate your torso so that your left elbow touches your right knee. Then lower your body while rotating your torso back to the starting position. Repeat to the opposite side.
- **LUNGES.** Stand with your feet spread naturally, back straight, and your hands on your hips. Step out with your left foot, lowering your body until your right knee comes close to the ground but does not touch. Keeping that left foot in place, raise your body forward to the standing position. Change legs and repeat.



# 90-DAY PREPARATION GUIDE CONT.

- **SQUATS.** Stand with your feet spread naturally and your arms straight out in front of your body. Lower your body by bending your knees to approximately 90 degrees, keeping your back straight. Return to starting position and repeat.
- **STAR JUMPS.** Stand with your feet together and your back straight, bending at the knees and waist. Lower your body until your hands touch the floor. From that position, explode upwards, jumping into the air so that your body is fully extended with your legs flared out to the sides and your arms to the sky. Return to the starting position and repeat.
- **BEND AND THRUST.** Stand with your feet together and arms hanging down at your sides, bend at the knees, and lower your body until you are in the crouched position with your hands touching the ground. Thrust your legs out straight behind you so that you are in the push-up position. Pull your legs back to the crouched position so your knees are directly under your chest. Then return to the starting position.
- **DORSAL RAISES.** Lie flat with your chest on the ground and your legs spread naturally. Cup your ears with your hands with your elbows pointed outboard. Keeping your abdomen on the ground, raise your chest and legs off the ground. Then lower your chest and legs back to the starting position.

**DISCLOSURE:** The 90-DAY PREPARATION GUIDE was created by the Training Command and the official document can be found here:  
<https://www.trngcmd.marines.mil/Portals/207/Docs/OCS/90%20Day%20Preparation%20Guide.pdf>

Individual OSOs may offer other training programs to prepare you for OCS. As with any dietary or physical fitness program, you should consult your doctor in advance and have a thorough examination.

# FULL BODY TWENTY MINUTE FARTLEK WORKOUT



## Warmup (3:00)

2:00 Jogging

- Ten burpees
- Five pullups
- Twenty mountain climbers

## The Fartlek Workout (15:00)

- Sprint 60 meters
- Max set of pushups in 45 seconds, alternate diamond and wide hands every 10
- 1:00 Run, high-tempo
- Max set of pullups, alternate palms in and out every 4 pullups
- 2:00 Run, medium tempo
- 45 seconds of crunches, 45 seconds of flutterkicks
- 1:00 lunges
- Max 1 set of dips (can substitute with pushups with hands close to body approximately waist-high)
- 25 star jumps
- 1:00 jogging
- 1:00 Max 30-lb ammo can (or dumbbell) lifts
- [caption id="attachment\_3004" align="alignright" width="384"]
- You can just use a 30+ pound dumbbell as your ammo can
- You can just use a 30+ pound dumbbell as your ammo can[/caption]
- 45 seconds side plank, left, then repeat right
- 3:00 max alternate sprints 50 meters, 40 meters, 25 meters, 10 meters with minimal rest
- The Cool-down (2:00)
- 1:30 slow jog
- 0:30 alternate lunge stretches, toe touches, and any necessary additional stretches

Contact us with story Ideas: <https://officercandidatesschool.com/>

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