

# **SERE Specialist Training Orientation Course (SST-OC)**

## **PHYSICAL TRAINING GUIDE**



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What does it mean to be fit? That comes down to what the desires of the individual are. Are they training for aesthetics? Power? Endurance? Fitness can simply mean the journey that those individuals partake to achieve that objective. Military members must be prepared for a wide variety of scenarios that develop in the tactical environment and therefore must not train for one simple aspect, but a variety of possibilities. Military athletes must be prepared for:

- Performing equally in both the known and unknown environments
- Intense work across all time domains; short, medium, and long
- Achieving the mission regardless of the environmental factors and possessing the mental capacity to do so

This document is intended as a guide in order to prepare candidates for the rigors of the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) pipeline. The contents of this guide are designed to afford each individual the base foundation to achieve a state of operational readiness. The exercises and progressions contained in the guide are shown with minimal or no conventional resistance training equipment.

This program's primary purpose is to develop functional fitness for military personnel, especially those interested in becoming SERE Specialists. This is not the "end all be all" of fitness nor is it the only solution to prepare for training. It is merely a guide that focuses on the physical components of training as a SERE Specialist. The idea is to get the candidate into the best physical shape prior to entering Basic Military Training so they are prepared for day one of the SERE Specialist Training Orientation Course (SST-OC). Statistics have shown that meeting the minimum acceptable standard is not sufficient to pass the rigors of the 3-week course along with the 23-week technical training school that follows SST-OC graduation.

This curriculum was designed as a repetitive eight week evolution. It is aimed at reducing candidate's 1.5 mile run time to under 10 minutes while maximizing aerobic capacity and muscular endurance. It is ideal to run through the program numerous times to achieve the highest physical capacity possible before entering the training process.

**\*\*\*Individuals who decide to take advantage and utilize this program do so at their own risk\*\*\***

"For those who want it, they will find a way. For those who don't, they will find an excuse"

#### DISCLAIMER

The contents expressed in this manual are the opinion of the SERE Specialist Training Orientation Course Cadre and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Department of the Air Force, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

### Foreword

The techniques, ideas, and suggestions within this plan are not intended as a substitute for proper exercise or medical advice. All forms of exercise can be risky, especially if performed without proper pre-exercise evaluation, competent instruction, and personal supervisions from a qualified fitness professional.

Any application of the techniques, ideas, and suggestions in this document are at the reader's sole discretion and risk. Always consult your physician or health care professional before performing any new exercise, exercise technique or beginning any new diet, especially if you have any chronic or recurring conditions.

LISTEN to your body, and adjust your exercise regimen as necessary. Build up to the increased repetitions and longer distances. If necessary, scale the workouts down for the first run through and then increase repetitions as capability grows. Watch your hydration level and nutritional intake while you complete this program to ensure you are maximizing its benefits and reducing the risk of injury. Do not hesitate to consult a specialist for proper nutritional recommendations for YOU.

Tips for Success:

1. There are ZERO substitutes for hard work. In order to improve any aspect of your conditioning you must get out there and work on it.
2. While exercising focus on form and execution of the given exercises. Don't sacrifice form for speed. Each repetition needs to be completed to the established standard or it will not count when it matters SERE Initial Fitness Test (IFT). If the repetition isn't counted then you are just wasting your energy. "Do it right or do it twice" Also, proper form prevents injury and allows members to train for longer periods of time.
3. Keep a log or journal of your workouts while you prepare for training. It will keep you honest with yourself and can be a great gauge to measure improvement by. There are plenty of formats available online, but in all reality it can be recorded in a spiral bound notebook as it doesn't need to be fancy.
4. Don't rest on your laurels. When you think you have put in enough time and effort into your workouts; get out and do some more.
5. Listen to your body, and adjust your exercise regimen as necessary. Build up to the increased repetitions and longer distances. Watch your hydration level, proper fuel intake, and rest. This needs to be balanced and don't hesitate to consult a specialist for proper recommendations for YOU.
5. Once in Basic Training it is imperative to take advantage of any opportunity to train when it presents itself. This could mean just knocking out as many pushups as possible in 5 minutes, if time allows or completing a circuit of calisthenics at the end of the day before bed. Any time you get a chance to do any calisthenics just knock out a set or two.
6. Finally, make sure to balance life effectively. Training isn't absolutely everything and it can be easy to burn out quickly. Ensure victories and progress is rewarded and that all aspects of life stay in proper proportion. Trainees must not lose sight of the end goal during the day to day grind.

This program can be scaled into 3 categories; as prescribed (100%), intermediate (80%), and beginner (60%). The 4 mile timed ruck, SERE IFT, and interval cardio sessions need to be completed as prescribed in both distance and duration. Long distance run days (Wednesday) may be scaled, but emphasis must be placed on reaching the 4 mile distance threshold as soon as capable. If this is your first run through it make take a few weeks to reach the 32 minute time cap and therefore your focus should be reaching that standard before the end of the first 8 week evolution. Scaling will be annotated in parenthesis next to the “as prescribed” numbers.

### Week 1

#### Day 1: Monday

SERE Physical Ability and Stamina Test

\*Note: Check out USAFSERECADRE’s SERE IFT Video for instructions and process:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/USAFSERECADRE>

#### Day 2: Tuesday

**Physical Training (PT):**

Calisthenics Pyramid for time: 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 (Intermediate = up to 8) (Beginner = up to 6)

1x Pull-ups

2x Dip

3x Push-ups

4x Sit-ups

5x Squat

\*Note: Multiply the number in the round by the number in front of the exercise (1<sup>st</sup> Round = 10x Pull-ups, 20x Dips, 30x Push-ups, 40x Sit-ups, 50x Squats 2<sup>nd</sup> Round = 9x Pull-ups, 18x Dips, 27x Push-ups, 36x Sit-ups, 45x Squats etc....)

**Cardio:**

20 Minutes of row 60 seconds/rest 60 seconds

#### Day 3: Wednesday

**Cardio:**

Run 4 miles in less than 32:00

#### Day 4: Thursday

**Cardio:**

Ruck 4 miles in less than 55 minutes with 45lb pack

*Note to all Applicants: Adjust weight according to your level of training. We suggest initially walking the 4-mile course without a ruck to gauge a 15 min. mile pace used in training. After that, increase the weight with the ultimate goal of 45-50 lbs. for the 4-mile course in less than 55 minutes.*

#### Day 5: Friday

**PT:**

3 Rounds for time:

Run 400 meters

21 x Kettle bell swing @ 45lb (Intermediate = 17) (Beginner = 13)

12 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 10) (Beginner = 7)

**Cardio:**

10 x 100 meter sprints at 60 second interval

\*Note: Sprint 100 meters at the top of every minute, your rest is the amount of time left in that minute

**Week 2****Day 6: Monday****Cardio:**

8 x 400 meter sprints in less than 1:50/rest 2:00

**PT:**

5 Rounds for time:

20 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 16) (Beginner = 12)

30 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 24) (Beginner = 18)

40 x Sit-ups (Intermediate = 32) (Beginner = 24)

50 x Squats (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)

**Day 7: Tuesday****Swim:**

30 Minute as Many Rounds As Possible (AMRAP)

50 Meter Swim

10 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

15 x Squats (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 9)

**Day 8: Wednesday****Cardio:**

Run 4 miles in less than 31:30

**PT:**

50 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)

100 x Burpees (Intermediate = 80) (Beginner = 60)

50 x Wall Ball @20lb (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)

**Day 9: Thursday****PT:**

20 Minute AMRAP

5 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 4) (Beginner = 3)

10 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

15 x Squats (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 9)

**Cardio:**

Ruck 4 miles in less than 60 minutes with 30 lbs.

**Day 10: Friday****PT:**

5 Rounds for Time

22 x Kettlebell Swings @45lb (Intermediate = 18) (Beginner = 13)

22 x Box Jump @24" (Intermediate = 18) (Beginner = 13)

400 meter run

22 x Burpee (Intermediate = 18) (Beginner = 13)

22 x Wall Ball @20lb (Intermediate = 18) (Beginner = 13)

**Cardio:**

10 x 200 meter sprint @ 2:00 interval

\*Note: Sprint 200 meters every two minutes, your rest is the amount of time left before the next two minute interval starts

**Week 3****Day 11: Monday****PT:**

25 Minute AMRAP

10 x Burpee Broad Jump (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

20 x Lunge Step (Intermediate = 16) (Beginner = 12)

10 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

20 x Flutter Kick (Intermediate = 16) (Beginner = 12)

**Cardio:**

8 x 400 meter sprints in less than 1:45/rest 2:00

**Day 12: Tuesday****Cardio:**

Ruck 4 miles in less than 60 minutes with 35 lbs.

**PT:**

50-40-30-20-10 (Intermediate = 40-30-20-10) (Beginner = 30-20-10)

Push-ups

Sit-ups

KB Swing @45lb

\*Note: Complete all prescribed repetitions for each exercise before moving to the next in line (i.e.

50 x Push-ups, 50 x Sit-ups, 50 x KBS, 40 x Push-ups, etc....)

**Day 13: Wednesday****Cardio:**

Run 4 miles in less than 31:00

**PT:**

Calisthenics Pyramid for time: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 (Intermediate = up to 8) (Beginner = up to 6)

1 x Pull- ups

2 x Dip

3 x Push-ups

4 x Sit-ups

5 x Squats

**Day 14: Thursday****PT:**

Complete 10 rounds for time of the following:

10 x Burpees (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

10 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

10 x Wall Ball @20lb (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

**Cardio:**

Complete three rounds of the following:

Row 250 meters/rest 1 minute

Row 500 meters/rest 2 minutes

Row 750 meters/rest 3 minutes

**Day 15: Friday****PT:**

Complete 5 Rounds for time:

30 x Kettlebell Swings @45lb (Intermediate = 24) (Beginner = 18)

30 x Burpees (Intermediate = 24) (Beginner = 18)

30 x Sit-ups (Intermediate = 24) (Beginner = 18)

**Cardio:**

10 x 100 meter sprints at 60 second interval

**Week 4****Day 16: Monday****Cardio:**

8 x 400 meter sprints in less than 1:40/2:00 rest

**PT:**

100 x Burpees (Intermediate = 80) (Beginner = 60)  
 50 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)  
 100 x Sit-ups (Intermediate = 80) (Beginner = 60)  
 200 x Squats (Intermediate = 160) (Beginner = 120)

**Day 17: Tuesday****Cardio:**

Swim 10 x 100 meters at 3:00 interval

**PT:**

50 x Box Jump (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)  
 50 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)  
 50 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)  
 50 x Kettlebell Swing @45lb (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)  
 50 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)  
 50 x Box Jump (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)

**Day 18: Wednesday****Cardio:**

Run 4 miles in less than 30:30

**Day 19 Thursday****PT:**

Run 800 meters  
 20 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 16) (Beginner = 12)  
 30 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 24) (Beginner = 18)  
 40 x Sit-ups (Intermediate = 32) (Beginner = 24)  
 50 x Squats (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)  
 Run 600 meters  
 15 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 9)  
 25 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 20) (Beginner = 15)  
 35 x Sit-ups (Intermediate = 28) (Beginner = 21)  
 45 x Squats (Intermediate = 36) (Beginner = 27)  
 Run 400 meters  
 10 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)  
 20 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 16) (Beginner = 12)  
 30 x Sit-ups (Intermediate = 24) (Beginner = 18)  
 40 x Squats (Intermediate = 32) (Beginner = 24)  
 Run 200 meters  
 5 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 4) (Beginner = 3)  
 15 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 9)  
 25 x Sit-ups (Intermediate = 20) (Beginner = 15)  
 35 x Squats (Intermediate = 28) (Beginner = 21)

**Cardio:**

Ruck 4 miles in less than 60 minutes with 40 lbs.

**Day 20: Friday****PT:**

Complete 6 rounds for time of the following:  
 24 x Squats (Intermediate = 19) (Beginner = 14)  
 24 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 19) (Beginner = 14)  
 24 x Lunges (Intermediate = 19) (Beginner = 14)  
 Run 400 meters

**Week 5****Day 21: Monday**

SERE Physical Ability and Stamina Test

**Day 22: Tuesday****PT:**

150 x Wall Ball @20lb (Intermediate = 120) (Beginner = 90)

100 x Burpee (Intermediate = 80) (Beginner = 60)

50 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)

**Cardio:**

Ruck 4 miles in less than 60 minutes with 45 lbs.

**Day 23: Wednesday****Cardio:**

Run 4 miles in less than 30 minutes

**Day 24: Thursday****Cardio:**

Swim 10 x 50 meters @ 1:30 interval then 5 x 100 meters @ 3:00 interval

**PT:**

20 minute AMRAP:

10 x Burpee (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

25 meter suicide sprint

10 x Kettlebell Swing @45lb (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

25 meter suicide sprint

10 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

25 meter suicide sprint

**Day 25: Friday****PT:**

Complete the following for time:

Run 1 Mile

20 rounds: (Intermediate = 16) (Beginner = 12)

5 x Pull-ups

10 x Push-ups

15 x Squats

Run 1 Mile



**Week 6****Day 26: Monday****PT:**

Complete 5 rounds for time:

15 x Thruster @45lb (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 9)

15 x Box Jump @24" (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 9)

30 x Sit-ups (Intermediate = 24) (Beginner = 18)

**Cardio:**

8 x 400 meter sprints in less than 1:35/2:00 rest

**Day 27: Tuesday****Cardio:**

Row 4000 meters

**PT:**

Complete 7 rounds for time:

10 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

20 x Burpee (Intermediate = 16) (Beginner = 12)

**Day 28: Wednesday****Cardio:**

Run 4 miles in less than 30 minutes

**PT:**

Complete 10 rounds for time with 30 seconds of rest between rounds:

100 meter sprint

10 x Burpee (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

100 meter sprint

10 x Pull-up (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

**Day 29: Thursday****Cardio:**

Ruck 4 miles in less than 60 minutes with 50 lbs.

**PT:**

Complete the following for time:

50 x Wall Ball @20lb (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)

50 x Thruster @45lb (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)

50 x Box Jump @24" (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)

50 x Burpee (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)

50 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)

1000 meter row

**Day 30: Friday****PT:**

Complete the following for time:

Run 1.5 miles

150 x Burpees (Intermediate = 120) (Beginner = 90)

Run 1.5 miles

**Week 7****Day 31: Monday****Cardio:**

4 x 800 meter run in less 3:30/3:00 rest

**PT:**

10 Minute EMOM of 3xChest to Bar Pull ups

50-40-30-20-10: (Intermediate = 40-30-20-10) (Beginner = 30-20-10)

Kettlebell Swing @45lb

Burpees

Sit-ups

**Day 32: Tuesday****Cardio:**

Swim 500 meters unbroken / rest 5 minutes then 10 x 50 meters @ 1:15 interval

**PT:**

Complete the following for time:

25 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 20) (Beginner = 15)

50 x Burpees (Intermediate = 40) (Beginner = 30)

75 x Box Jumps @24" (Intermediate = 60) (Beginner = 45)

100 x Sit-ups (Intermediate = 80) (Beginner = 60)

**Day 33: Wednesday****Cardio:**

Run 4 miles in less than 30 minutes

**PT:**

20 minute AMRAP:

5 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 4) (Beginner = 3)

10 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

15 x Squats (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 12)

**Day 34: Thursday****Cardio:**

Ruck 4 miles in less than 60 minutes with 50 lbs.

**Day 35: Friday****PT:**

Complete 5 rounds for time of the following:

Run 400 meters

21 x Kettlebell Swings @45lb (Intermediate = 17) (Beginner = 13)

12 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 10) (Beginner = 7)

**Week 8****Day 36: Monday****PT:**

30 minute AMRAP

100 meter Farmer's Carry @45lb (Intermediate = 35) (Beginner = 25)

100 meter walking lunge

100 meter burpee broad jump

**Cardio:**

2 x 800 meter sprints in less than 3:30/rest 3:00

4 x 400 meter sprints in less than 1:35/rest 2:00

6 x 100 meter sprints at 1:00 interval

**Day 37: Tuesday****Cardio:**

Ruck 4 miles in less than 60 minutes with 50 lbs.

**PT:**

Calisthenics Pyramid for time: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 (Intermediate = up to 8) (Beginner = up to 6)

1 x Pull-ups

2 x Dip

3 x Push-ups

4 x Sit-ups

5 x Squats

**Day 38: Wednesday****PT:**

Complete 10 rounds for time of the following:

15 x Squats (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 9)

15 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 9)

15 x Sit-ups (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 9)

15 x Box Jumps @24" (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 9)

**Cardio:**

Run 4 miles in less than 30 minutes

**Day 39: Thursday****Cardio:**

Row 5 x 500 meters with 90 seconds of rest after each round

**PT:**

30 minute AMRAP:

50 meter suicide sprint

50 meter walking lunge

50 meter burpee broad jump

**Day 40: Friday****PT:**

Complete the following for time:

Run 1 mile

20 rounds:

5 x Pull-ups (Intermediate = 4) (Beginner = 3)

10 x Push-ups (Intermediate = 8) (Beginner = 6)

15 x Squats (Intermediate = 12) (Beginner = 9)

Run 1 mile

**Weight Training to Support Development and Preparation**

Weight training may be implemented to support muscular development while awaiting training. Emphasis should be placed on understanding proper form and reducing the risk of injury. As mentioned earlier, do not allow ego to interfere with training as the results will not end up in your favor. To keep things as simple as possible, weight lifting to support trainee development is limited to four simple compound movements; the squat, deadlift, bench press, and standing military press. A recommended training split is provided if you wish to work these lifts into your preparations. Modern day access to information places a wealth of knowledge at your fingertips. Do your due diligence and conduct some legitimate research before engaging in any of these exercises.

**Suggested Training Split:**

Monday: Squat

Tuesday: Standing Military Press

Thursday: Deadlift

Friday: Bench Press

### **Movement Familiarization and Standards**

1. **Push-ups are a two-count exercise.** Starting position is hands, approximately shoulder width apart, arms, back, and legs must remain locked straight. Count one; lower the chest until the elbows are bent at a 90-degree or lower angle. Count two; return to the starting position.
2. **Pull-ups are a two-count exercise.** Starting position is hanging from the bar, palms facing away from the candidate with no bend in the elbows (“dead-hang”). Hand spread is approximately shoulder width apart. Count one; pull the body up until the chin is over the bar. Count two; return to the starting position.
3. **Sit-ups are a two-count exercise.** Starting position is back flat on the surface, fingers interlocked behind the head, head off the surface, and knees bent at approximately a 90-degree angle. Another individual may hold the individual’s feet during the exercise, or be placed under a “toe-hold” bar. Count one; sit up so that the back is vertical to the surface. Count two; return to the starting position.
4. **Burpees are a two count exercise.** Starting position is standing straight up. Count one; sprawl out and drop to the floor ensuring both the hips and the chest are in contact with the ground. Count two; spring back up off the ground, jump, and clap the hands over the head while returning to the starting position.
5. **Burpee Broad Jumps are a two count exercise.** Starting position is standing straight up. Count one; sprawl out and drop to the floor ensuring both the hips and the chest are in contact with the ground. Count two; spring back up off the ground while jumping as far forward as possible. Return to the starting position and start again.
6. **Box Jumps** are conducted on a wide variety of stable platforms that vary in height from 18” to 36”. Boxes at the SST-OC course are 24” in height, but beginners are encouraged to start at a lower height to reduce the risk of injuries. Start with a shoulder width stance while standing directly in front of the platform or box you intend to jump up onto. Bend slightly at the knees and explode upward by jumping as high as possible. Try to land softly on top of the box with a slight bend in the knees to absorb the impact and protect the body. Complete the repetition by standing all the way back up to full hip extension on the top of the platform and then return the starting position on the ground. You may either jump back down or step down. Jumping down just puts more stress onto the joints and the spine, especially when jumping from higher vertical distances. It is recommended that beginners step back down and focus on proper form prior to each repetition.
7. **Kettle Bell Swings** are an explosive moment involving a few steps to complete each repetition. Start with a shoulder width stance, knees slightly bent with toes angled slightly outward. Hold the kettlebell between the legs, just below the hips, with an overhand grip. Move your hips back while allowing your arms to swing back and the kettlebell to swing between your legs. Knee bend is only slight and not a full depth squat. You should only be bending down enough to allow the kettlebell to pass between your legs and gain momentum for the upward swing. Once the kettlebell reaches the back of the swing, use your hips to generate an upward momentum on the kettlebell while the arms act as a pendulum to guide the kettlebell along the correct path. Arm involvement is strictly limited to this pendulum action and not in a pushing or pulling motion on the weight. The top of the swing is located just above eye level. Once again, the power to lift the kettlebell to this height is generated from the hip drive and not a bending of the back or flexing of the arms. Once the kettlebell reaches the target height, continue to swing up and down in a continuous motion until all repetitions are completed.
8. **Walking Lunges** are a great exercise to strengthen the quadriceps in the legs. Each repetition starts with your feet shoulder width apart and hands are on the head or the hips. Take one step forward while descending until the rear knee nearly comes in contact with the ground. Focus on keeping the chest and hips in an upright position and don’t allow yourself to lean forward or side to side. Also, don’t allow the knee to pass the front of the foot on the descent. Step distance will vary based on height, flexibility, and ensuring enough distance has been traveled to ensure the rear knee may get close to the ground while the front knee doesn’t pass your toes. Drive through your heel/midfoot while

raising yourself back up to the starting position. Repeat the process for the other foot and ensure that repetitions are always kept even for each side to reduce over development of a particular side.

9. **Suicide Sprint** are designed to get the heart rate up and a very quick fashion by having the athlete sprint between a multitude of distances numerous times in a short timeframe. The overall distance may vary but typically you divide the total distance into four equal distances. For instance if you were to complete a 100 meter suicide sprint you would divide it into a 25 meter, 50 meter, 75 meter, and 100 meter distances. Run as fast as possible from the start up to the 25 meter marking, back to the start, out to the 50 meter, back to the start, out to the 75 meter, back to the start, out to the 100 meter, and back to the starting line. The repetition is complete once the full course has been run.

10. **Squat** are a staple exercise of any given fitness program. They are a two count exercise starting with feet shoulder with apart and toes pointed slightly outward. Count one; push your hips, bend your knees, and lower the body until your thighs are just below the crease in your hip (this is known as going just below parallel to the ground). Ensure that you focus on pushing your knees, thighs, etc. outward and not allowing them to cave inwards during the exercise. Count two; pause briefly at the bottom and then return to the starting position.

11. **Thruster** is a two count exercise that involves squatting with a barbell. Count one; holding a barbell just above the shoulders with your hands and feet shoulder width apart, lower your body into a squat position while keeping the bar just at shoulder height. Count two; explode upward back into the starting position while simultaneously pushing the barbell up above the head. The arms, legs, and hips should be locked out at the top of the repetition. In a continuous motion continue to squat down and explode upward to complete the prescribed number of repetitions.

12. **Wall Balls** are very similar to the thruster, but a weighted ball is used instead of a barbell. Count one; squat down while holding a weighted slam ball or wall ball in front of the body at shoulder height. Count two; explode upward while using your momentum to throw the ball up to a ten foot target on the wall. As the ball returns to the ground use its momentum and catch it on the way down while continuing into the next repetition.

13. **Flutter Kicks** are very similar to a leg lift but one leg is lifted at a time instead of both. Flutter kicks are a 4 count exercise that is counted as each foot reaches the top of the range of motion of the movement. Start by placing your hands under your buttocks in order to support the lower back. Legs should be held out straight with the feet roughly six inches off the floor. Raise one leg up roughly 18 to 36 inches and then return it to the starting position while raising the other leg up 18 to 36 inches. One repetition is counted after four total kicks.

#### **Nutritional Assistance**

There are many different opinions on nutrition and a wide variety of data available on the market for performance nutrition. There is no “one plan fits all” mentality for performance nutrition. Each candidate must understand their body and understand what it needs to be in optimal condition. Dietary choices should be looked at as a lifestyle of decisions versus a temporary solution to a performance issue. This basically means that good decisions must be made through a consistent effort to fuel a military athlete. It isn't impossible to outwork a bad diet, but it is definitely an uphill battle. Nutritional guidance is provided to merely get the candidate moving in the right direction and understand what “good choices” are when it comes fueling their body.

As mentioned above there are several viewpoints on nutritional input and ways to go about fueling one's body. No matter the methodology, one thing remains the same. Dietary demands can be broken down into two simple components; macronutrients and micronutrients or macros and micros.

Macro nutrients constitute a major part of an individual's diet supplying energy and essential nutrients that are needed for growth, maintenance, and activity. They are broken down into the following three categories:

**Carbohydrates:** Are most people's main source of energy. Intake should be adjusted based on activity levels, exercise, and genetics. One may also consider boosting intake for temporary needs such as competition planning or training specifics. Ideal sources are those that are closer to their natural, unprocessed state. Sources include breads, cereal, grains, fruits, and vegetables.

- Recommended intake is 1 gram per pound of bodyweight (180 grams for 180 pound person).

**Proteins:** the macro that assists in muscle repair and building. Proteins should be included in almost every meal (breakfast, lunch, and dinner, snacks, etc.), especially while involved in rigorous training. Ideal sources are lean meats like fish and chicken, beans, and even nuts.

- Recommended intake is 1 gram per pound of lean bodyweight (162 grams for 180 pound person with 10% body fat).

**Fats:** are often looked down upon when people initially think about them, but are essential in muscle development and cellular support. They also assist in maintaining blood sugar levels and protecting the body's organs from shock. Beneficial sources of fats come from nuts and seeds, fish, avocado, flaxseed oil, and olive oil.

- Recommended intake is .5 grams per pound of bodyweight (90 grams for 180 pound person).

Micronutrients include all of the minerals and vitamins that the body needs in much smaller quantities than proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. They support the main body functions while also assisting in development, bolstering the immune system, and good overall health. Since they are not produced by the body they must be provided for by sound nutrition. A diet that focuses on whole foods and solid meals needs little supplementation from external sources. This simply means that if you eat plenty of lean meats, veggies, fruits, and seeds there shouldn't be any need for things like multi-vitamins or other forms of supplements.

### Physical Evaluations for the SERE Specialist Career Fields

#### A. AIR FORCE SPECIAL WARFARE/SERE/EOD Initial Fitness Test (IFT) CRITERIA

The purpose of the IFT is to assess an Air Force candidate's current physical condition for potential into one of the above career fields. This test is comprised of several events; the candidate must pass every event. Failure of any event will result in the overall IFT failure. However, test administrators should direct candidates to complete the test in its entirety to determine physical conditions status. Test administrators must conduct this test in the order and time limits listed below. Record IFT minimum standards and results on the "Evaluation Worksheet" managed by AETC/A3S contact below.

**NOTE:** The IFT requirements are designed to test for a minimum fitness level for entry into the training pipeline. Candidates should continue to train throughout their application process to exceed these minimums in order to enhance their chances of success. Each applicant needs to successfully complete the IFT with a Special Ops Developer prior to booking a SERE contract with an Air Force Recruiter and then again on day one of training at the SERE Specialist Training Orientation Course (SST-OC).

**NOTE:** Exercise form is strictly enforced during the IFT and in the training pipeline. Repetitions done without proper form will not be counted and will be to the member's disadvantage. Events graded calisthenics, and the last event for the is the run for SERE. Swimming is no longer a IFT requirement for a SERE Specialist, but as a global survival expert we recommend being comfortable and confident in the water.

**1. Calisthenics:** Conducted as the first phase of the test. Three calisthenics exercises are evaluated, each with specific time parameters and specific exercise form mechanics. All members will exercise to either muscle failure or time completion, whichever occurs first. The intent is to have members do as many "good form" repetitions in the time allotted or when muscle failure is reached. Allow a 2-minute rest between each calisthenics exercise.

**1.1. Pull-ups (2 minutes):** Pull-ups are a two-count exercise. Starting position is hanging from the bar, palms facing away from the candidate with no bend in the elbows ("dead-hang"). Hand spread is approximately shoulder width apart. Count one; pull the body up until the chin is over the bar. Count two; return to the starting position. Legs are allowed to bend, but must not be kicked or manipulated to aid upward movement. If the candidate falls off or releases from the bar, the exercise is terminated.

3.1.1. Minimum Repetitions: 8

3.1.2. Allow a 2 minute rest before the next event

**1.2. Sit-ups (2 minutes):** Sit-ups are a two-count exercise. Starting position is back flat on the surface, fingers interlocked behind the head, head off the surface, and knees bent at approximately a 90-degree angle. Another individual may hold the individual's feet during the exercise, or be placed under a "toe-hold" bar. Count one; sit up so that the back is vertical to the surface. Count two; return to the starting position. The exercise is continuous. If the member stops, the exercise is terminated. If the member's buttocks rise from the surface or his fingers are not interlocked behind his head during the repetition, the repetition is not counted. There is no authorized rest position.

3.2.1. Minimum Repetitions: 48

3.2.2. Allow a 2-minute rest before the start of the next event

**1.3. Push-ups (2 minutes):** Push-ups are a two-count exercise. Starting position is hands, approximately shoulder width apart, arms, back, and legs must remain locked straight. Count one; lower the chest until the elbows are bent at a 90-degree or lower angle. Count two; return to the starting position. The only authorized rest position is the starting position. If the knees touch the ground the exercise is terminated. The member will not raise his buttocks in the air, sag his middle to the surface, or raise any hand or foot from their starting position. If a hand or foot is raised, the exercise is terminated.



3.3.1. Minimum Repetitions: 40

**2. 1.5 Mile Run:** The run must be conducted on an accurately measured course, preferably a running track.

2.1. Physical Training (PT) clothes and good running shoes are the only required items.

2.2. Maximum Time: 11:00

Statistically speaking, only achieving the bare minimum passing scores in each category does not equate to an ability to pass SST-OC. The average numbers for individuals who not only pass SST-OC, but complete training and graduate as a SERE Specialist are provided for each event as a suggested minimum for each candidate to reach:

Pull-ups: 11-14 repetitions or better

Push-ups: 55-60 repetitions or better

Sit-ups: 65-70 repetitions or better

1.5 Mile Run: 09:15 to 10:30 or better

#### **B. Ruck March Criteria**

1. Initially in training, you will be evaluated when by carrying a 45-50 lb. pack for 4 miles in under an 55 minutes on flat ground. The pack will become your best friend. You will have it with you and on you for most of your training, so learn to make it more comfortable. Remember, SERE is the “Home of the Walking Air Force”.

2. The 4-mile Ruck is a Go/No-Go event for training and you will be disqualified from the career field if you do not meet the minimum time limit. You will be tested on a mostly flat surface and there is no running, but just a faster walk. This evaluation is conducted on a separate day from the IFT eval. We suggest initially walking a 4-mile course without a ruck to gauge how fast the 13:45 min. mile pace needs to be. After that, start with a lighter ruck, such as 20-25 lbs., to let your body become accustomed to carrying the weight. Over time, increase the weight in increments to build up to the max weight of 45-50 lbs. to avoid injury. The average overall time for graduates of our course is 48:00 to 53:00 min. with no running or shuffling.

## SERE CREED

*I am a Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape Specialist.*

*I am an expert in SERE techniques and full spectrum personnel recovery.*

*This is my chosen profession, it is characterized by integrity, service, excellence, and grit.*

*I earn the title SERE Specialist through the rigorous pursuit of skills, knowledge, and experiences which enable me to advocate for isolated and captured personnel.*

*I am prepared, I am adaptable, and I thrive in adversity.*

*Failure is never an option for a United States Air Force SERE Specialist.*

*I am the keeper of our nation's solemn promise:*

*No service member will ever be forgotten.*

*These things I do, that others may live to*

**“Return With Honor”**



**More information about the SERE Specialist career field can be found at:**

**GOSERE Website [www.gosere.af.mil](http://www.gosere.af.mil),**

**Social Media: “USAF\_SERE” Facebook, Instagram, YouTube & Twitter**

**USAFSERECADRE’s channel-YouTube & SERE IFT Test Videos for hints:**

**[www.youtube.com/watch?v=h14NVKCAEwY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h14NVKCAEwY),**

**SRLO Email: [66trs.sss.gosere@us.af.mil](mailto:66trs.sss.gosere@us.af.mil), Phone: (210) 671-3882**

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