TACTICAL BARBELL

II

CONDITIONING

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Consult a physician prior to starting any training program, including the programs, sessions and protocols outlined in this book

“The more thou sweateth in training, the less thou bleedeth in combat”

Richard Marcinko

(And every military training cadre since)

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INTRODUCTION

You have something very valuable in your hands. A lifetime's worth of training knowledge. Drawn from the world's most extreme arenas. Lessons learned, and best practices from military operators, tactical law enforcement, martial artists, and others that rely on their physical capabilities to survive and thrive in some very harsh and unforgiving environments. Places where there's more at stake than winning a medal, or getting a bruised ego. Bottom line, with these people, their training *has* to work.

By implementing the strategies in this book, you will cut your learning curve down by decades. If you're young, I am envious at just how far you're going to be able to take your level of conditioning. The path has been laid out and handed to you on a silver platter. You'll get to avoid costly amateurish mistakes that lead to injury and burn out. If you're older, you're going to reclaim that confidence you once had in your physical abilities. You may have forgotten what that feels like. Prepare to be reminded.

It's great having a 600lb squat and 400lb bench press. But, as an operational athlete, if you can't run, work, or thrive for long periods of time in a multitude of energy demanding environments, you are ineffective. Your big bench press is useless, your big squat is useless.

Tactical Barbell proposes you work towards being a different kind of athlete. The kind that is not only extremely strong, but also highly conditioned. If you look carefully, you'll see these people all around you. That guy on your Emergency Response Team with the 350lb bench press *and* a sub 9 minute 1.5 mile run. The old Marine Sergeant that can run 6 miles in under 40 minutes, deadlifts over 600lbs and can do 30 (non-kipping) pull-ups.

We want to avoid being the guy with the 700lb squat that gets gassed walking up the stairs - or the marathoner that tops out at 10-20 push-ups. One of the biggest myths being perpetrated is that you have to choose between being chubby and strong or lean and weak. **You don't.** There is an elite middle ground.

So how exactly do you get very, very, good at everything?

It's NOT by combining everything into one random super-workout and repeating. That's a great approach for working up a sweat, and releasing some endorphins – not so great for actually progressing your abilities. Most of you probably have this figured out by now.

Tactical Barbell takes a simple, structured, three pronged approach to conditioning.

It consists of Base Building, followed by a transition to a more specific conditioning protocol. Periodic maintenance of lower-priority fitness domains complete our model.

In Part I you'll be introduced to the TB2 conditioning protocols. First up, Base Building, which serves as a kind of basic training for everyone. Base Building will harden the body, harden the mind, and prepare you for what's to come. From there, you'll transition to one of two specialist continuation protocols: Black or Green. Both protocols have several variations to fit your unique goals.

In Part II, you'll be let in to the Tactical Barbell Training Vault. You'll have access to over 50 high quality conditioning sessions, some of which have been provided by some very hard, extreme people.

This isn't going to be a mishmash of exercises thrown together laundry-list style to make you feel like you're doing something because you're busy and complicated. Instead, each session fits into a broader category, and is used to develop certain attributes at certain times during your training plan. For example, certain sessions are designed to stimulate cardiac hypertrophy and are almost solely used during Base Building and Green protocol. Other sessions might focus on speed-endurance or anaerobic capacity, and are primarily used with Black template. Other categories include work capacity, cardiac contractile strength, and lactic/alactic development. So no need to worry, there is method to the madness. You won't be running around working up a sweat for nothing. Each session is designed to progress your skill and ability in a certain category. You'll get to choose the unique sessions you are drawn to, and insert them into your protocol when that category is called for.

In Part III, we go over options for tweaking and customizing your protocol. We'll also talk about incorporating real life – i.e. sports and training. For those of you that don't want to think at all – you'll be provided with the 17 week program we use for clients that are preparing for entry into tactical law enforcement (i.e. SWAT, ERT etc.). It consists of an 8 week Base Building phase followed by 9 weeks of Black protocol, individual sessions picked for you.

By the time you get to the end of this book, you'll have a thorough understanding of how to program your conditioning. You'll also know exactly how to incorporate your strength training, whether you use TB1 or something else. You'll know how many conditioning sessions to do per week, what attributes those sessions develop, and how the rest of your life fits in. You'll learn how to choose the systems you need to prioritize, the systems you need to maintain, and how to handle the logistics of both. You'll have a thorough grasp of the skeletal structure of TB2, and how to fill it in to meet your particular goals. This is not an academic textbook approach to conditioning.

Tactical Barbell is all about simple, direct, concrete approaches that bring about results. We're not interested in putting a unique spin on things, turning fitness into a neuroscience discussion, or conducting a marketing experiment. You'll be provided with the hard-earned tools and approaches used by the pros, to get you where you want to be. That's it. It's all about having a simple, intelligent, and actionable plan. It's easy to be hard, harder to be smart. If you're tired of hype, politics in fitness, and countless streams of conflicting information spewed by the inexperienced, welcome home.

OPERATIONAL ATHLETES – THE ROADMAP

Before we get into the details, let's look at our big-picture three-step approach for both operators and civilian multi-skilled athletes.

STEP 1 – BASE BUILDING

Build a base of general endurance and strength FIRST.

General Endurance will primarily consist of aerobic development.

Strength will consist of both maximal strength and strength-endurance.

Operators/operational athletes will use occupational-specific endurance sessions. Run, ruck, swim, etc.

Civilians/others can utilize any of the listed session provided.

I can get fancy here and talk about 'resilience' training, and movement skills blah blah all day to make things seem complicated. The truth is you will develop things like resiliency and everything else you need through all facets of your training, by simply showing up and doing the work.

STEP 2 – CONTINUATION PROTOCOL

After Base-Building, use a continuation protocol. Your continuation conditioning will consist of anaerobic system development, work capacity, speed, power and strength.

This is your main training plan, which is specific to your individual needs.

Actively progress the systems you need to excel at, maintain the systems you don't.

Your continuation protocol will be customized for you. Occupational requirements will dictate what skills some of you need to prioritize. The protocol of a SWAT member will differ from that of a military operator, which will differ from that of a recreational athlete.

If you're a military operator, your continuation protocol will continue to progress endurance training along with other traits.

If you're a civilian or non-military operator (police ERT, HRT, SWAT etc.), endurance may be set aside and maintained while other skills are aggressively advanced.

Scale individual training sessions based on skill level and needs. Military operators might perform an LSS run for 2-3 hours, a civilian novice might start with half hour increments.

STEP 3 – MAINTAIN LOWER PRIORITY FITNESS DOMAINS

Maintain, rather than attempt to actively progress your lower priority fitness domains. For example if endurance is low on your priority list, it shouldn't make up a significant portion of your training.

There are several approaches to maintenance, including a periodic return to Base Building, or the inclusion of a minimal amount of lower priority training.

This three step framework will put you light years ahead of anyone trying to do everything at the same time ‘super-workout’ style. This is similar to the approaches utilized by professional athletes/teams, career mixed martial artists, and others that are serious about their training. Unless you’re satisfied with a generic, general level of fitness, training by its nature cannot be general, or cookie-cutter. “Working out” can be generic, “training” cannot.

CONDITIONING

Let's get the boring stuff out of the way first. This isn't a textbook, but I do want to paint a general picture of the systems we're training so you understand why certain things are done the way they are, or included in this book.

Conditioning. What is it exactly? It's very simple;

Conditioning is your ability to produce energy to meet the task at hand.

That task might be fighting an opponent in a cage, ruck marching for 20 miles while carrying an 80lb load, or sprinting as fast as you can for 100 meters. All require energy. Different types of energy, and different 'fuel' sources.

Conditioning is not just 'cardio'. There's interplay with strength, strength-endurance, power and other systems. The body is interconnected and complex, so there is a lot of overlap and debate as to what the boundaries actually are between things like 'strength' and 'conditioning'. For our purposes 'conditioning' is improving energy production. I won't be getting great detail, but if you're interested in going deeper refer to the **'References/Recommended Reading'** list at the end of this book.

The body's general 'fuel' consists of Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP). The engines that put that fuel to use are the **aerobic** and **anaerobic** systems. Creatine-Phosphate, lactate, muscle glycogen, stored liver glycogen, oxidation of fatty acids (fatty tissue), all play a part in generating energy or facilitating ATP. It all depends on what energy systems being used. For example, a 100 meter maximum effort sprint is powered by stored ATP/creatine-phosphate. You won't be tapping into your body fat for energy, as you would if you were running a marathon.

Put aside your image of aerobic training = jogging for a moment. The aerobic system generates the majority of ATP for most daily activity. Unless you're performing an activity that has you go all-out for about 10-120 seconds or less, **the aerobic system will be providing you with the majority of your energy.**

A well-developed **aerobic** system can provide energy for hours. It utilizes both sugar *and* fat in the process. It supports and enhances the anaerobic system by helping 'reset' it when the anaerobic system gases out. The better your **aerobic** system is, the quicker you can get back to using the anaerobic system. Here's the downside. The **aerobic** system doesn't generate energy as *quickly* as the anaerobic system. Slow steady state jogging for long periods of time is a classic demonstration of aerobic energy at work. But don't let that very specific example fool you, the aerobic system will provide **most** of the energy for almost **any** work or exercise you do. That energy may be 'background' or 'supporting' energy in some cases, but it is there working away.

The anaerobic system (which includes the lactic and alactic system) is capable of generating energy extremely fast, but can only sustain that energy for about 10 seconds (alactic system) or 60-90 seconds (lactic). In some cases, the anaerobic system will continue to participate for up to two minutes. Because it generates energy very quickly, it also creates metabolic byproduct very quickly. This byproduct can cause fatigue. Hence, one reason why anaerobic energy can only be sustained for short periods of time before fatigue sets in. This system uses sugar/glycogen to generate ATP. Think about how long you can maintain a maximum or near

maximal effort sprint. A demonstration of your anaerobic systems at work.

I mentioned that a well-trained aerobic system supports and enhances the anaerobic systems. After that short burst of intense anaerobic energy fizzles out, your aerobic system steps in. It starts cleaning out that metabolic waste spewed out by the anaerobic system. A well-developed aerobic system clears out that byproduct faster than a poorly trained one. Which means you don't have to wait as long to use the anaerobic system again. Translation: FASTER recovery in between bursts of more intense activity. Alternatively, if you have a poorly developed aerobic system, you'll need much longer recovery time in between the same bursts of intense activity. Developing your aerobic system also increases your anaerobic threshold. By training the aerobic system, you've increased the overall output of your heart.

Are you beginning to see the importance of the interplay between the systems as it applies to your training? What would your performance be like if you only developed your anaerobic system? This is fine for a *very* narrow specialist population, like powerlifters, 100 meter sprinters, discus throwers and the like. Not acceptable for a multi-skilled operational athlete.

I'll give you a couple examples of how the systems interact with each other here. This is an oversimplification, but I want you to give you a general idea, a big picture. *Keep in mind* ***all*** *your energy systems are 'on' to some degree when engaged in activity. They're not little switches that turn-on sequentially when they're needed.* So with that in mind, here are a couple examples.

Let's say you're a cage fighter. You're fighting an opponent, moving around throwing some light jabs and feints, waiting for an opening. You're in aerobic mode here for the most part. Low intensity activity. You see an opening and immediately unleash a flurry of hard powerful strikes and kicks. Boom – you've engaged the anaerobic systems. That flurry lasts about 10-60 seconds depending on intensity and your level of conditioning. Then you back off to catch your breath and recover. Back to aerobic mode. Now if you have a well-trained aerobic system, you'll recover quickly compared to someone that doesn't. Remember, the aerobic system helps 'reset' the anaerobic system. So you can throw another flurry of strikes with less time resting in between. Shorter recovery time. As opposed to the fighter that neglected aerobic training. He now has to catch his breath for a much longer period of time, before being able to press the attack again.

For my military audience, this one might be a little closer to home. You're out on patrol. You're carrying maybe 50-80lbs of gear, and going at a walking pace. Maybe the conditions are hot. Right now, you're working at a low level of intensity. You can keep this up for hours and hours. At this moment you're primarily using your aerobic system, elements of strength-endurance, and maximum strength (load bearing). Your anaerobic systems are engaged as well, but not to any great degree. They're 'on' and ready, but that's about it.

Your patrol is interrupted by shots fired. You disengage and break contact. You double tap towards the threat, (or whatever your immediate/action drill is) then turn around and sprint/bound back several meters. You hit the ground/take a knee and providing cover fire. You immediately get up and repeat the same thing over and over again for a couple hundred meters or whatever. Sprint for a few feet. Get down, return fire, or provide covering fire for your partner or unit. Intermittent sprinting, carrying a heavy load. Brief rest before continuing. So now your anaerobic system has kicked in full force for the sprinting/bounding. Most likely your alactic system if you're moving as quickly and intensely as you should be. However, your aerobic system is still working in the background. Your anaerobic-alactic energy is fizzling out within 10-15 seconds of intense activity, partially due to that metabolic

byproduct being generated. You're panting and exhausted after each sprint/bound. Your aerobic system keeps stepping in for one of its important jobs. It starts working like crazy to clear out the anaerobic system's mess, which gets you over that fatigue, so you can quickly engage the anaerobic system again. Now you're ready for another quick bound. The fitter your aerobic system, the quicker you're able to recover in between bounds for that next mad dash. Too easy.

So to recap. Because you spent time training your aerobic system, you were able to recover very quickly in between bounds. You sprinted faster, recovered faster, which then allowed you to cover more ground in a shorter period of time. Ultimately you got out of the zone of fire faster. It made you a harder target. You spent time on anaerobic training, so your sprinting/bounding was also more effective and powerful. You spent time on strength training and did your squats, so that 70lb rucksack on your back is having less of an impact on your energy levels. If you don't have superior leg/load bearing strength, your energy systems would be working overtime to compensate – which would increase your fatigue significantly. Who says strength training isn't that important for a soldier in a combat role?

Now let's say you didn't spend much time on your aerobic training. All you did for 'cardio' was high intensity interval style work. You hear that shot fire. Your first couple bounds away from the danger zone are fast. Real fast. Faster than anyone else's. But you also tire out equally fast. You start resting longer in between bounds, because your poorly developed aerobic system takes longer to clear away the fatigue caused by your engaged anaerobic system. You are moving out of the kill zone at a slower rate overall. As time goes on you have to rest longer to recharge your anaerobic system. Your bounds become slower and longer, because it's tiring going up and down for short sprints. It becomes easier and easier to stay upright for a little while longer, to catch your breath. Not good.

Now if you only trained the aerobic system and neglected the anaerobic, you wouldn't be able to maintain or generate the same level of intensity or speed while bounding. All energy systems are important.

Don't make the mistake of just training one modality or the other. And remember, *you can adjust the dose.* Trainee A may have a greater need for aerobic capacity vs Trainee B. Trainee A participates in triathlons, and Trainee B is an office worker focused on increasing strength and performance all around. So Trainee A's conditioning protocol includes substantial aerobic training, Trainee B's has far less. Simple. Don't get wrapped up in what's better or worse. Everything depends on your end goal.

TACTICAL BARBELL II OVERVIEW

Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.

Sun Tzu

Tactical Barbell is a strength and conditioning system for the operational athlete that needs to function optimally in multiple fitness domains. TB1 covered strength. This book covers the other side of the coin, conditioning.

Within our definition of an operational athlete, trainees have different strength and conditioning needs. An infantry soldier's conditioning work won't be the same as a SWAT officer's. Johnny SWAT won't train the same way as Bobby office worker, who just wants to get extremely strong and highly conditioned for no particular role. That infantry soldier needs a higher level of aerobic/endurance development than Johnny SWAT. The office worker may just need enough aerobic work to reap the benefits and not a minute more. Not only do goals vary, but they also change along with your interests and lifestyle. Next year that office worker wants to run an adventure race and maybe the infantry soldier takes up BJJ. Now the training has to change. It might be time to change up the strength work, focus on different energy systems, or both.

TBI and 2 provide you with the framework to maneuver within these training parameters. When your interests start leaning toward adventure racing, you'll have the tools to move your training in that direction without greatly sacrificing your other attributes. More focus on improving maximum strength for the next 3 months? You'll learn how to adjust your conditioning work to deal with that. And of course, if you just want to be a well-rounded high performing operational athlete, well that's the backbone of this program, and the intended end-product.

In this book, you'll learn how to develop all your energy systems; increase work capacity, improve muscular endurance, and enhance explosive power. You'll also be shown how to incorporate all of this with your current strength training.

So how do you get good at everything?

There are key things you have to do in order to get to that place of having a 600lb deadlift and 19 minute 5km race time. Two very important skills; learn how to PRIORITIZE, and learn how to be EFFICIENT.

First, you have to know how to train each system in the most efficient manner possible. Efficiency becomes important, because as a multi-tasking athlete you can't afford to lose training time or energy doing things in a less than ideal manner. You have to master multiple skills. Your time and energy are going to be tight and precious. Instead of wasting time trying to build your core with eight different exercises while balancing on a medicine ball and simultaneously foam rolling your stomach, you'll have to rely on fewer, more direct and powerful movements. Things like hanging leg raises, planks, ab rollers, and the contribution made by deadlifts, squats, and sprinting. **Choose fewer, but more effective tools**.

In addition to learning the most efficient training methods, you have to understand how to

prioritize. You have to learn how to put together a program that improves your high priority fitness domains, while maintaining the others. Work capacity, strength, endurance, power, speed….where do you start?

Let's go a little deeper into TB's three pronged approach. First, we're going to do a little base building. Eight weeks of aerobic focused work, general endurance, and strength. This is step 1, or 'Block 1' for all trainees regardless of end goal. Look at general strength and aerobic capacity like water wells. You create large reservoirs and then dip into them to develop sub-categories like strength-endurance, anaerobic capacity, and the rest. The deeper and bigger you dig your well, the more raw material you have available to grow your other abilities. For example, training maximal strength *first* to a high degree, allows you to develop a greater threshold for strength-endurance. You'll take your SE much further than someone that doesn't have that high base level of strength. You'll hit 100 push-ups with less effort, whereas the other guy might top out at 50 with the same amount of SE work. Sometimes when you keep drawing too much from your well, it can run dry and you have to replenish it. An example of this is when you start training strength-endurance or high repetition bodyweight-only work for too long. Your overall maximum strength levels begin to drop, and you start getting weaker. In turn, your strength-endurance drops over time. Ever wonder why doing only hundreds of push-ups everyday slowly stops working after a few weeks and starts to fizzle out? Time for a return to maximum strength training, even if only briefly. Top up that reservoir. Similar principles apply to the aerobic/anaerobic systems.

It's extremely important – I urge you not to skip Block 1. We're building you a bigger, better gas tank, along with a high-performance engine. You will also reap a greater anaerobic threshold. This phase will slowly get you used to working for longer periods of time, and will pave the way for more intense future training. Another rarely mentioned, but valuable side effect of endurance training is hardening the mind and increasing your threshold for tolerating pain. It helps develop will power and teaches you to keep going. After you complete Block I, your continuation protocol won't seem as daunting. If you skip it and dive right into your conditioning template, you will hurt more than you need to and you won't be as fully developed at the end of the day. Trust the process.

There are certain rules we're going to follow during this phase that'll enhance the effectiveness of the training. This block is a little more cookie-cutter and less flexible than your continuation protocol will be. It's designed that way to ensure you have certain basics in place before moving on to more advanced training.

General strength and aerobic capacity are foundational fitness domains.

The more you have, the farther you can go. The more you have the farther you can develop other 'secondary' attributes.

After base building, you'll choose a continuation protocol or template based on your specific conditioning goals. You'll customize this protocol with the individual training sessions found in the Training Vault, or Part II of this book. Finally, you'll learn how to combine your particular conditioning protocol with your pre-existing strength program. The end product will be your strength and conditioning protocol. You'll learn how to efficiently train your energy systems, and exactly how to prioritize and schedule multiple fitness domains.

Base Building prepares you for a transition to your specific conditioning protocol. Step two, is your specific conditioning protocol.

GREEN PROTOCOL, BLACK PROTOCOL

So, everyone regardless of end goal goes through Block I. It's like basic training. You come out the other side with a vastly improved gas tank, and enhanced energy system. You develop your endurance capacity to the point of reaping the benefits and avoiding the side effects of excessive 'cardio'. You harden your body and prepared your mind for more difficult work. You're ready for the real training. Now what?

That depends on your goals. If you're not an endurance athlete, or military applicant, Block 1 might be all the endurance/aerobic training you need for a while. If you choose, you can now focus on advancing your higher intensity work capacity, strength, and explosiveness, while simply maintaining that aerobic/endurance base you built up. On the other hand, if you are an endurance athlete, or soldier, then your continuation training will be different.

You have the option of two main conditioning protocols. Each protocol has several variations to account for differences in priorities. They are:

1. Green Protocol

2. Black Protocol

Green Protocol is for you if endurance and aerobic capacity **continue** to remain a priority in your training. You might be a soldier, military applicant, or training for an adventure race. Or you just prize a high level of endurance for whatever reason. With Green, the focus is on endurance, strength, and strength-endurance. Green will include some HIC, but that'll account for less than 10% of your training.

The majority of TB users will fall into **Black Protocol** or one of its variations. With Black, there's a focus on being a well-rounded, strong, highly conditioned athlete. Anaerobic systems, work capacity, strength, power, and speed are some of the domains you'll aggressively progress. There will be Endurance maintenance work, but that'll account for less than 10% of your training.

To recap, first you complete Block 1 and reap the benefits. These include lowered resting heart rate, cardiac hypertrophy, cardiac strength, and a more efficient vascular network. You've built your general aerobic base. Now you can leave that aerobic training behind for a while and move on to conditioning more specific to your goals. So if it's Black Protocol, your focus will switch to shorter higher intensity work, power, speed and anaerobic training. If it's Green, you'll continue with a more intense endurance focused program.

These protocols make up the skeletal structure, or templates for this conditioning program. Now you need to fill them in with the correct individual training sessions, suitable for your goals.

Now we move on to the conditioning domains.

CONDITIONING DOMAINS

The TB2 conditioning domains are broken down as follows.

Individual training sessions are going to fall into four categories for ease of programming.

1. Endurance (E)

2. High Intensity Conditioning (HIC)

3. Core + Grip Finishers

4. Tactical Barbell Challenge Sessions

Both HIC and E have numerous sub-categories.

ENDURANCE (E)

E sessions will focus on developing aerobic capacity, strength-endurance, and hardening the mind's tolerance to moving and working for longer periods of time.

HIGH INTENSITY CONDITIONING (HIC)

HIC sessions are all about approaching maximum effort, and developing higher work output in a shorter duration of time. There will be a focus on the anaerobic systems, general aerobic conditioning, work capacity, speed/speed-endurance, and power.

CORE + GRIP

Consists of sessions designed to develop the midsection and grip strength, including the TB 'Plank and Shank' core routine. Most of these are presented as finishers, to be tacked on at the end of your regular training when time permits. However, two standalone sessions are included.

TACTICAL BARBELL CHALLENGE SESSIONS

Extreme physical and mental challenges, optional, and not meant to be a part of your regular conditioning protocol.

ENDURANCE

Endurance sessions are going to consist of:

1. Long Steady State Aerobic Training

2. Strength/Muscular Endurance

Now let's convert you to the benefits of this very important physical domain which has become a villain in some fitness circles.

AEROBIC TRAINING

Let's talk about aerobic training. No doubt, some of you are probably panicking at reading the word 'aerobic'. You're picturing skinny-fat marathon runners, who leg curl instead of squat, and are probably sterile to boot. Aerobic training has fallen out of favour within the popular civilian fitness market. It's touted as being 'unmanly' and you're being told you can get to an 'elite' level of conditioning by focusing on brief high intensity training sessions. Not only is aerobic work deemed unnecessary, but it's considered bad for you. It'll eat away at your hard earned muscle mass, lower your testosterone, and give you a heart attack. I certainly wasn't immune to this line of thinking, and fully bought into it for several years. It's not that simple.

Let me show you how it all worked out for me.

Let's go back about 15 years. I was a soldier attached to a para unit. My daily physical training in garrison looked something like this. Unit PT, almost every morning, five days a week. PT generally consisted of runs lasting around 45 minutes to an hour, anywhere from 2-6 miles or further. Sometimes they would be long steady state. Other times they'd be structured like fun-runs, where we'd stop every few minutes and perform things like push-ups, pull-ups, fireman carries, sprints or burpees. Occasionally in place of running, we'd put our boots on and go for a ruck march. This involved carrying around 50lbs-80lbs or more, a rifle, and webbing. We'd ruck anywhere from 2-10 miles. The pace was quicker than a comfortable hike, but slower than a jog. Three days a week, in the evenings, I'd do my own strength training. Once or twice a week, I'd head down to the track or find a hill, and do some sprints. Outside of my 'PT', my day job consisted of more ruck marching, lots of walking, and explosive high intensity activity like contact/break contact drills or pepper potting. Some days there was very little extra physical activity. Some days there was a lot.

If you analyze the above, you'll see a large portion of my weekly training was **aerobic** based. The daily morning PT. Long runs. Ruck marches. Constant moderate activity for lengthy periods of time. Anaerobic work and strength training came in second. A very important and vital second, make no mistake. Being strong creates resiliency, which is a HIGHLY prized trait in infantry and spec ops units. Think about load bearing capacity, when you're strapping on a hundred pounds of gear in the form of ruck, webbing, armor, extra ammo, and whatnot. But hands down, aerobic capacity/endurance was the attribute I was developing and drawing from the most.

With me so far? So after about 2 years of training and working in this fashion, I had a 300lb + bench press (almost 200% of my bodyweight at the time) and an 8:30 minute 1.5 mile run. I

had a respectable 6 mile/10km run time of around 40-42 minutes. I could knock out 20-25 pull-ups and do roughly a hundred push-ups. I had body fat in the 4%-5% range, and weighed about 150lbs give or take. I was relatively well-rounded, as a tactical athlete should be. I didn't overthink my training, and there was no internet to confuse me or take me off track. I wasn't special or alone in this, the majority of the soldiers in my unit were performing at the same level, slightly better, or slightly worse.

Fast forward several years later. I was a member on a federal police emergency response team. I was obviously still heavily into fitness, always looking for ways to improve performance. At this time, the concept that aerobic work was evil came to my attention. I read that long steady state work was to be avoided, and that I could get highly conditioned by focusing on short intense sessions, things like sprints, burpees, or a mix of both. Not only would my training be brief, around 20 minutes or less, but within that 20 minutes of intense work, I'd be getting 'better' conditioning than if I worked for hours. Supposedly, aerobic work was actually lowering my strength, and taking away my explosive power. I could also expect to get skinny-fat because of the muscle loss, due to a slower metabolism.

I loved it. Because.

One, I wasn't particularly fond of long steady state work. Two, the logic behind the 'no endurance' approach made sense to me. Get ultimate conditioning in only 20 minutes or less?? Who wouldn't want to believe that? Plus I was always naturally better at the anaerobic stuff than that endurance work anyway. I was no longer in the military, so I wasn't being forced to go on fun-runs or ruck marches. This made it very easy for me to dump the long-steady-state work.

It was great. I was lifting three days a week, and doing brief 'cardio' sessions. Instead of slogging through 2-6 mile runs, I was doing sprints and other short met-con style workouts. My training was finished up in around 20 minutes, and afterward, I felt great. And the variety! Compare burpees, hill sprints, and sledgehammers, to simply pounding the pavement at the same monotonous pace for an hour. No contest.

Unfortunately, no matter how good something feels or sounds, you have to stop and look at the results once in a while.

Here's what happened when I stopped and took a hard look at my results. After a couple years of just strength training and anaerobic work, this is where I ended up;

My 1.5 mile time had crept up to over 10 minutes. I could squeeze out a 9:45 if I absolutely had to, but it was a challenge that required extra prep. That's a far cry from my old peak times of 8:30-8:45. The 1.5 mile is a very common fitness test in the tactical community and is considered a measure of cardiovascular conditioning. My time was putting me in the 'diesel' category. Unacceptable.

I used to run 5km in 19-21 minutes. Now I was struggling to finish in 26-28 with much effort.

Operations were becoming tiring. In the past, it was nothing for me to carry heavy loads and patrol or work for hours. Now I felt fatigued, far more fatigued than I should have. I was doing far less physical work in law enforcement than in the military.

There was a constant background feeling of fatigue, during my daily routine activities. I just felt plain tired most of the time. In the weight room, I was just going through the motions. In the past I'd have a feeling of motivation, a kind of fiery energy before lifting. Now I felt stale, and stagnant.

I was no longer at the head of the pack during longer distance unit ‘fun runs’.

Once in a while I’d go running or hiking with non-‘tactical’ members, and I’d be the one struggling!

I was also developing a nice little layer of fat around my belly I couldn’t seem to shake.

Initially I thought I just needed to train harder. So I buckled down on the cardiovascular work. I pushed the intensity. I increased the number of sessions per week. I’d do things like wear a gas mask and go for short hard intervals or do ultra-high rep kettlebell swings. I’d throw in frequent Tabata work. So what was the end result of all that?

No change. I still felt like someone had removed my gas tank and had installed a smaller, less efficient one. I had become heavier and older, but I refused to believe that was the cause. There were plenty of athletes my age or older with just as much muscle mass outperforming me. Something in my approach was off. But I couldn’t figure it out. Maybe it was diet, maybe I should start eating paleo. Maybe I needed to double my carbs. Maybe I needed to cut out all my carbs. Maybe I needed more vitamin D or BCAAs. Nope. It was none of those things.

I ended up in a conversation that pointed me in the right direction. It was with a close friend from prior military days. A Tier 1 special operations soldier and who was frequently involved in running selection courses for his elite unit. These selections were designed to weed out the weak, unsuitable, and unmotivated. A class that started with 35-40 candidates would end up with maybe 5 still standing when it was all over. During our talk, he stated that he was seeing more and more candidates lacking in one major quality:

Endurance, or more specifically a strong aerobic system.

More and more recruits were preparing for selection by focusing only on training the anaerobic systems. Short, high intensity stuff, because it was marketed as ‘functional’ and ‘elite’. They’d show up for selection looking fit, but couldn’t make it through the long hours of constant activity, and sleep deprivation.

They had conditioned themselves to perform at a high level for about 20 minutes at a time. Anything longer or more drawn out, they’d fatigue, and ultimately fail or give up.

This is exactly how I’d been training for the past few years.

Around the same time I came across resources aimed at mixed martial artists. Articles and books by respected strength and conditioning coaches like Joel Jamieson, who debunked the ‘anaerobic only’ approach to training. They were advocating an *intelligent* return to roadwork. Mixed martial artists and tactical athletes are similar. They have to be skilled in multiple fitness domains.

Things were starting to come together. I examined my own experience. It matched with what I was learning. The elusive obvious finally clicked into place. In the past, when I had trained general endurance on a regular basis, I was in far better shape overall. The difference was night and day. My current ‘symptoms’ matched having a poorly developed aerobic system. So, I decided to put it to the test, and slowly re-introduced long-steady-state and other types of aerobic work.

Fast-forward again, several months later.

I reduced my 1.5 mile time to a low 9 minute range.

I had far more energy in and out of the weight room.

My short high intensity anaerobic sessions improved dramatically, they felt easier, and my performance improved significantly.

I brought my 10km/6 mile run time back down to 47 minutes (it had deteriorated to close to an hour).

My resting heart rate dropped from around 69-74 to around 50-52. (It's currently in the high 40s).

I reduced my bodyfat levels.

The benefits continued, and my performance progressively improved over the years.

Surprisingly, my muscle did not disappear. I had no reduction in maximum strength. On the contrary, I had far more energy with the barbells, kettlebells, and everything else. The only change I had made in my training, was the *intelligent* addition of long steady state, aerobic training. Key word **intelligent.** If you're not a marathon runner or endurance athlete, you need the right dose of aerobic training. Not too much, not too little. When you do too much in relation to your specific goals, then some of those aerobic 'side effects' DO become a cause for concern. If you *overdo* it, there certainly are implications to health, hormone levels, joints and loss of lean body mass. Alternatively, when you do too little, you limit your performance and fitness levels, and you lose the health benefits.

In this program we're going to use the right dose. Not too much, not too little. Enough to reap the benefits and springboard your performance, but not enough to spill over into negative effect.

Let's talk concrete benefits. Why exactly is endurance-based aerobic training essential for the operational athlete? What are slower, lengthier, sessions doing for you that short intense 'cardio' workouts can't?

To state the obvious, endurance-type sessions improve the aerobic system. Let's take that further. Endurance type session improve the aerobic system in unique ways that other training styles can't. Now take a minute and think about how much you can actually improve the aerobic system in a human being. On one end of the spectrum, you have ultramarathon runners that run for a hundred miles, on the other hand you have your couch potato that gets winded walking to the refrigerator. You can physiologically take that couch potato and turn him into that ultramarathon runner, barring any medical issues. There is room for massive improvement for this particular domain, compared to others. Speed for example. Okay, that's fine and dandy, maybe you have no interest in running for hours. Let's talk about the benefits that are applicable to you.

Your aerobic system provides the **majority** of energy for most activity. Isn't this a good thing even if we're not talking about running? I'm guessing you want to be unfatigued for 'most activity'.

Your aerobic system works to convert BOTH fat and sugar into energy. The anaerobic system relies primarily on sugars. Fat provides more energy than sugar. And who doesn't want to lose fat?

A well-developed aerobic system can produce energy for **hours.** Your anaerobic systems top out after about 10 to 120 seconds of energy output. When your anaerobic engines sputter out, your aerobic system steps in to take up slack. It also assists in recharging your anaerobic system so you can start using it again. A well-developed aerobic system 'recharges' the anaerobic system faster than a poorly developed one.

Also, the more developed your aerobic system is, the longer it takes for your anaerobic systems to kick in, which means it takes longer for you to fatigue. Remember your anaerobic system works fast, but tires out even faster. It is advantageous to delay tapping into anaerobic energy to delay fatigue.

Developing the aerobic system increases your anaerobic threshold, because you've improved the heart's overall output and performance. Aerobic training improves your maximum heart rate.

In addition to the benefits above, there are certain physiological adaptations to the heart that aerobic training can induce. These adaptations will improve your overall conditioning levels and performance.

Increased Heart Volume (Eccentric Cardiac Hypertrophy)

Through certain types of aerobic training, namely long duration/low intensity (endurance) work, the left ventricle of the heart increases in volume. Through aerobic training the left ventricle of your heart hypertrophies and is able to contain a greater volume of blood. What this means is your heart pumps out more blood with each beat, which means more oxygen to working parts. Increased cardiovascular performance, a more efficient cardiovascular system, and a lower resting heart rate are a result.

This change won't come about through short high intensity work. Physiologically it takes **roughly 30-60 minutes+ working at a steady, low level of intensity** to induce this adaptation.

Stronger Heart Contraction

Certain forms of aerobic training cause changes to your heart to allow it to contract more forcefully, resulting in more blood being dispersed. More blood while working equals more oxygen delivery, equals improved performance.

Improved Vascular Network

Aerobic training enhances the highways your heart uses to get oxygen to your working parts. Again, this translates to improved physical performance, and increased health.

Can you see what you're missing out on by doing only short HIIT style sessions?

You'll benefit from aerobic training if any of these apply to you:

Your resting heart rate is in the 60s or higher.

You have a slower 1.5 Mile/Cooper's run (roughly, anything over 9:30/10 minutes)

Your current conditioning regime consists primarily of short duration, high intensity work (less than 30mins)

You 'gas' quickly on longer runs, or when sparring.

You've never focused solely on aerobic development for several weeks. You've always mixed it up with anaerobic work. Particularly anaerobic lactic work.

You can't run for 3 miles without stopping.

Your nickname on the team is Diesel.

If you still need convincing of the value of endurance training for the tactical athlete, let's talk about the British Special Air Service. These commandos are amongst the most elite in the world. The first, and arguably the most physically gruelling part of SAS selection is

fittingly called ‘Endurance’ phase. It consists of ruck marching in hellish terrain for 10-40 miles a day, for close to a month. The marches are timed, the packs are weighted, and nobody cares if you’re injured or your feet hurt. You either make it, or you don’t. Think about that. 10 to 40 miles a day, sometimes more than one march a day, consecutive days. Timed. In country known for its hills and challenging terrain. Carrying a pack that weighs 50lbs plus. Think about how fatigue and physical strain would accumulate each passing day. This isn’t something unique to the SAS by the way, all high end military units have similar phases of selection designed to test physical and mental endurance. Think about the infamous Navy SEAL hell-week. Constant work with no sleep for a week. The key word is constant. What do all of these selections have in common? The intensity varies but the activity is constant. Really think about that word constant.

Now, think about how you’d prepare for ‘constant’. Would it be by doing burpees and kipping pull-ups all-out for 20 minutes at a time? Or maybe several 400 meter sprints? Pushing a prowler? Bench press or squat? These all have value and are equally important qualities.

But.

Ultimately, to successfully work hard for a long period of time – *you have to work hard for a long period of time*.

‘Constant’ activity for lengthier periods of time.

Don’t make the mistake of training yourself in 20 minute blocks 3-5 times a week, and expect to achieve elite conditioning. A tactical athlete with a poorly developed aerobic system is like a 3 legged dog in a race.

Now we’re not looking to turn you into an endurance athlete or SAS member. You don’t have to be a special operations soldier to benefit from developing your aerobic capacity. But we’re going to borrow some of the approaches the elite use to develop your base and get those benefits I listed above. It is easier than you think. How far you take it after we give you the foundation, is up to you. Remember, aerobic training contributes to greater anaerobic efficiency. So even if the majority of your activity is anaerobic, developing your aerobic base is one of the easiest ways to take your anaerobic game to the next level.

And if you hate running, not to worry. Running is just one tool. There are plenty of others that we can use for aerobic system development. You’ll find a few sessions in the endurance protocol that contain no running, and you’ll learn how to modify the other sessions on the list to suit your needs.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS AND MISTAKES

To many, aerobic training means only one thing - long steady state jogging. This is a misconception. Aerobic training improves a few things as I mentioned above; cardiac hypertrophy, cardiac strength, improved vascular network, and improved oxygen utilization to name a few. Different types of aerobic activity target different areas of the aerobic system.

For example, let’s take Long Steady State (LSS) work. Jogging at a steady pace for an hour or so is an example of LSS. LSS is one of the best ways to develop eccentric cardiac hypertrophy as mentioned above. Basically it enlarges a portion of your heart so it can hold and pump a greater volume of blood. During activity this means more oxygen and energy to working systems. For conditioning and performance, that’s a huge benefit. The best way to

develop this hypertrophy is by keeping your heart rate at a level which allows the chambers to fill with larger amounts of blood. If your heart rate gets **too high**, the heart doesn't fill up with enough blood to stretch and adapt the ventricle. There isn't enough time for the ventricles to fill up because of increased/quicker contractions. You want your heart rate low enough to maximize blood volume. So you need to maintain a relatively low level of intensity for a long enough period of time to make that happen. So if you want to bring about that particular type of cardiac adaptation and its benefits, why would you throw in sprints during a long steady state jog and interrupt the process by spiking your heartrate? This is a perfect example of why more is not always better. I made this very same mistake for a long period of time. I thought if jogging at an easy pace was good, then going even faster and doing sprints and hills along the way would be that much better. Wrong.

Now don't get caught up in all this to the other extreme and think LSS is the bomb, and the only thing to do. Again, LSS is great at developing *certain* aerobic traits. We talked about how LSS develops cardiac hypertrophy. Not to use another example let's talk about another adaptation, cardiac strength, or how forcefully your heart can contract. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the stronger your heart can contract, means more blood and oxygen get to your working systems. This means more energy, greater endurance, and improved performance. While LSS is great for cardiac *hypertrophy,* it's not necessarily the best method to develop cardiac strength. One way to do that is through particular types of interval training. Yes, interval training can be aerobic when done a certain way. And anaerobic when done another way.

If your eyes are starting to glaze over, all I want you to really take from all this is that there are many ways to develop the aerobic system, and there are different methods and tools for developing each aspect. TB2 contains sessions designed to cause cardiac hypertrophy, cardiac strength, improved oxygen delivery, and strength-endurance. When you see an LSS session, understand that there is a specific reason it's being included (ventricular hypertrophy/enhanced vascular network etc), and there's a specific reason it *won't* include sprints or burpees. Likewise, you will see sessions that may not fit your perception of aerobic work, such as certain types of interval training, but it is, and it's hitting your aerobic system from a different angle by forcing different adaptations. So when you see certain HIC sessions included in your Base Building phase, they're there because they improve certain aerobic traits. Remember, you're not training to be a good long distance runner or LSS-er, you're developing and enhancing physiological markers.

TRAINING THE AEROBIC SYSTEM IN ISOLATION

Another thing you're going to notice is that there will be very little anaerobic work during Block I/Base Building. There are a couple reasons for this. The aerobic system requires frequency (3-5 sessions a week+) for proper adaptation. So logistically scheduling in anaerobic work on top of this is not realistic or effective. Second, certain types of anaerobic training and aerobic training cause adaptations which are at odds with each other – kinda/sorta like trying to bulk up and lose weight at the same time. It can be done, but it's just not as effective as doing one or the other first. So build your aerobic base during Block I, don't worry about the anaerobic stuff, you'll get more than you want during your continuation protocol. Don't add in any extra 'cardio' or anaerobic work during Block I. You might be undoing or at-odds with all the hard aerobic work you're doing – you'll just be slowing your progress down by trying to do more.

STRENGTH-ENDURANCE

Strength-Endurance (SE) is another domain that will fall under “Endurance” for the purposes of this program. I’m not going to get too detailed here. This one’s pretty self-explanatory. Strength or muscular endurance is your ability to exert force at a moderate/low level of intensity for lengthy periods of time. Being able to do a hundred push-ups or 25 pull-ups are both examples of strength-endurance at work. Here’s another example. Let’s say you’re running a marathon, you’re halfway, and you’re not even close to being out of breath. That’s great, your aerobic system’s looking good and ticking along with no problems. But your legs are tired and wobbly. They feel like they’re going to give out, and it’s frustrating you to no end because you feel ‘cardio’ wise you can go on forever. Your legs are giving out before your lungs. That’s your muscular endurance getting ready to fail. I’m generalizing here, because a highly developed aerobic system contributes to greater strength/muscular endurance through enhanced oxygen delivery and whatnot. But, classic aerobic system aside, you can develop greater strength endurance through various methods that increase your muscle’s capacity for long periods of work. There will be basic coverage during Block I, and more in-depth SE work contained in the Green templates. You’ll also be shown how to put together your own SE focused protocol for further specialization.

Muay Thai fighters run 5-6 miles every day, 6-7 days a week. Do your roadwork!

HIGH INTENSITY CONDITIONING (HIC)

HIC sessions consist of the following sub-categories:

1. Anaerobic Lactic + Anaerobic Alactic training
2. Aerobic training (Non-endurance)
3. General Conditioning / Work Capacity
4. Power/Power-Endurance/Speed/Speed-Endurance

Many sessions will obviously have overlap, but HICs will be loosely categorized by their primary objective. Don't worry too much about the fine tuning right now.

THE ANAEROBIC SYSTEM(S)

As mentioned previously, the aerobic system's great for developing slow energy used over a long period of time. But it's not as efficient at generating high rates powerfully and quickly. Enter the anaerobic systems (ANS). The ANS generates energy/ATP very quickly using sugar/glycogen. To oversimplify, it doesn't need oxygen to work the way the aerobic system does. The downside is it can't sustain this energy output for very long.

The ANS consists of the anaerobic-lactic, and anaerobic-alactic systems. The lactic system performs for about 60-90 seconds at full throttle, and the alactic gives you everything it's got for about 10 seconds give or take.

The 100 meter sprint is a classic example of your alactic system at work. It fizzles out at that kind of maximum effort near the end of your run.

The 400 meter race is a display of energy provided by the lactic system. You can't sustain the same pace/energy output as you did running the 100 meter, but you're not going slow enough to primarily engage the aerobic system.

Both will be developed under the HIC banner.

While the ANS can be greatly improved and enhanced, there is a bit of a ceiling. Think about it in relation to developing something like the aerobic system (you can train to run for hours), or strength. You can take a guy that can barely deadlift a bar and improve that by almost a thousand pounds. The ANS is a little trickier, no one has developed a way to sprint for hours yet. Going back, that's why it's so important to develop the aerobic system, because the better your aerobic system, the quicker your ANS can 'recharge' and get back into action. Less recovery time needed between those fast sprints, or that flurry of punches. So in a round-about way, aerobic development is one way to improve ANS performance.

HIC ANS sessions will be relatively brief, and as per the name, will involve higher levels of intensity. Tools used will include track runs, kettlebells, burpees, and hill sprints.

HIC AEROBIC TRAINING

Thought you were done with "aerobics" after Block 1? Relax. While these sessions enhance the aerobic system, they will not include long steady state/endurance style work. These

particular sessions will enhance the aerobic system from different angles – namely increased cardiac contractile strength, improved mitochondria function etc. Tools used will include rested intervals, sprints, heavy bag work, etc.

GENERAL CONDITIONING/WORK CAPACITY

Remember how I said I wouldn't throw a laundry list of random exercises at you….? I lied. Kind of. This category will contain random/laundry-list type activity by design. These sessions will bring many of your strength and energy systems together, and provide overall non-specific conditioning. It has tremendous benefit when used at the right time for the right purpose. As an operational athlete, this type of work will be applicable to what you might face in the field, because it forces you to use different energy systems at varying doses of intensity and duration. You've trained your strength, your aerobic system, your anaerobic system etc. - now it's time to bring all these separate elements together to work as one unit. Variety junkies will get to use a multitude of different tools, such as sledgehammers, kettlebells, burpees and the like. There will be ways to adapt the sessions if you don't have access to the tools. Remember, the tools aren't as important as the fitness domain you're trying to train.

POWER /POWER-ENDURANCE/SPEED/SPEED-ENDURANCE

The combination of strength and speed. Strength applied with speed. When a boxer throws that knockout punch, power is the attribute you're looking at. When a boxer throws multiple punches at close to that same intensity level – you're looking at power-endurance. Power-endurance is the ability to exert that power for lengthier duration/higher volume.

Power can be acquired through skills training required for your particular sport or activity. For example the aforementioned boxer can develop power through heavy bag work, pad drills etc. Power can also be enhanced with the use of weights or bodyweight drills.

Certain sessions in this program are dedicated to increasing power/power-endurance. The idea is that you want to develop a high level of base strength and then 'convert' some of that strength to power or power-endurance.

Tools used will include explosive plyometric work, sprints, and barbells/dumbbells.

Speed-Endurance is just that. While speed may be running 100meters as fast as you can, speed-endurance is holding on to that pace for a longer distance. Tools used will include running/rowing/cycling/track intervals.

CORE + GRIP FINISHERS

Core + Grip make up the remaining regular training sessions in this program. Both grip and midsection are extremely important. Regular heavy strength training will provide you with this to some degree, but every once in a while add in one of these finishers to take your abilities higher. With the exception of the full core session, all of these are finishers that can be tacked on after your main training sessions.

TACTICAL BARBELL CHALLENGE SESSIONS

At the very end of the Training Vault you'll find optional Challenge sessions. These are for those of you that border on the insane or obsessive-compulsive. They're very difficult, and not meant to be a part of your regular conditioning protocol. They're not very healthy for you either in a conventional sense. So why include them? They develop mental toughness. They give you a chance to test your edges against the extreme. But if you have to ask, then most likely these are not for you. If you can complete all 5 challenge sessions competently, you are officially superhuman cyborg. To date, I've had TB clients complete 3 at the most, but no one has completed all 5 yet.

Duku-Duku (aka Pretorian Hills):

The most brutal hill and kettlebell challenge you'll ever come across. Loosely based on a South African military selection exercise.

Burpees for the Mentally Disturbed:

If you thought burpees were bad before…

Triska-Deka-Phobia:

Unlucky 13.

Beasting:

Take the beast for a stroll

Snake-Eater's Delight:

This one includes a little psychological torture

CONDITIONING PROTOCOLS

BLOCK I – BASE BUILDING

HARDENING THE BODY, HARDENING THE MIND

Block I is eight weeks long and focuses on general endurance and strength. We're building up your aerobic base, maximum strength and strength-endurance. Bringing those areas up just enough to benefit, and then shifting the focus to work capacity, the anaerobic system and more maximum strength training.

If you continue with Green protocol, you'll continue the trend with additional in-depth endurance work. More on this later.

There are two versions of Block 1. In one, you drop traditional maximum strength training for the first five weeks and replace it with strength-endurance. In the second version you do the opposite. A strength first version, and a strength-endurance first version.

For the SE version, we'll be putting maximal strength training aside for the first five weeks. In its place will be strength-endurance. Maximal strength training will return in week six and beyond. There are a couple reasons for this. Backing off heavy strength work frees up more energy to focus on the lengthier aerobic/endurance sessions. For the goals of this particular block, it's just not as efficient to go for an hour long ruck march after doing several sets of heavy deadlifts. Strength-endurance is a high priority domain for the operational athlete - you'll be required to exert force for more than one to five repetitions at a time in real life. Strength-Endurance also has the added benefit of strengthening tendons, ligaments and joints to prepare for future heavy barbell lifting. For a lot of you that's going to be a huge benefit and injury-prevention strategy in the long term. If you're an older athlete that's been lifting heavy for years, this will be a much needed break for your body and CNS.

If you're panicking right now at the thought of not being able to squat and bench for five weeks, never fear. The strength-first version is for you. You'll continue with conventional strength training while base building, but there are going to be minor modifications so the priority is still aerobic capacity/endurance. It'll make your life easier.

When deciding what version of Block I you're going to choose, keep in mind it's only temporary. We're laying the groundwork for the training to come. Block I will build your gas tank, and prepare your joints and ligaments for future strength and conditioning sessions. The more solid your foundation, the farther you'll go in the long run. It's good to shake things up and not get too attached to one modality. Remember, our goal is overall performance, not waddling up to the heaviest object you can and picking it up once.

Another overlooked benefit of endurance training I'd like to talk about is the mental aspect. It increases your capacity for long training sessions and improves pain tolerance. Longer sessions develop will power. You'll learn to keep going, and to push-through periods of discomfort. You reset your boundaries. There is a huge psychological advantage when you run a 1.5 mile timed test, if you're already used to running, moving and working for an hour or two at a time. That, combined with the actual physiological improvements the training will bring, will result in superior performance.

Some of you will notice frequent LSS aerobic sessions throughout the week become easier and easier relatively quickly. Many trainees we put through Block I have a similar experience. About two or three weeks in, they notice almost-daily running becomes

considerably easier than running only once or twice a week. They're also usually surprised at how relatively quickly their aerobic ability improves. Within a few weeks they notice they are going farther in the same amount of time with far less effort and fatigue. This applies to all LSS training, not just running.

At the end of the day, keep in mind this block is only eight weeks long. It'll strengthen your heart, increase cardiac volume/capacity, improve oxygen delivery to working systems, and enhance your vascular network. It'll build strength-endurance and set the stage for a solid musculoskeletal system. All of these things result in vastly improved performance, and pave the way for the second stage of the TB conditioning protocol. Any slight changes to your schedule, lengthier training sessions etc. are only temporary.

BLOCK I - PROGRAMMING

DURATION

8 Weeks

GOALS

Train and develop the aerobic system.

Build strength/strength-endurance

Prepare for transition to high intensity conditioning.

Prepare for further maximal strength training.

Increase mental threshold for work duration and pain tolerance.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

See template for specifics.

Perform 3-5 Endurance Sessions per week.

Perform 2-3 Strength-Endurance circuits per week/ or Max Strength sessions

Choose sessions from the “Endurance” category in the Training Vault (Part 2).

Rest completely at least one day per week. No structured training. Walking, casual swimming, or pick-up sports are okay. The rest day can be used in the middle or end of the week, doesn’t matter.

For the standard approach, maximal strength training will be set aside for the first five weeks of Block I, and there will be a focus on strength-endurance in its place. Maximal strength will be re-introduced in week six.

The non-standard/ strength-first approach allows you to include maximal strength training for the first five weeks.

In either case, maximal strength will return to being a high priority domain after Block I.

You must manage your food intake to take into account the extra activity. **Do not under-eat**. There are several recommended resources at www.tacticalbarbell.com. If you’re having a hard time finding them, write in to me on the website and I’ll point you in the right direction. I highly recommend you get at least 1gm – 2gm of protein per lb of bodyweight during this block. I don’t give out nutritional advice, but I am personally NOT in favour of low carb approaches for optimal performance.

Time and time again I run into trainees that suffer under any sort of moderate to heavy conditioning load, and the problem is almost always insufficient daily food intake, and/ or lack of sufficient quality carbohydrates.

BLOCK 1 - BASE BUILDING: STANDARD TEMPLATE

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
1	SE 3 x 20	SE 3 x 30	SE 3 x 40	SE 1 x 50
2	E x 30M	E x 40M	E x 50M	E x 60M
3	E x 30M	E x 40M	E x 50M	E x 60M
4	SE 2 x 20	SE 2 x 30	SE 2 x 40	SE 1 x 50
5	Recovery	Recovery	Recovery	Recovery
6	E x 35-120M	E x 45-120M	E x 55-120M	E x 60-120M
7	Rest	Rest	Rest	Rest
DAY	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8
1	SE 3 x 50	Max Strength	Max Strength	Max Strength
2	E x 45-60M	HIC#1-10	HIC#1-10	HIC#1-10
3	E x 45-60M	Recovery	Recovery	Recovery
4	SE 2 x 50	Max Strength	Max Strength	Max Strength
5	Recovery	HIC#1-10	HIC#1-10	HIC#1-10
6	E x 45-120M	E x 30-60M	E x 30-60M	E x 30-60M
7	Rest	Rest	Rest	Rest

Don't panic at all the busy acronyms in the table, it's actually pretty simple:

SE 3 x 20 = Strength-Endurance circuits/ 3 x 20 refers to circuits x reps

E = Endurance sessions/ E x 30M = Endurance session x 30 minutes

HIC = High Intensity Conditioning/ HIC#1-10 means you can use HIC sessions numbered from 1 through 10. All E and HIC sessions are numbered and listed in Part II. Reason being these particular HIC sessions primarily work on your aerobic system.

Max Strength = Regular barbell strength training. TB Fighter or any other 2 day/week template is ideal for this block.

Recovery = see below

As you can see, the first five weeks of Block 1 are Endurance/Strength-Endurance dense. Then we start tapering off the long-duration work and start hitting the aerobic system from different angles using certain HIC sessions. Generally speaking, the first five weeks develop cardiac hypertrophy, improved oxygen delivery and muscular endurance. Then for the remainder we work on cardiac strength, preparation for anaerobic training, and a gradual return to maximum strength.

Day 6's

The sessions on Day 6 in this block are designed to allow you to push your boundaries. You'll have a recovery day beforehand, and a rest day afterward. So this is a chance for you to try running or working for longer than you're used to. Maybe you want to try your hand at a two to three hour ruck march, or maybe you want to try running for 60 minutes straight if you've never done so. This is also the perfect spot for doing any of the Fun-Runs found in the Training Vault. As long as you adhere to the minimum time limit, you can go for as long as you want. Have a little fun with it, challenge yourself.

Strength-Endurance Circuits

See the Strength-Endurance chapter in Part II of this book for the details on how to put

together and perform your strength-endurance circuit. Not only do SE circuits develop muscular endurance, but they'll also provide you with an element of cardiovascular conditioning.

Endurance Sessions

Choose sessions from the 'Endurance' list in Part II of this book. In the above template, I've outlined the recommended duration for each E session - but you can scale that depending on your current fitness levels. Build up slowly within your means, or use the upper ranges (60-90 minutes) if you're more experienced. The only rule is that each E session has to be a **minimum** of 30 minutes. For those of you that are advanced, you can take it right up to 120 minutes if desired. If you're an out of shape beginner, stick closer to the 30 minute end of the scale. You'll find non-jogging options in the Endurance list of exercise choices. If you're just starting out and can't run without stopping and walking – that's fine. Run-walk-run is acceptable and will generally keep you in the aerobic zone anyway.

All the E sessions have their own individual guidelines. Plug them in to the above template accordingly with the necessary modifications.

HIC Sessions

During Block 1, HIC sessions are used through weeks 6-8. Only certain HIC sessions can be used - numbers 1 through 10 as listed in Part II of this book. The reason being, certain HICs have an aerobic element and are compatible with the goals of this block. For example, 400M Resets train cardiac contractile strength, a prized aerobic trait. Other HIC sessions might focus on the lactic system. Trying to develop the aerobic and lactic system at the same time isn't the best practice, because of opposing adaptations.

Recovery Day

Recovery days are designed for movement drills, massage, stretching, or any light activity that assists in healing or gives you a mental break. Recovery days can also be used as an extra rest day for doing nothing.

For the more experienced, if you're still feeling refreshed and raring to go, you can do another low intensity/easy E or SE session. For the majority, it's a good idea to stick to a recovery session, or rest, because you might not be used to the volume of work. Especially if you're new to E or SE type work. Remember, the volume's going to be increasing over the weeks, so don't push yourself too hard in the beginning out of eagerness and burn yourself out or get injured. When the end of the week rolls around, assess yourself. Are you still mentally motivated? How do your joints, knees and tendons feel? Anything flaring up? If you have doubts, err on the side of rest/recovery. Here are some activities to consider:

Low intensity mobility/movement drills

Bike riding

Swimming

Walking/Hiking

Shadow boxing/very light bag or pad work

Yoga/Stretching/Massage

SE Circuit, but only do 1 circuit or half the assigned reps for that week

Whatever you do, keep it easy, low intensity and fun. Don’t exert yourself.

BLOCK 1 – BASE BUILDING: STRENGTH-FIRST TEMPLATE

In the standard BB template above, strength-endurance is trained for five weeks followed by a transition to maximal/barbell strength work for the remaining three. With the 'strength-first' approach, reverse that. For the first five weeks, do your maximum strength/barbell training. For the last three weeks, transition to strength-endurance. Where you see 'SE' in the template, replace it with 'Max Strength' and vice-versa. Here are some guidelines to consider when incorporating maximal strength work:

Select a two day per week strength template such as TB Fighter.

Use a Minimalist or Standard Cluster. Go ruthlessly spartan for the block. Eliminate any non-essential lifts or assistance work. Use maybe 2-3 core/compound lifts tops. Or 3 compounds + 1 bodyweight.

Retest your one repetition maximums, and use a 90% Training Max as taught by Jim Wendler in his book 5/3/1 (see References/Recommended Reading chapter). You'll use this training max for the entire 8 week Block.

Your strength training sessions will take the place of the SE circuits in the standard template, exactly as laid out in Weeks 6-8. On the days marked SE, you'll be doing your strength training instead.

You have the *option* of doing an SE Circuit on your Recovery Day. I'd suggest 2-3 SE Circuits of 30-50 reps.

If you're using Tactical Barbell for your strength work, then Fighter template is the obvious choice here. If you're not, any two day strength template/modified strength template will do the trick.

STRENGTH ENDURANCE: TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

There are a couple different approaches to strength-endurance training.

The standard base building approach has you doing SE work first, before transitioning to maximum strength. With the strength-first template that's reversed, you train maximal strength first and then transition to strength-endurance.

There are benefits to both approaches.

Strength-Endurance First

Acts as a General Physical Preparation phase

Strengthens ligaments, joints and connective tissue in preparation for the heavy barbell work to come

Novices get to ease in to physical work with lower intensity training

Experienced lifters get a break from heavy lifting; CNS is given time to recover, and connective tissue/ligaments develop resiliency with significantly lighter loads

Maximal Strength First

By developing maximum strength first, you've developed a greater reservoir from which to improve your strength-endurance. Think of it as "converting" strength to strength-endurance. The more strength you have, the further you can take your strength-endurance.

In the big picture it doesn't matter what you do first for this block. The reason the standard template prescribes SE first is that most people that come to us *already have* a strength training background/base. So you might already have a decent existing strength reservoir to "convert" to strength-endurance. A break from heavy training might be a refreshing change of pace and a welcome rest for your CNS.

If you're starting at ground zero, then consider the strength-first template. Again, in the big picture it doesn't make a huge amount of difference at this stage of the game. Your continuation protocol will iron out any differences. Just pick a route and take it!

CONTINUATION

Your continuation protocol is your primary conditioning program. In comparison to Block 1, you'll find greater flexibility, along with more balanced volume. The reason being, your continuation protocol is meant to be run long-term, for the rest of your life. It's not a smart or sustainable approach to train every day like its hell-week or bootcamp.

There are two main protocols, both with optional variations to cater to specific goals.

BLACK PROTOCOL

Black is the standard Tactical Barbell conditioning template. Black was originally designed for our tactical police clients; SWAT officers, Emergency Response Team, and HRT. It's for the trainee looking to be extremely fit across multiple domains. There is no specialization. The focus is on aggressively improving high intensity work performance, general conditioning, and strength. There will be relatively little endurance work beyond occasional maintenance. If you want to be strong and well-conditioned in a non-specialist way, this template is for you. There will be variations of Black provided to fit your particular goals. Black is suitable for tactical law enforcement, regular law enforcement, and recreational trainees that prioritize maximal strength and conditioning equally.

GREEN PROTOCOL

This is a conditioning template for trainees that want to develop endurance capability beyond Block I. Endurance, strength endurance and maximum strength will be priority domains. Limited time will be spent on HIC. Green was originally designed for clients preparing for military contracts, or continuation infantry training. Green is well suited for adventure racers, pre-bootcamp prep, or anyone interested in endurance activities.

Note: this is not a specialist template. It's for building very high levels of general endurance. If you're training for a marathon or triathlon, you need to train for a marathon or triathlon. Green *will* give you a solid base of endurance to funnel into a more specialist program.

BLACK PROTOCOL

DURATION

8-12 Weeks +

GOALS

Progress HIC

Progress Maximum Strength /Work capacity

Maintain Endurance / Strength-Endurance

GUIDELINES

2-4 Strength sessions per week

2-4 HIC Sessions per week (minimum 2/week)

1 E Session every 1 to 2 weeks (minimum 1 every two weeks)

1 Rest day per week

Use the Easy Week Principle

Return to Block 1 (Base Building) 1-2 x per year if necessary

Take a week off every few months throughout the year

The above are general parameters. As you gain experience you can adjust as you see fit, as long as you maintain minimums. You can increase HICs, increase E sessions etc. Remember, with Black the majority of your focus should be on Strength and HIC. E and SE take a back seat, so focus on those priority domains for best results.

BLACK PROTOCOL STANDARD TEMPLATE

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
1			
2	HIC	HIC	HIC (Easy)
3			
4	HIC	HIC	HIC (Easy)
5			
6	HIC	E	HIC (Easy)
7	Rest	Rest	Rest

Protocol Minimums

These are the minimums for Black:

1. Do minimum of 2 HIC sessions per week.

2. Do a minimum of 1 E session every other week.

3. Do a minimum of 3 conditioning sessions total per week.

4. **Every 3rd week, take an EASY week.** Cut the number of conditioning sessions, cut the duration, difficulty, or number of rounds. This will keep you from burning out/injuring yourself, and will set you up for long term steady success. Experienced trainees can ignore or tweak this guideline based on personal work capacity. This easy week purposely coincides with Tactical Barbell's strength training heavy weeks (90%-95% loads). Remember what I said about having a conditioning program that's sustainable long term? This is not bootcamp or selection with a clear beginning and end that allows you to push 100% because you know where that end is. This is for life. Constant, frequent, high intensity training will without a doubt eventually burn you out and sideline you if not approached intelligently.

This is the suggested standard set-up. Your HIC and E can be done on any day, not just days 2, 4, and 6. You can do two days in a row, or whatever. As long as you're hitting your weekly minimums. You can choose to do additional HICs and E, again, as long as you're hitting your weekly minimums. If you want to give your E levels a little more attention you can do 2 HICS + 1 E every week if you choose.

It's simple; do at least 3 conditioning sessions a week, 2 of which *have* to be HIC.

You can also do your conditioning sessions on the same days as your strength work. If you're doing them during the same session, do your strength work first, and conditioning afterward. If you're doing a Morning/Evening setup, it doesn't matter what you do first. You can strength train in the mornings, and condition in the evenings, or vice-versa.

Don't get overzealous in the beginning and try to do a whole bunch of extra work. Try it out as suggested first. In my experience, many over eager trainees try to do extra HIC and E, but they don't know how to adjust their food intake or recovery, and their strength levels end up taking a hit. They haven't changed the amount of food they're eating, and add intense conditioning sessions four or five times a week. Then they wonder why they can't complete all their assigned bench press reps. Bad enough many are on ridiculous restricted diets that hamper performance.

BLACK PROTOCOL: PROFESSIONAL

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
1			
2	HIC	HIC	HIC (Easy)
3			
4	HIC	HIC	HIC (Easy)
5			
6	E x 60Min	E x 60Min	E (Easy)
7	Rest	Rest	Rest

Black/Professional is designed for those with an occupational fitness requirement, mainly tactical police operators, firefighters, etc.

With Black/Professional, you're training a minimum of 1 E every week instead of optionally every other week as with Black/Standard. It's also recommended that your E sessions be at least 60 minutes in duration. Adjust based on occupational requirements.

BLACK + ZULU

(+4 Days Strength Training)

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
1	Strength + HIC	Strength + HIC	Strength
2	Strength	Strength + HIC	Strength
3	HIC	Rest	E (easy)
4	Strength	Strength + HIC	Strength
5	Strength	Strength + HIC	Strength
6	E	Rest	HIC (easy)
7	Rest	Rest	Rest

Here's a sample training schedule to get you thinking. There are many ways to plan your training week.

This comes from a former client, a municipal police/ Emergency Response Team member. He uses TB Zulu template for his strength training, along with Black/Standard. So four days a week of barbell work, which take around 20-30 minutes.

Notice during week 2, he takes care of his strength and conditioning in the same session. Not only has he added an optional 4th HIC session, but he's also got three full days of no training. A great way to free up your time. To make this easier logistically, he might choose HICs that can be done indoors in the gym after his barbell work. Or he'll just exit the gym after strength training and do running-based HICs in the surrounding area. Tons of flexibility.

During week 1, when he does his conditioning on separate days from his strength work – he'll take advantage of that and do conditioning sessions that need specific venues. HICs that are hill based, ruck marches, or Fun-runs for example. Notice during week 3, he's only doing 2 conditioning sessions. Remember every 3rd week is easy week, where you should cut number of sessions, duration, reps or difficulty. Week 3, our client is doing strength work in the 90% range so he temporarily lowers his conditioning load. He may be retesting his strength maximums in the coming week, another reason to ease up on the conditioning. He could've kept the 3rd conditioning session and modified it to make it easy, instead he chose to drop it completely. Perfectly acceptable.

BLACK + OPERATOR

(+3 Days Strength Training)

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
1	Strength	Strength	Strength
2	HIC	HIC	HIC (easy)
3	Strength	Strength	Strength
4	HIC	HIC	HIC (easy)
5	Strength	Strength	Strength
6	HIC	E	HIC (easy)
7	Rest	Rest	Rest

The above uses three strength training sessions (typical of Operator template) as an example.

I don't recommend using TB Mass template here. Mass is a specialist template that requires a reduction in conditioning/cardiovascular training in order to maximize benefits. If using Mass, I suggest doing no more than 2 HIC sessions per week. No E at all.

Gladiator template can be used, but I recommend using a training max/conservative 1rm numbers, and adhering to the '2 exercises only' rule. Adjust your conditioning load as necessary.

It isn't necessary to use Tactical Barbell for your strength training. Any 3 x week quality strength training program can be substituted. Bodybuilding or hypertrophy focused programs however are not compatible, including the aforementioned Mass template.

BLACK + FIGHTER

(+2 Days Strength Training)

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
1	Strength	Strength	Strength
2	HIC	HIC	HIC (easy)
3	E	Rest	HIC (easy)
4	Strength	Strength	Strength
5	HIC	HIC	E (easy)
6	SE Circuit	SE Circuit	Rest
7	Rest	Rest	Rest

This one isn't complicated. Simply use a twice/week lifting program along with the Black protocol minimums. You can use your extra training time for HIC, E, or SE circuits (SE circuits fall under the 'E' category). Using Black with Fighter gives you a lot of flexibility and time to work on your conditioning levels. Obviously only lifting twice a week isn't as optimal for strength development as three or more sessions, so take that into consideration if you're going to go this route.

BLACK PROTOCOL – VARIATIONS

Here are a couple variations on Black protocol for those of you with different goals.

INCREASED STRENGTH FOCUS

This is for you if your strength tends to lag, or you consider yourself relatively weak. Strength is your number 1 priority, (at least for now) and you really want to bring that attribute up to snuff, without getting chubby. This will also be of interest to you if you're primarily a strength athlete who wants a decent level of conditioning. You have zero interest in endurance work, and really have no need for even a little bit of it.

1. Do no more than 2 HIC sessions per week
2. Do no E sessions at all beyond Block 1/Base Building
3. Do only the first 5 weeks of Block 1/BB.
4. Strength train 3 x week during Block 1, instead of SE work. Adjust E sessions accordingly.
5. Stay in the lower ranges of E work during Block 1 (30 minutes)

EXTRA CONDITIONING

For the standard Black Protocol, 2-3 HIC + 1 E session every week or two is the recommended approach. I find this range ideal for long-term sustainability, compatibility with strength training, injury prevention and peak performance.

But, you might have the desire or capacity to do more. Maybe it's a temporary situation, you might have extra training time for a limited period - no school or job for several months, on vacation etc. Or you might be an experienced athlete that's developed a significant amount of work capacity. In that case, feel free to add in more HIC, E or SE sessions every week. Be aware of your recovery abilities, and always think long term. One of the quickest routes to failure is over-eagerness, resulting in trying to go too hard or do too much at the start – which then results in injury or burn-out. Game over. You can certainly do more, just be smart about it.

Before doing extra, I suggest you test yourself. See if you can complete 8 weeks of Black Protocol as laid out, the bare minimum, without missing a single session. Don't miss a single conditioning session, and don't miss a single strength session. If you can do this, and you're still eager to add more work, then do so. Test your consistency first. If your consistency fails, stick to the minimums. Many overestimate how consistent they are, and tend to miss more sessions then they think. Commit to less, but with ironclad consistency.

If you're a beginner starting at ground zero, do no more than the minimums until you've been consistent for 6 months.

MORE ENDURANCE

Let's say for whatever reason, you enjoy or need a slightly higher level of Endurance, but you're using Black, and not ready to commit to Green. Here are a couple ideas to get you thinking:

Leave Black as is. Periodically rotate in a routine Base Building block throughout your

annual training plan. For example, you could alternate between 18 weeks of Black Protocol followed by 8 Weeks of Base Building continuously.

Add in an extra E session every week. So you can do up to 2 E sessions weekly.

Alternate between Black and Green. Do 9 Weeks of Black, followed by 9 of Green and keep alternating in this fashion.

If you need more E than this, then Black protocol isn't the best choice for you. Consider Green.

BLACK PROTOCOL - EASY WEEK PRINCIPLE

Too much is the same as not enough.

Miyamoto Musashi

Every third week, (3, 6, 9) make your conditioning sessions easy. Cut the number of rounds in half, lower the duration and/or intensity. Don't strain – just 'grease the groove' with little effort. There are countless benefits to this practice.

Short term/gung-ho/all-out/balls-to-the-wall/all the time/ training = injury, burn-out, plateaus. This is short term, amateur thinking. You won't last. Think about popular programs that are set up this way. Really think about them. How many people do you actually know adhere to frequent, high intensity programming, consistently, for YEARS? Are they healthy or are they always plagued with some sort of sidelining injury? Are they really regular or do they get excited for a couple weeks, fall off for a week or two, get excited again – rinse repeat? Maybe they're consistent, but the intensity and fire has gone out of their activity and they're just going through the motions and on the verge of burnout.

Make no mistake, with regular training you will develop work capacity levels that make you appear superhuman, but you won't get there without a steady, intelligent, *consistent* approach.

Intelligent two steps forward/one back training = able to bring more intensity to each session, stay injury free, stay motivated, avoid burn-out and plateaus. This is long term training for a lifetime.

When it's time to work – then work like a crazy cyborg commando on meth. When you have a well-deserved easy week coming up – take it. Think long term. This should be making perfect sense to you. This isn't an 8 week training camp or spec ops selection. This is you training for life, for the next 30 or 40 years. An easy conditioning week allows you to recharge your physical and mental batteries. You'll be itching to get back out there and hit those hills or swing your kettlebells. Don't be the guy that gets all excited, and goes full bore/all-in for the first few weeks, and then burns himself out like an amateur.

Another major reason we've included easy week is that it will coincide with your 90-95% high intensity strength training days if you're using Tactical Barbell. So now you get to save your energy and use it for those heavy loads you're going to be throwing around all week.

A simple guideline that can make or break your training over your lifetime.

If you're experienced and you've built up a high work-volume threshold over the years, then feel free to ignore or approach this rule any way you'd like. TB conditioning sessions can be challenging, so you may find yourself adjusting your approach accordingly.

What about Green Protocol? With Green, intensity level is much lower – so rather than reduce the duration/difficulty of your sessions, just skip an E session or two, if required, every 3 to 6 weeks. LSS style E sessions are done at a recovery pace anyway, and you can also change up your tools to avoid any repetitive-type overuse. For example, switch from LSS running to swimming or Triples if you want to ease up on the repetitive foot-strike activity.

Remember, it's easy to be hard, it's harder to be smart.

GREEN PROTOCOL

A minority of TB users will fall into the Green category. Green is for you if you're an endurance athlete, or live an endurance lifestyle. You might want to adopt this protocol temporarily if you're preparing for an adventure race or travel/hiking expedition. It'll also be of interest to you if you're starting a military contract, heading to bootcamp, or prepping for infantry continuation training. The priorities for this protocol are Endurance, Strength-Endurance, and Maximal Strength.

DURATION

8-12 Weeks +

GOALS

Progress Endurance

Progress Strength-Endurance

Maintain/Progress Maximal Strength

GUIDELINES

3-5 Endurance sessions per week

2 Strength sessions per week

1 SE session per week

1 HIC Session every other week

1 rest day/week minimum

Take a week or two off every few months

GREEN PROTOCOL - STANDARD TEMPLATE

(9 WEEKS)

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
1	Max Strength	Max Strength	Max Strength
2	E	E	E
3	E or Recovery	E or Recovery	E or Recovery
4	Max Strength	Max Strength	Max Strength
5	E	E	E
6	E	E	E
7	Rest	Rest	Rest

DAY	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6
1	Max Strength	Max Strength	Max Strength
2	E	E	E
3	E or Recovery	E or Recovery	E or Recovery
4	Max Strength	Max Strength	Max Strength
5	E	E	E
6	E	HIC	HIC
7	Rest	Rest	Rest

DAY	WEEK 7	WEEK 8	WEEK 9
1	SE 3 x 30	SE 3 x 40	SE 3 x 50
2	E	E	E
3	SE 3 x 35	SE 3 x 45	SE 3 x 55
4	E	E	E
5	SE 2 x 40	SE 2 x 50	SE 2 x 60
6	HIC	HIC	HIC
7	Rest	Rest	Rest

SE = Strength-Endurance Circuit

E = Endurance Sessions

Max Strength = maximal/barbell/strength training

HIC = High Intensity Conditioning Session

This template is performed in 9 week blocks. During the first half, you build up a general strength and endurance base. No HIC is performed. In weeks 5-9 there is a transition to HIC and Strength-Endurance. The maximum strength you built up is ‘converted’ to strength-endurance during weeks 7-9.

Protocol Minimums

1. Do a minimum of 3 E sessions per week (Minimum of 2 during weeks 5-9)
2. Do the required Max Strength/SE work as included in the template.
3. Take a minimum of 1 rest day per week

***Military Operators/Members/Operational Athletes:**

Scale the sessions. Work in the upper ranges during your E sessions, 60-120 minutes+.

Choose occupational-specific E sessions (LSS running, rucking, swimming, Fun-runs)

Fun-Runs can be used in place of HIC.

Consider choosing Hills/Speed-Endurance/work capacity sessions for HIC.

Strength-Endurance Circuits

See Part II of this book for the details on how to put together and perform your strength-endurance circuit.

Endurance Sessions

Choose sessions from the 'Endurance' list in Part II of this book. Scale as necessary using the guidelines provided with each individual training session in the book.

Max Strength

Tactical Barbell's Fighter Template is recommended for your maximum strength sessions, but any quality two day/week strength program can be substituted. If you want more than two strength sessions throughout the week, Green protocol may not be the best choice for you. Tactical Barbell Fighter users – retest your maximums after the full 9 weeks, not after 6. Your maximum strength will drop slightly while you're training SE for 3 weeks.

GREEN PROTOCOL – PROGRESSIVE SE TEMPLATE

This Green variation allows you to focus on Strength-Endurance and gives you a block to block progression model.

This can be a useful protocol if you have NO equipment, or very basic/minimal equipment (dumbbells/kettlebells), and you can't do any maximal strength training.

With this version you do no maximal strength training. Instead you'll do three Strength-Endurance circuits, 2-3 Endurance sessions per week and one optional HIC. Although this template is useful if you're in a position where you have no equipment, it can obviously be done with equipment as well. Your weekly set-up will look like this:

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
1	SE 3 x 30	SE 3 x 40	SE 3 x 50
2	E	E	E
3	SE 3 x 30	SE 3 x 40	SE 3 x 50
4	E	E	E
5	SE 2 x 35	SE 2 x 45	SE 2 x 50
6	E or HIC	E or HIC	E or HIC
7	Rest	Rest	Rest

Protocol Minimums

Do a minimum of 2 E sessions per week

Do a minimum of 3 SE circuits per week

Do no maximum strength training

Do not run this protocol for longer than 9 weeks without re-introducing maximum strength training for a block or two if possible.

You'll keep repeating the above 3 week block for as long as you run this protocol. So Week 4 is the same as Week 1, Week 5 is the same as Week 2, etc.

If you're using a more typical SE cluster incorporating barbells, dumbbells, or weighted exercises, increase the resistance by 5lbs-10lbs on your exercises every 4th week – but only on the exercises with which you've successfully completed 50 reps without rest on at least one set.

If you're using a mix of bodyweight and weights, you'll just be adding the 5-10lbs to your weighted exercises. Bodyweight stuff will obviously remain the same, unless you incorporate a weight vest or backpack.

Here's an example using dumbbell bench press. Let's say you start with 10lb dumbbells. On Day 1/Week 1, you end up doing 2 sets of 20 reps with your ten pound dumbbells. On Day 3, you end up doing 3 sets of 25 reps. And so on. On Week 3, Day 5 you get all the way up to 40 reps without resting, but then you have to rest a few seconds before finishing off your set of 50. So for dumbbell bench press, you'll continue using 10lb dumbbells for your next 3 week cycle, no weight increase yet. Let's say on your next 3 week cycle, you do hit all 50 reps in a row, you'll do the next cycle with 15lb dumbbells. You just need to hit 50 on ONE set.

I don't recommend running this protocol for more than 9 weeks at a time. After 9 weeks, re-

introduce a protocol that contains maximum strength training, either Green standard, or Black. Run the maximum strength containing protocol for 4 to 6 weeks before returning to this.

Maximum strength contributes to your strength-endurance. For best strength-endurance results over time, maintain and progress your maximum strength as well.

TRAINING GUIDELINES

I'm going to outline a few hard learned principles when it comes to conditioning, and training in general. They include some of the most common mistakes I've seen or made myself:

Train the aerobic system. Don't skip Block I. Your aerobic system works with your anaerobic system to generate energy and perform work. Aerobic/endurance training is mandatory for the operational athlete.

Don't **overdo** the endurance work, unless endurance is a priority domain for you. Otherwise just use the lowest effective dose. Develop a base level of endurance/aerobic capacity and then move on.

Don't try and train everything at the same time. There's a good chance that as a tactical athlete your training week is starting to resemble Baskin-Robbins. You think you need to cover off 50 different things, when in reality you only need about 2-3 at different times. Just because someone comes out with a new gadget or exercise doesn't mean you automatically have to include it in your training ASAP. I've seen training programs that are ridiculously complicated and require an admin clerk to stay on top of. I saw a popular general conditioning based website (not Crossfit, but someone trying to copy that style, poorly) that had a list of ***18 exercises to perform*** at various times for various reps and timings during a single session fun-run **while running**! Random exercises you were supposed to stop and do, like a certain number of burpees, different types of push-ups, different types of sit-ups etc. Did they expect trainees to memorize the exercises/reps and times before heading out on this ridiculous run? Or maybe carry a wrist/notepad? How do you keep track of *18 exercises* while running? Ridiculous. This should all be a moot point if you're reading and using this book.

First, Base-Build. Then, advance high priorities and maintain low priorities. Build general strength and endurance first. After base building, prioritize your fitness domains. Start training certain attributes less, and others more, based on your goals. Some attributes you will do the bare minimum to maintain, others you will actively attempt to advance.

Occasionally return to Base Building. Do this by either repeating Block I, or by incorporating minimal maintenance training sessions. How often you return to Base Building depends on your goals, regular training regimen, and strengths/weaknesses. For some, once a year or two will be enough, others will want to run Base Building every few months.

The fitness domain you're training is the important thing, the tools are secondary. Are you training endurance, strength, or what? What are the principles for training a particular domain, and then what are the best tools/exercises for it? One trainee I worked with had been doing bodyweight squats while wearing a weight vest, for maximal strength training. Why

didn't he just do barbell squats? That would've been the smart choice. But he thought a weight vest + bodyweight squats was more 'tactical' and 'functional'. That cool looking weight vest/body squat would've been great for strength-endurance training, but not so great for maximal strength. Some tools are better for the job than others. Choose those that are *most effective for the attribute you are training*.

Advance yourself in fewer activities that do the same job. Make sure your desire for variety/novelty doesn't get in the way of actual improvement. Don't dissipate your energy and focus. Doing 'lots of stuff' doesn't necessarily mean you're getting anywhere faster.

Train smart/remove your ego. Different domains respond to different training methods. If you're working on certain aerobic qualities, it's counterproductive to try to go as fast and hard as you can. If you're developing the anaerobic system you will need to go as fast and hard as you can at times. If you're training maximum strength – you need to be well rested between sets. If you're training muscular endurance, you need to push out many more reps in a shorter period of time, with little rest. More is not always better. Keep your ego in check and use your head.

Take any conflicting information in context. A champion powerlifter is telling you not to do long steady state running? He might be right. For his situation and goals. Not necessarily yours.

Rest periodically. Do not ignore the rest day. What you 'feel' can be deceptive. Just because you feel great, doesn't mean your body/mind don't need rest. Cocaine 'feels' great. Think long term.

Consistency is king. Progress takes time. Stay consistent, and keep plodding. Compare yourself with yourself no earlier than every six months. Make no judgments until six months are up, and then see how far you've come and re-assess. Anything less is a waste of time. No changes of importance will happen in the short term. Shut your mind up for six months, do the work, and then assess.

You will have bad days. Some sessions will be better than others. Some days you'll fly through a 5 mile run and think you finally have it, and then the very next session you'll get winded putting on your running shoes. You will not always enjoy training. You will hurt. Many of your training sessions will be less than perfect. This happens to all of us. Suck it up. You are slowly turning into a machine. This doesn't happen overnight.

If you're advanced or more experienced, don't be afraid to cut sessions short, or skip them if the need arises. Some of you are in-tune enough to know when to push or pull back. You know when you're at the point of diminishing return for the week, when you might benefit from skipping a session or lowering the mileage/intensity. You'll also know when to do extra if needed. If you're in this category, you will know. If you're not, aim for consistency and go

by The Book.

Focus on what's important, not on products, gear, and marketing. Forget about needing a souped-up watch built by NASA designed to measure the pace of your stride. Forget about getting the perfect pair of multicolored five toed shoes to go with your Paleo diet. Focus on what's important – doing the work. Focus on the cake, not the icing. Years ago I came across a group of runners in a large city. I had just been released by the military, so I was a bit of a primitive morlock. These runners were wearing expensive reflective jackets, top-of-the-line brand new running shoes, and utility belts with pouches containing colorful gels, liquids, and who knows what else. I was in awe. I thought I had run into a group of elite Olympians. Nope. After about two blocks of cheering and tepid running, 90% of the group quit. Don't do this. They were more in love with the *idea* of getting fit, versus actually getting fit. They were more into getting a hobby vs improving performance. It can creep into all of us. Fast forward several years, I remember looking down on this raggedy looking guy wearing plain sweats, a stained ball-cap, and cheap looking runners. Well, he blew by me and almost lapped me on a difficult looped-trail run. This was a guy focused on doing the work. When I got home I shamefully took off my expensive reflective running jacket and hid it in the bottom of my closet. There is nothing inherently wrong with Gucci kit and new tech, that's not the point. But sometimes you need to remind yourself of why you're doing things. Do you want to *look* like you can perform? Or do you actually want to be able to perform? The elite focus on being the best at the basics. Amateurs are all about tech, gear, 'hacks', and shortcuts. Some people will decide to skip a training session because they left their $200 heart rate monitors at home or forgot their music. Others feel like they need to learn all about POSE running before ever setting a foot on a track. Don't do this. Focus on continuously hammering away at the basics. Cake first, then icing.

II
TRAINING VAULT

TRAINING VAULT

1. ENDURANCE SESSIONS (E) # 1 – 8

2. HIGH INTENSITY CONDITIONING (HIC) # 1-40

3. CORE + GRIP FINISHERS # 1-4

4. CHALLENGE SESSIONS #1-5

SESSION DIFFICULTY

BEGINNERS/ENTRY LEVEL

Some of you starting this program may be beginners when it comes to conditioning. Most of the sessions in TB2 have been sourced from the military, tactical police, and martial arts community. They may be very challenging if you're starting at ground zero. Because we've included an incremental Base Building block, your path will be substantially easier. So when you do actually get to your continuation protocol – seeing 10 hill sprints + kettlebell swings at the top won't be as intimidating.

Depending on your background and progress, 10 hill sprints can still be very daunting. So if you're a beginner, and this seems like a monumental task – don't sweat it. I promise you, if you follow this program, there will come a time where you'll simply shrug your shoulders and go do the hill sprints. You won't think twice about it. If you're consistent, that time may be in the near future. If you're a little less habitual, it'll take you longer. But it will come. So what do you do in the meantime? If you're assigned 10 hill sprints, and you can only do two – no problem. Walk or jog up that hill for the remaining eight sprints. It counts. Many of us were in that position at the beginning of our careers.

To help you pace yourself, each session has a **standard**, **basic** and **advanced** version. The standard version is posted. Basic and Advanced Options can be found beneath.

The Basic version is the entry level, easier option. It adjusts the difficulty by decreasing rounds, repetitions, duration, or weight. But, you don't have to be an out-of-shape beginner to use basic. You might be in the middle of a particularly hard strength building week involving heavy squats and deadlifts. Using the scaled down version of Bloody Lungs would be acceptable. Next week your strength load tapers off, and you decide to schedule in the standard, more difficult version of Bloody Lungs.

If you're at a stage where even the Basic version seems impossible, by all means scale down some more. Cut the duration, distance or repetitions all the way to the lowest level possible if necessary. The important thing for you as a rank beginner is consistency and volume over time. So even if you just head out and do 1 repetition or round of your conditioning work and "walk" the rest, that's totally acceptable – as long as you're consistently doing the minimum assigned number of sessions per week. Your mantra should be 'consistency first'. This will ultimately lead you to high conditioning levels, guaranteed.

Maybe you're just starting out with a regimented conditioning protocol. We all have to start somewhere. Jumping in to the standard or advanced versions aren't going to benefit you if you die before you complete the sessions. If you're starting from ground zero, start with Basic, and scale up as your conditioning improves.

ADVANCED + OPERATORS

Few of you are going to have the opposite problem. You might need more of a challenge. The 'Advanced Version' of each session was created for you. If required, scale further. Realistically, most of you should do just fine with the Standard version. Also, check out the Challenge Sessions in the Training Vault.

ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS

Some of the sessions will have an additional category ‘Alternative Versions’. This allows you to substitute different movements or tools. For example, if you don’t have access to kettlebells, you can substitute dumbbells. Can’t run today? Row instead, or use battling ropes.

Most of these sessions can be done with basic equipment, and a track or place to run. I’ve made a point of keeping this program as spartan as possible as far as workout toys are concerned. The goal of this program is to get you to an extremely high level of conditioning, not to entertain and distract you with variety. If you’re deployed, you won’t always have access to the toys.

Kettlebells, sledgehammer/tire, battling ropes, rucksacks, jump ropes and weighted vests are about as exotic as we get outside of standard dumbbells and barbells. If you don’t have any of the aforementioned equipment, never fear. This entire program can be done using nothing but bodyweight and shoes. You’ll just need to make the appropriate training session choices. Most sessions will also give you the option to use more common-place equipment substitutions.

But, there are two things I can’t recommend highly enough. Number one, find a hill. Number two, get a kettlebell or two. Kettlebells are the only pieces of non-standard equipment that will really optimize your experience with this program. They’re extremely versatile tools that bridge the gap between strength and endurance. They can be used for a lifetime. Check craigslist and second hand sports stores for bargains. Start light, 16-24kg. You can do most of the kettlebell work in this program with dumbbells, so don’t panic if you’re not able to run out and buy one right now. Next, go forth and find a hill. You could be in better shape than most people on the planet by simply sprinting up a hill a couple times a week. Very little compares to the benefits hill work will bring you. If I could only have one conditioning modality on my island, it would be a steep hill. Hill sprints will turn you into a cyborg.

Couple reminders:

Your first priority is to complete your session. That’s it. You don’t have to set records or look pretty doing it. You can take as long as you need to. As your conditioning levels improve, your speed and competency will increase naturally. You will start to automatically push yourself when that time comes. To get to that point, just go through the motions for right now.

Prioritize consistency over volume and variation. Do a few things consistently, instead of trying to do more and constantly falling short. I can’t tell you how frequently I run across trainees who have their training week packed with kettlebells, weights, track work, burpees, bodyweight exercises, mobility work while trying to run two different strength programs on top of that. I’ve yet to see a single one of them complete their self-imposed regimen for more than two weeks without interruption. I’m being generous, they rarely last a week. Commit to less, and stick to it.

ENDURANCE SESSIONS (E)

Endurance sessions (E) focus on developing the aerobic system, by causing beneficial cardiac hypertrophy, increasing heart strength, improving oxygen delivery, and enhancing the vascular network. Strength-endurance also falls under the E umbrella in this program. Improving these parameters are the backbone of a solid aerobic base, and will skyrocket your level of conditioning when done correctly and in the right amounts.

Endurance sessions are longer duration and fit the stereotypical 'cardio' image. You'll find traditional LSS work, running, ruck marching, and cycling. Each training session will have its own rules.

There are a few conditions that have to be met, for all the good aerobic system adaptations to happen;

Duration – it takes a minimum of 30 minutes to induce the adaptations we're looking for. For best results, E work should be performed for 45-60 minutes plus.

Low Intensity – you shouldn't be working hard. You should be working long. If you're running or cycling, you'll want to be at a low enough level of intensity that you can have a conversation. Some of you will have to slow yourself down. Remember, pushing too hard causes the heart to work in a different way which won't give us the adaptations we're looking for right now. Not only that, but increased cortisol plays an issue when you increase intensity. So harder isn't better. You want to keep the activity relatively the same pace throughout, so no intervals or interruptions that'll either spike the heart rate too high, or drop it too low. There are exceptions to this (i.e. 'Fun-runs').

You don't need a ton of variety. If there are one or two E sessions you like, you can keep repeating them. No need to go down the entire list. When doing E work, I personally stick to LSS running, because it's convenient, easy, and very effective for improving aerobic performance. Tailor your exercise selection to your needs. If you're starting a military contract, then you'll want to focus on simple LSS running, ruck-march sessions and fun-runs. Leave the cycling and other stuff to the side.

Dosage – you need the right dose of E sessions. Not too much, and not too little. You'll pack as much of it in as you can during Block I, which is the proper time and place for it. After that if you go with Black Protocol you'll be doing far less, and if you go with Green you'll be doing more. If you're an operator or grunt-military, work in the upper ranges during your E sessions; 60-120 minutes plus.

E sessions might be boring and repetitive for those of you into short duration work capacity style workouts. Just grit your teeth, carry on, and think about all the performance enhancing changes it's making to your cardiovascular system. It's only temporary.

ENDURANCE SESSIONS

1. LSS
2. Ruck Up
3. Triples
4. Fun-Run – Standard Issue
5. Fun-Run – Cannonball Run
6. Fun-Run – 03 at Stupid-Dark 30
7. Warrior Run
8. Strength-Endurance Circuits
    1. Bodyweight Cluster
    2. Barbell Cluster
    3. Kettlebell Cluster
    4. Dumbbell Cluster

1. LONG STEADY STATE (LSS)

Run

Cycle

Swim

Row

x 60 Minutes

Unglamorous, but very effective for what we're trying to accomplish. Choose one of the above activities and perform it for 60 minutes, or as prescribed in your protocol. The intensity should be low, and the pace relatively steady. You should be able to maintain a conversation while working. Slow yourself down if you have to. Work for time, not distance. As you progress you'll notice you'll cover the same distances more quickly which is a good indication of progress. I cannot stress enough the importance of low intensity here. It's not necessary to have a heart rate monitor, but if you do you should be in the 120-150bpm or 50%-70% of max heart rate range. If you think you'd be having trouble holding a conversation, you're working too hard. If you're not sure if you're working too hard, go slower. Err on the side of slower. **'Comfortable'** should describe your pace. Do not throw in intervals, sprints, or go out of your way to run up hills. If there happen to be a few hills on your route, that's okay, not a big deal – take them easy.

Basic Version:

Start with one of the activities on the list you find easy. Aim to complete 30 minutes of work or movement. Gradually increase the time over the weeks as your performance improves. Work toward completing 45-60 minute sessions. If you're running and you need to stop every so often and walk that's fine. Because you're out of shape, your heart rate is most likely still in the work zone, just don't rest so long that it drops back to fully rested. Again, you don't need a monitor, just start running again before you feel completely rested, while you're still breathing with a little exertion. A walk-run-walk session is totally acceptable if you're entry level/beginner.

Advanced Version/Operators:

Increase the duration to 90-120 minutes +

2. RUCK UP

Ruck March with a 50lb load

90 minutes

Use a backpack, or military ruck. You can choose to wear boots, or runners. If you're starting a military contract, I suggest you get used to wearing issue boots and issue ruck. You can get both relatively cheap at surplus stores. Try getting the equipment identical to what you'll be using during Basic/Infantry school etc.

March at a pace quicker than a stroll, with purpose. You want to get your heart rate roughly in the 120-150bpm range, or working at 50%-70% of max heart rate. Not necessary, but if possible choose a route with a few hills and uneven terrain.

If you've never gone hiking or carried a ruck, make sure that whatever you're carrying is not going to hammer against your back. If you're carrying weights, kettlebells or hard objects, swaddle them in towels or a pillow before putting them in your ruck. Otherwise it'll keep banging up against your lower back and can get *very* uncomfortable over time.

Basic Version:

Start with a lighter load 20-30lbs, and / or start with 30-45-60 minutes.

Advanced Version/Operators:

Increase the duration to 2-4 hours +

And/or increase the load to 80lbs – 100lbs +

Alternative Version:

Work for distance instead of time. Choose 3-10 mile routes depending on your skill level, and attempt to complete them as quickly as possible WITHOUT breaking into a jog or run.

3. TRIPLES

Jump Rope	10 minutes
Run	10 minutes
Row	10 minutes
x 2 circuits	

Triples are a relatively easy way for variety junkies to get through steady state style aerobic work. It can be done inside, and is a great alternative to LSS if the weather's not co-operating or you simply want to change things up.

The key to this workout is low intensity and ease. The focus should be on steady work, at a pace that allows you to hold a conversation. Easy skipping, slow run, and easy rowing.

I've had trainees ask about incorporating kettlebell swings or burpees, but both are a little too intense for this session and will likely take your heart rate out of the desired target zone. Aim to work approximately within 120-150bpm or 50%-70% of max heart rate.

There is no rest period between each activity. Immediately after skipping, start your run, immediately after running move on to rowing. There is no rest between circuits.

Basic Version:

Complete 1 circuit

Advanced Version:

Complete 3-4 circuits

Alternative Versions:

Run/Row/Stationary Bike

Heavy Bag work /Step Ups/Easy effort battling ropes

Outdoors: cycle/run/swim or run/swim x 15-20 minutes each ('doubles')

Jump rope/Step-ups/Pad Work

Use your imagination and string together 4, 5, 6 or more different exercises if desired. Only choose exercises that can be performed at a low intensity.

MILITARY FUN-RUNS

Fun-runs have been evoking dread in military and special operations personnel for decades. Almost every infantry, spec ops, or elite police tactical team in the world uses some variation of the Fun-Run. They're usually used for selection courses and designed to force less motivated or poorly conditioned candidates to drop out. They can be run for several hours, and have many different painful variations. We'll be using scaled down versions, as we're trying to build you up to improve your conditioning, not break your body down to force you to quit.

Fun-runs are great tools to prepare for bootcamp, selection courses, and adventure racing. They develop aerobic capacity, muscular endurance and anaerobic performance to a high degree. Use a combination of Fun-runs, ruck marches and plain old running, and you'll be far more prepared than 99% of the recruits at boot/basic, or infantry continuation.

Use them sparingly during Block 1, don't use more than one of these per week. When possible, use them at the end of the week before a recovery day.

These should become a staple for you if you choose Green protocol, particularly if you're going to be starting a military contract.

If you're just a beginner, some of these might initially be too difficult for you to complete. I'm thinking of the weighted / kettlebell runs in particular. The bodyweight fun-runs should be fine. Once your conditioning levels improve, they'll still be here waiting for you. You'll have an opportunity to try them out during your continuation protocols.

If you're a rank beginner, you'll want to put your focus on the fundamentals for Block I. Mostly long steady state running/Triples etc. Build up your capacity for longer work before trying to jump into the deep end. That being said, like every training session in this book, I've included a 'Beginner' and 'Advanced' version. So if you want to dip your toe in the Fun-run water, look at the Beginner versions.

INDOORS:

With a little ingenuity most of these Fun-Runs can be done indoors using a treadmill, or even a rowing machine, bike or stair-master in place of jogging. I recommend heading outside and doing them as outlined to get the full experience, but if you can't because of weather, logistics or time, then the indoor versions will suffice.

4. FUNRUN: STANDARD ISSUE

10km LSS Run

A - Burpees x 10

B - Squats x 20/Push-ups x 20

Set your watch to sound off every 6 minutes. Run your 10km route at a comfortable pace. 50%-70% of max heart rate. When your alarm goes off, drop and do ‘A’ or 10 burpees. Get up and continue running. When your alarm goes off a second time, stop and do ‘B’, or the air squats and push-ups. Continue running. Each time your alarm goes off, alternate between ‘A’ and ‘B’ until you’ve completed your 10km route. There is no rest period when switching between running and exercises.

Basic Version:

5km LSS

A – Burpees x 5

B – Squats x 10/ Push-ups x 10

Advanced Version:

10km LSS

A – Burpees x 10/ Squats x 50 / Push-ups x 30

ALL 3 exercises are done every 6 minutes.

OR

10km LSS

10-15lb weight vest

A – Burpees x 10

B – Squats x 20/ Push-ups x 20

Alternate between A and B every 6 minutes.

5. FUNRUN: CANNONBALL RUN

3 Mile LSS Run

A – Kettlebell Swings x 10

B - Goblet Squats x 10

C – Push-ups x 10

For this little gem start out with a kettlebell or dumbbell you can easily swing one handed. Generally in the 12kg-24kg range for men, and 8lb-16kg range for women. You'll also need a backpack to put your kb in for the run. Pad that sucker with a pillow, towels, small blankets or whatever. Before you head out ensure that you can run with the kb snugly on your bag, with minimal movement. It is extremely important to secure and pad that weight in your pack. Pillows folded around the bottom of the KB work very well.

Set your timer to go off every 7 minutes. Run at a slow, comfortable pace. When your alarm goes off, stop, pull your kb out and perform exercise 'A', or 10 KB swings. You can do them two handed, one handed, or change it up. Just get the bell up 10 times. Immediately put it back in your pack and continue running. Next time your alarm goes off, stop and do 'B', or the KB Goblet squats. Next stop, do the push-ups while leaving the KB on your back. Every 7 minutes of running alternate between doing 'A' and 'B' and 'C' until your 3 mile run is complete. You should start feeling it nicely in your hamstrings and back. Trying to run after kettlebell swings is a real treat.

If you're using a dumbbell, leave the db in your backpack and do the squats while wearing the weighted pack.

There are no rest periods. Don't take too long putting your kettlebell back in your pack after the exercises. You want to be up and running again quickly after each set of exercises. Use the slow comfortable running as time to recover.

Basic Version:

1.5 Mile LSS Run

Advanced Version:

6 Mile LSS Run

And / Or

A – Kettlebell swings x 20

B – Goblet squats x 20

C – Weighted Push-ups x 20

You can also increase the weight of the kettlebell you use.

6. FUNRUN: 03 AT STUPID-DARK 30

Run x 6 Miles:

A – Push-ups x 25, Squats x 25

B – Mountain Climbers x 50

C – Burpees x 10, Sit-ups x 25

This pleasant run was introduced to me by a former Sgt in the Marine Corps. This Sgt would take his squad for a long run at an **uncomfortably** quick pace. You kept up or you didn't. At various intervals A, B, or C was performed. If you were behind on the run, you would have to stop and complete the exercise, even if the rest of the squad was just finishing up and getting up to start running again. The pace was modified for no one. As you can probably imagine, if you started falling behind on any aspect of this run, it would be easy to compound that lag and fall far back, making it a superhuman effort to catch up. There was usually a Cpl at the back of the pack ensuring that stragglers completed A, B or C when they reached the exercise stops. The last one back to barracks was given any menial or undesirable tasks. This style of Fun-run has been used as a selection tool by various high speed army units across the world. Sometimes done in combat boots, and run for several hours at a relatively quick pace.

For our purposes this will be a run **for time**. Set your timer to go off every 7 minutes. When your alarm sounds the first time, you'll drop and do 'A' as quickly as you can. Then you'll get up and continue running for another 7 minutes, as quickly as you can. Time stops when you're doing the calisthenics and starts up again when you get up and begin running. Next time your alarm goes off, do 'B'. Continue cycling through A, B, and C every 7 minutes until your 6 mile run is complete. **Your goal is to finish the 6 mile run as quickly as you can.** The quicker you do it, the less stops you have to make. Needless, to say, your pace won't be comfortable or slow as it is with the other LSS sessions/Fun-runs.

The mountain climbers are done per leg. So 25 kicks per leg for a total of 50. Not 50 per leg. The sit-ups are done immediately after the burpees.

Basic Version:

Run x 2-3 miles

A – Push-ups x 10, Squats x 15

B – Mountain Climbers x 20

C – Burpees x 10, sit-ups x 10

Advanced Version

Run x 8-10 miles

A/B/C same as standard version.

7. WARRIOR RUN

45 Minutes

Run as far as you can in 45 minutes. Record your distances over the year. Good to include once every couple months or so to chart your progress. Use sparingly.

Basic Version:

30 Minutes

Advanced Version/Operators:

60 Minutes

8. STRENGTH-ENDURANCE CIRCUITS

Exercise#1

Rest 30-120 seconds

Exercise#2

Rest 30-120 seconds

Exercise#3

Rest 30-120 seconds

…..etc.

Choose a cluster of 5 to 8 exercises. You can use barbells, dumbbells, bodyweight exercises or a mix of both. Check your template for number of circuits and reps you'll be doing. You'll set up your work area with all the tools/exercises you need before starting the circuit. You don't want to waste time finding your weights or tools while you're in the middle of it. Timings are important for this session. Here's an example session where the trainee has been assigned 3 circuits x 30 reps, with the following cluster:

Push-ups x 30

Squats x 30

Barbell rows x 30

Back hyperextensions x 30

Dips x 30

Hamstring curls x 30

Rest 2 minutes

x 3

So you'll start with push-ups, do 30, and then rest for 30-120 seconds. Then you'll move on to squats. You'll do your assigned number, rest for 30-120 and continue making your way down the circuit. After you've completed one full circuit, you'll rest for 2 minutes and repeat. The lower you can reduce your rest intervals, the better. You can reduce the rest intervals between exercises to zero if you choose and if you're able. This is an exercise in improving muscle endurance, not strength.

There are going to be many instances where you cannot complete all assigned reps for a particular exercise all at once. That's fine, rest-pause as needed until you've squeezed out all reps. Then take your rest interval before moving on to the next exercise. Over time, where in the past you would fail at 20-25 reps, eventually it'll creep up to 30-40, and then, ultimately 50 or higher.

Barbells and dumbbells are great to incorporate in your SE circuits. Use approximately 15%-30% of your 1 rep maximum for the exercises you choose. Another great option is doing bodyweight circuits while wearing a weighted vest.

If you’re interested in doing a serious Strength-Endurance phase of training, refer to Green Protocol – SE Template in Part 1.

SE EXERCISE CLUSTERS

Below are several cluster/circuit examples.

You can also create your own. Choose 5-8 exercises that cover off all your major body parts. What I mean by this is don't use a circuit consisting of just chest exercises. Choose exercises you won't be waiting in line to use, as that'll disrupt the short rest intervals necessary for enhancing muscular endurance. Bodyweight, dumbbells, kettlebell circuits, and barbell complexes are all excellent choices. You can mix and match modalities within your circuit; you can combine kettlebells with bodyweight, dumbbells and barbells and so on.

The driving principles behind SE are light resistance, high repetition, and short rest intervals. Don't get too hung up on the amount of weight you're using. If using dumbbells and barbells, use roughly 15%-30% of your estimated 1 repetition maximums. No need to actually test. If you find you've gone too heavy, just drop some weight.

Think about how your exercise selection fits in with the parameters of circuit training. For example, say you want to include barbell bench press. That fits and is a perfectly acceptable exercise to use for SE development. But will you have access to that bench for all of your circuits when you need them? Do you train at a gym that allows you to leave your bar/weights on the bench while you go do the rest of your circuit? A simple fix for this is to do a floor press or use dumbbells instead. The point I'm trying to make is make sure you can access each exercise on your circuit immediately without waiting for minutes at a time. A shorter rest interval is needed for success with SE circuits. You don't want to be waiting for minutes at a time to do the next exercise on your list. Let's say this happens even though you've taken precautions. Let's say you've chosen kipping pull-ups as one of your exercises. Good choice, pull-up bars are usually unoccupied in most gyms and there are sometimes more than one kicking around. So you do your set, and you move on to the rest of your circuit – you come back for round two, and find someone just getting ready to do a set of pull-ups on your bar. No problem, just skip it and move to the next exercise on your circuit. When your bar becomes unoccupied, head back and complete your set, tick it off the list.

Another thing you want to think about is type of exercise. With SE, our reps are going to be in the 20-50 range. Some of you are not going to be able to complete all prescribed reps without stopping intermittently and taking short rest-pauses before continuing. That's fine, that means you're on track, and that's how SE training works. But you don't want to sabotage yourself with exercises that are too difficult to complete for high reps. Things like one armed push-ups, pull-ups and handstand push-ups come to mind. Let's say you can squeeze out 3 one armed push-ups with great difficulty. Is it really a good choice for an SE phase where you'll be asked to perform 50 reps?

There are exceptions to this. Let's say you can already do around 15-20 pull-ups, and you want to include them in your circuit. If you have the time, and you understand you'll be spending a lot of that time on the pull-up bar when you come to it – then have at it. Understand you'll be at that pull-up bar until your set of 20-50 is done. Rule of thumb, be able to do 15 to 20 reps of a 'higher tension' more challenging exercise before using it. Exercises that fit into this grey area include the aforementioned pull-ups, pistol squats, and one armed push-ups. A lot of this is going to depend on your existing level of strength/muscular endurance. A trainee that can do 20 pistol squats per leg, might benefit

from including pistols in an SE circuit. That trainee's maximum numbers in the pistol will improve, and he'll reap the benefits of improved SE. On the other hand, a trainee struggling to do 3 pistol squats per leg, will not. That trainee is better off including pistols in a maximum strength program until he can do 15-20 per leg.

None of this applies to the more regular exercises such as push-ups, crunches, air squats etc.

BODYWEIGHT CLUSTER

Push-Ups

Squats

Kipping Pull-ups or Inverted Rows

Bicycle Crunches

Dips

Back Extensions

To make this SE Circuit more challenging or to create progression, use a weight vest or backpack with an additional 5-10lbs.

I’m not a fan of kipping pull-ups for building strength or anything else - but they fit for our strength-endurance goal because we’re interested in moving the muscles at a low intensity, for longer periods of time. With SE our reps will range from around 20 to 50, so regular pull-ups are not going to work as well for the average trainee.

BARBELL CLUSTER

Push Press

Front Squat

Row

Bench Press/Floor Press

Shrugs

Romanian Deadlift

You can do the entire circuit using the same barbell/weight. Remember the goal here isn't resistance or how much weight you can lift. It's all about high repetition. So make sure you keep the weight very low – 15%-30% of your 1 rep max if I had to assign a number. You could do the above circuit with an Olympic bar and a couple of 10s or 5s and you'd have the right idea.

KETTLEBELL CLUSTER

Swings

Goblet Squat

Renegade Rows

Single Arm Floor Press

Kettlebell deadlift

Kettlebells and SE circuits are a perfect fit.

Any exercise that has you do one arm/leg/part first and then the other – you'll divide the reps. For example the single arm floor press, if the circuit calls for 30 reps – you'll do 15 per arm.

DUMBBELL CLUSTER

Bench/Floor Press

Lunges

Rows

DB Push Press

Squats

Lying Leg Raises

All the exercises above (except the leg raises) are done with a pair of light dumbbells. Again, roughly 15%-30% of your estimated 1 rep maximums. In other words, go light. If a session calls for 30 reps, i.e. 30 lunges – that means 15 per leg, or 15 per arm in the case of dumbbell rows.

MIXED SE CIRCUITS

The above are all cluster examples. You can create your own circuit using a mix of tools. Mix up kettlebells, bodyweight work, barbells, etc.

HIGH INTENSITY CONDITIONING
(HIC)

HIC sessions are divided into three broad categories, with plenty of overlap between each. They are as follows:

HICs#1-24 – Aerobic/Anaerobic

Sessions 1-10 are a mix of aerobic and anaerobic work. Some continue to train the aerobic system and facilitate the transition to anaerobic work. These sessions might not be what you typically think of as 'aerobic' work. They'll include maximum effort intervals, hills, burpees and sledgehammer work. They contribute to aerobic capacity in some way, whether it's by increasing heart strength, improving energy combusting mitochondria, or by developing greater tolerance to lactate. Certain HIC sessions might appear similar to anaerobic work, but slight differences in the methods cause different adaptations. Sessions 11 to 24 primarily focus on developing the anaerobic systems. These sessions will frequently require repeated near maximal efforts, with short rest intervals that are over before you are fully recovered. Don't get too concerned with the differences, just know you'll get a mix of aerobic and anaerobic work here.

HICs#25-36 General Conditioning

GC sessions focus on developing work capacity and general physical fitness. Generally speaking, work capacity is the ability to do more in less time. To increase the volume of work you can handle and recover from. As you can probably surmise, this is extremely important for both your strength training and conditioning. The more you can handle + recover from = the more you can do over time. That's why many of these GC sessions are done "for time." GCs also bring various energy and strength systems together in different and random quantities to perform in a single session. Most of your training isolates fitness domains, GC makes them work together as a team. Very applicable to 'real life' situations. This is the time and place for laundry-list style sessions.

HICs#37-40 Power Development

These sessions incorporate barbell work, plyometrics and track intervals to develop power, explosiveness and power-endurance.

The bulk of your HIC sessions should come from #s 1 to 36 using a mix of Aerobic/Anaerobic + General conditioning. **Avoid doing only AA, or only GC. Mix it up**.

Sprinkle in Power Development occasionally or as needs dictate.

Follow the guidelines provided with each HIC session. If the session calls for you to be fully rested before a maximum effort, then be fully rested. Don't go before you're ready, thinking

by making it harder, it'll be 'better'. Nope. If there's a set, shorter rest interval, then make every effort to adhere to that rest interval, even if you're not fully recovered.

Here's an example using one of my favourites, 600M Resets. This session calls for maximum effort 600M laps, with a long 3-5 minute rest interval in between each lap. This particular session is designed to increase cardiac contractile strength, and is a very beneficial aerobic adaptation. If you don't rest as long as you should between laps, you won't get that adaptation because you won't have the energy to provide that maximum effort. So if you think you'll make this session more challenging by cutting down your rest intervals, you're shooting yourself in the foot and totally missing out on the benefit you're supposed to be getting.

Now on the other hand there are also sprint sessions that call for short rest intervals, 60-90 seconds or less. They're usually designed to improve lactic/alactic capacity. For these particular sessions, you need short rest intervals to get the benefits. Too long of a rest and your body won't receive enough of a stressor to adapt and improve that parameter.

My point is, stick to the guidelines provided with each HIC training session. Don't try to make sessions harder or longer thinking more is always better. That's an amateur mistake.

HIC AEROBIC-ANAEROBIC:

1. Connaught Range 10 to 1s
2. Fast 5
3. 600M Resets
4. Heavy Bag Resets
5. Indoor Power Intervals
6. Sledge Drill
7. BOO
8. BOO II
9. Fobbit Intervals
10. Short Hills
11. Oxygen Debt 101
12. Speed-Endurance Ladders
13. Meat Eater
14. Meat Eater II
15. Disarmed
16. Standard Issue Hills
17. Apex Hills
18. Bloody Lungs
19. Bloody Lungs II
20. Anaerobic Capacity
21. Pepper Pot
22. Buffalo Laps
23. Meat Eater III
24. Devil's Trinity – Combat Conditioning Circuit

HIC General Conditioning:

25. GC# 1 aka Beat Your Face
26. GC# 2
27. GC# 3 aka Brig Rat
28. GC# 4
29. GC #5
30. GC #6
31. GC #7
32. GC #8
33. GC #9
34. GC #10
35. GC #11 aka Outside the Wire
36. GC #12

HIC Power Development

37. BW Plyometric Power
38. Power Complex
39. Kinetic Conditioning
40. Transition Complex

1. CONNAUGHT RANGE 10 TO 1s

10 Burpees

100m sprint

9 Burpees

100m sprint

8 Burpees….

To

1 Burpee

Find a football field or track. Any space that gives you 100 meters of running room works. Do 10 burpees and sprint 100 meters. Do 9 burpees and sprint back to your starting point. Do 8 Burpees and sprint 100 meters. Shuttle run style. Keep repeating until you've made your way down to 1 burpee. Your goal is to complete as quickly as possible. This session originates from a member of the RCMP's elite federal Emergency Response Team. 10 to 1 burpees in this fashion were frequently incorporated during morning PT for ERT candidates.

Basic Version:

Start with 5-1s. Work up to 10.

And / Or decrease the run to 50 meters

Advanced Version:

Increase the sprint distance to 100 meters.

And / Or add in 10 squats – so burpees and squats are both done at each stop in 10-1 fashion

2. FAST 5 TEMPO RUN

5km/3 mile run - 80%-85% max heart rate

This run should be at a faster pace than your LSS work. You should be going fast enough that you cannot hold a conversation easily. Get a little bit outside your comfort zone for this one.

Basic Version:

Start with half the distance if necessary. Work up to the full distance.

Advanced Version:

Increase the pace/and or distance to 4-5 miles

3. 600 METER RESETS

Sprint/Run 600M Maximum Effort

Rest 3-5 minutes

Repeat x 6

You'll notice something very significant about this workout. You will be resting in between efforts for a long period of time, **about 3 to 5 minutes**. The benefits of this session come about by exerting maximum effort *from a rested state*. Read that again if you have to. You are not doing yourself any favours by sprinting your next rep while you're still exhausted. That kind of training can be found elsewhere in this book and serves a different purpose. Think of it like strength training for the heart. You want to be well rested for a high intensity effort. This session assists in developing strength of cardiac contraction, and enhances mitochondria amongst other things.

This is best done at a track, but any 600m running space will do. Before you begin the session, jog for 5-10 minutes at comfortable slow pace to warm up and get the blood flowing. Stretch if you have to.

Each 600M rep is run at a maximum effort. Then you rest and recuperate for a relatively long time (3-5 minutes) and repeat for the remainder of the session. I repeat, be relatively well rested before each rep. There are other sessions where you won't have lengthy rest intervals. This is not one of them.

Basic Version:

4 reps

Advanced Version:

10 reps

4. HEAVY BAG RESETS

Heavy Bag Strikes x 90 seconds – Maximum Effort

Rest 2-5 Minutes

x 5 rounds

Similar in principle to the 400m resets. Intense activity springing forth from a well-rested state. Use any type of striking you like; straight punches, kicks, knees, elbows or combos, as long as it's a maximum all-out effort for 90 seconds. Your goal is to meet the 90 second deadline. After each 90 second rep, rest for 2-5 minutes and repeat. Treat that bag like it's an opponent trying to take your life. You explode into maximum effort, from a relatively well rested state. Your intensity and power might start to fade out part way into the drill, that's natural. That's where you enter the training zone that takes your ability to the next level– just keep pushing through the fatigue with whatever force you can muster until that alarm sounds. Even if you start looking like a slow drunken monkey. For this session, if you like, you can do some very light skipping or stretching to pass the time in between rounds.

Basic Version:

4 rounds and/or x 60 seconds maximum effort instead of 90

Advanced Version:

Up to 10 rounds and/or increase striking to 2 minutes.

This is a great HIC session to tack on after a strength training session when you're already in the gym. You can also use it standalone and add a core or grip finisher after.

5. INDOOR POWER INTERVALS

2 Minute Treadmill Run/ Airdyne/ Row - Max Effort

3-5 Minutes rest

x 5

I've included this session for convenience. It's for those that can't always get to a track, or are dealing with uncooperative weather. It has all the benefits of the 600 Meter Resets, but is an indoor version.

The key here is to work at close to full speed, a 'maximum effort'. This isn't going to be an all-out sprint with a two minute duration, but it shouldn't be that far behind. Push it as hard as you can for the two minute interval. It'll be roughly 80%-90% of your maximum heart rate. Remember, you'll get a chance to rest up for a relatively long time in between reps, so don't be afraid to push it. You'll see dramatic increases in your cardiovascular ability if you regularly train these 2 minute max effort intervals. If running, set the treadmill to a pace that's ballpark 80% or more of your 100m sprint speed and sustain that effort for 2 minutes. Then slow right down to a walk and reset/rest for a full 3-5 minutes. Be relatively well rested before your next all-out 2 minute effort.

Depending on the quality of your treadmill you might have to use the incline to add challenge to your 2 minute effort. Make sure you get a feel for the speeds, don't go flying off the treadmill and hurt yourself. Don't get too caught up in getting the speed exactly right. Your 2 minutes should be a hard effort, but with a pace you can sustain for that length of time. To give you some idea, on treadmills with maximum speed level 12, I've used level 9-11 as my max effort speed. This is of course going to vary from treadmill to treadmill, and individual ability.

This along with 600 Meter Resets will have a significant impact on your cardiovascular development. We're all used to sessions that have us working hard for 20 to 60 seconds. Making an adjusted maximum effort for 2 minutes really takes your game to the next level.

Again, I want to emphasize, make sure you're well rested before each maximum-effort rep. Take up to 5 minutes if needed. When you're well rested, you're in a better position to make that max effort.

Basic Version:

1 Minute maximum effort reps. Work up to 90 seconds and then 2 minutes, over time.

Advanced Version:

Complete up to 10 reps

Alternative Versions:

Stationary bike/ Airdyne/Row

6. SLEDGE DRILL

Sledgehammer / Tire Strikes x 1 Minute

Jump Rope x 1 Minute

Sledgehammer/ Tire Strikes x 30 Seconds

Jump Rope x 30 Seconds

Rest 2-3 Minutes

x 5

Alternate hands/grip occasionally when doing the sledge strikes. You want powerful consistent effort that you can maintain, but not quite an all-out effort. So you're focusing on repeated powerful blows with the sledge, without going crazy. Just a nice sustained effort for the duration. This is an anaerobic threshold type training session, designed to increase the amount of time you can work at near maximal efforts. It has the added benefit of strength-endurance, power-endurance, and work capacity.

Basic Version:

3 Rounds

Advanced Version:

1 Minute for each of the four movements

5 Rounds

Alternative Versions:

Dumbbell or Barbell Push-Press in place of the Sledge/Tire

7. BLACK ON OXYGEN

(aka BOO)

Kettlebell Swings x 60 seconds (or 30 swings)

800m Run

2-3 minutes rest

x 5

I learned this nasty little session when training with a former US Army Ranger. He was employed by a private contracting company (PMC) at the time we crossed paths. It's the solo variation on a partner drill. With the regular version, you partner up and head out to the track. One of you starts kettlebell swinging, the other starts running the 800 meters. When the runner finishes up his two laps, you switch up. The runner starts KB swinging, and the other runs 800 meters. And you keep going continuously for a set amount of rounds. If you have a training partner, try the partner version once in a while.

Now here's the solo version. Take a kettlebell to the track. Around 16kg – 32kg for men, with roughly 24kg being about the mean. 8-24kg for women.

The goal of this session is continuous higher intensity work for several minutes.

Do one or two handed Russian style kettlebell swings at a consistent comfortable pace for one minute. Remember to switch hands halfway through. Some of you might have to put the KB down before the minute's up – that's fine, rest briefly and continue. After the minute's up, immediately drop the kb and run 800m as quickly as you can. Come back to your kettlebell and rest for 2-3 minutes before the next round. For this session, stick to 2-3 minutes of rest, you don't have to be fully recovered between sets today.

Basic Version:

x 3 Rounds

Advanced Version:

Use a heavier KB

Or

Use the same kettlebell as in standard version, but swing for 2 minutes instead of 1.

8. BOO II

10 Burpees

800m run

5 Burpees

400m run Maximum Effort

Rest 2-3 minutes

x 3

Aim to complete each round as quickly as possible. Your initial 800m pace is not going to be a sprint, but it should be faster than a jog. After the 800, you'll immediately drop and do 5 burpees. And then get up and hit that final 400 meter lap with maximum effort. After the circuit's done, rest and repeat. Once again, you do not have to be fully rested between rounds for this one, try not to go over the RIs.

Basic Version:

5 Burpees/400m run/5 burpees/400m max effort run/Rest 2-3 mins x 2 Rounds

Advanced Version:

20 burpees/800m run/10 burpees/400m max effort run/ Rest 2 mins x 3-5 Rounds

9. FOBBIT INTERVALS

Treadmill Run/Row/Skip x 2 Minutes

Kettlebell Swings x 20

Run/Row/Skip x 2 Minutes

Kettlebell Snatch x 10/arm

Repeat x 20 Minutes

For this one you'll set the treadmill at a pace slightly slower than a jog. If a comfortable treadmill jog is level 5, set it to level 4.

One or two handed kettlebell swings can be used. You can use different weights for your swings and snatches as well, if you choose.

Jog for an easy 2 minutes, step off the treadmill but leave it running. Perform the kb swings either one or two handed. Immediately get back on your treadmill, and make note of the time. Mentally mark off 2 minutes. After that two minutes passes, you'll step off the treadmill and perform 10 snatches per arm. Keep repeating until your treadmill reads '20 minutes'. Your treadmill timer isn't going to match up neatly, your swing and snatch intervals may take more or less time every time.

Basic Version:

Do only 10 reps for the swings and 5 reps/arm for snatches.

And/or

Shorten the session to 15 minutes.

Advanced Version:

Use heavier kettlebells and/or

Increase session to 30 minutes.

Alternative Versions:

Jump rope/ row/ stationary bike/ stair climber instead of treadmill

Dumbbells instead of kettlebells

Barbell or dumbbell push-press instead of kettlebell snatch

10. SHORT HILLS

Hill Sprint

30-60 second rest

x 10

For this particular hill sprint workout, you want a shorter hill that takes you roughly 10-15 seconds to sprint up. Nothing longer or higher. Use the walk back down as your rest. Upon hitting the bottom, repeat.

Basic Version:

x 5, work up to x10

Advanced Version:

x 15 – 20

and/or

Wear a weight vest/10lbs-20lbs

11. OXYGEN DEBT 101

200M run x 3 / 30 Seconds RI

Rest 3 Mins

x 3-4

This little gem was provided by a nationally ranked runner and former police academy instructor. It's designed to work the lactic system and increase pain tolerance. Sprint 200 meters at maximum effort. Rest for 30 seconds and repeat two more times. Three sprints equals one round. Rest 3 minutes in between rounds.

Basic Version:

x 2 rounds, work up to 4 over time

Advanced Version:

Do all 4 rounds.

12. SPEED-ENDURANCE LADDERS

400M x 1

40 seconds rest

300M x 1

30 seconds rest

200M x 1

20 seconds rest

100M x 1

10 seconds rest

Work your way back up the ladder in reverse. Sprint 100M, rest 20 seconds, sprint 200M, rest 30 seconds etc.

All running is done at maximum effort. SE Ladders are an effective way to improve speed-endurance.

First, work your way down the ladder, starting with the 400M sprint. When you finish the last rung, the 100M sprint, you'll rest 10 seconds and work your way back up. You'll start with the 100M sprint again, and keep climbing.

Basic Version:

Work your way down the ladder. Rest a full 2 minutes at the bottom before working back up the ladder.

Advanced Version:

Work your way up and down the ladder continuously as many times as possible. Down and back up is one round. Do multiple rounds. Use a 2 minute rest interval at the bottom of the ladder if necessary in between some rounds.

13. MEAT-EATER

100M Sprint

Russian Kettlebell Swings x 20 (24kg-48kg)

Walk Back to Start

x 10

Use a moderate/medium heavy kettlebell. Lay the kettlebell on the track 100 meters away, near the finish line. Sprint with maximum effort to the kettlebell. Immediately pick up the kettlebell and start swinging. When you're done, turn around and walk back to start. I prefer two-handed swings, but can be done with one. Repeat x 10.

Basic Version:

x 5, and start with a lighter kettlebell if required

Advanced Version:

Complete this session for time, as quickly as possible. This means you can jog back to start instead of walk.

And/or use a heavier kettlebell.

Alternative Version:

Use a dumbbell for the swings instead of kettlebells

14. MEAT-EATER II

10 Russian Kettlebell Swings

10 Burpees

Rest 60 seconds

x 10 rounds

For Time

Deceptively simple, highly effective. I recommend using a medium/heavy (for you) kettlebell and using two-handed Russian swings. If you only have access to light kettlebells, do one handed swings, but do 10 per arm.

It doesn't matter if you start with the burpees, or the kettlebells.

Basic Version:

x 5 rounds, use a lighter kettlebell if necessary

Advanced Version:

Challenge yourself with a heavier kettlebell, one that you can barely swing for the full 10 reps. Leave a swing or two in the bank to maintain form if necessary.

15. DISARMED

10 Burpees

Heavy Bag Strikes x 2 Mins

Rest 60 Seconds

x 3-5 rounds

Finisher:

Plank & Shank – 3 Minutes

x 3

Work hard during the heavy bag portion. Steady strikes, along with combos approaching maximum effort and speed. After you've completed the main workout, rest for a minute or two and move on to the plank and shank finisher. Do 30 seconds of each until three minutes is up. You can rest after each plank and one shank round for 30-60 seconds if required. So it would look like this; plank 30 secs/shank 30 secs/ rest 30-60 secs. Repeat two more times.

Basic Version:

Heavy bag strikes x 1 minute instead of 2

Advanced Version:

Heavy bag work x 3 minutes

HILL TRAINING

If I was only allowed one conditioning exercise for the rest of my life, it would be hill sprints. Nothing builds your legs, heart, lungs and willpower like hill sprints. Hills are to conditioning what barbells are to strength. Hills are a cyborg-factory.

One of the fittest people I know does nothing but 2-3 hill sessions, along with 3 barbell strength sessions per week. That's it. He is an absolute beast.

After you complete Block I, I highly recommend you make hill sprints a staple in your continuation protocol. I've provided several variations that start from the very basic, right up to the extremely challenging. Some of these variations will incorporate your favorite tools and exercises, such as kettlebells and burpees.

A note on hill 'distances'. Since hills vary in length and incline, and you're limited by geography, it's pointless assigning specific distances/sizes.

If you only have access to a shorter hill (5-10 seconds to sprint up), then compensate by doing more reps, and vice versa. Don't get too caught up in the size of your hill, it can't be controlled, and you will reap all the benefits regardless.

But, if I *had* to assign some sort of measure, I'd say find a hill that takes you 30-40 seconds to sprint up.

16. STANDARD ISSUE HILLS

5-10 Hill Sprints

1-2 minutes rest intervals

This is the standard issue, basic hill sprint session. Don't let its simplicity fool you. It'll probably do much more for your conditioning than complicated workouts involving 10 different exercises with 20 different toys.

You can walk down the hill, or jog. Once you get to the bottom, your rest interval starts. Maximum effort and speed up the hill.

Don't get hung up on finding the perfect hill, but aim for something that takes you 30-45 seconds to sprint up if you can. If you can only find a 'short' hill that takes 10-15 seconds, then simply double the reps.

Basic Version:

Start with 3-4 rounds and work up to 5 – 10 over time. Extend the rest intervals between sprints to 3 minutes.

Advanced Version:

Jog back down/no rest interval at the bottom.

17. APEX HILLS

Hill Sprint

10 Russian Kettlebell swings

Walk down

Rest 1-2 Minutes

x 5-10

This is one of the simplest and most effective conditioning sessions in the book. This is a personal favorite and staple in my own conditioning program. It's simple, scalable, flexible, and will turn you into a machine. I like using a heavy kettlebell with two handed swings for an added power/strength element.

Set the kettlebell at the top of the hill. Sprint up to it with maximum effort. Bang out 10 crisp powerful Russian swings. Set the KB down and walk back down to the bottom. Rest interval starts at the bottom of the hill. If you don't have an easily accessible hill you can drive to, then make a day of it and hike out to it with your kettlebell secured in a backpack. Ensure it's comfortable, because chances are you'll be very tired on the hike out.

Basic Version:

Start with 3-4 rounds, work up to 10 over time. And/or use a lighter kettlebell if necessary.

Advanced / Operators:

Jog back down to the bottom and eliminate the rest interval between rounds – the jog down becomes your recovery period.

And/ or use a heavier kettlebell or even double kettlebell swings.

Operators work up to using the 48kg (Beast) kettlebell for 15+ rounds

Alternative Versions:

Use dumbbells

Do Snatches instead of swings

18. BLOODY LUNGS I

10 Plank Push-ups

Hill Sprint

10 Burpees

Walk Down

x 5

Start at the base of the hill. Do 10 plank push-ups. The version we do has you start out in the plank position, push up one elbow at a time. From this upright position do **one complete regular push-up**. Now you're back in the upright position. Move back down to your starting plank position, one elbow at a time. That's one repetition. Once you've completed 10, sprint up the hill with maximum effort. Perform 10 burpees at the top. The walk back down is your rest period.

Basic Version:

You can incorporate an extra 1-2 minutes of rest at the bottom of the hill after walking down.

And/or

Perform 5 plank push-ups/burpees instead of 10

Advanced Version:

x 10 rounds

and/or

jog down the hill/instead of walking

Operators consider using a weighted vest 10-20lbs

Alternative Version:

This is best done using a hill, but if you absolutely can't find one, because you live in Saskatchewan or something, then you can do a 400M max effort run in place of the hill sprint.

19. BLOODY LUNGS II

10 Burpees

Hill Sprint

5 Kettlebell/Dumbbell Snatches/arm

Walk Down

Rest 1-2 mins

x 5-10

With this more difficult version of Bloody Lungs, you'll leave a kettlebell or dumbbell at the top of the hill. You'll start off with burpees, immediately sprint up the hill. At the top, pick up the kettlebell and perform 5 snatches per arm. You can use a dumbbell in place of the kettlebell. You can also use push-presses or swings in place of snatches.

Basic Version:

x 5 rounds, work up to 10 over time. Use a lighter kettlebell to start if necessary.

And/or use swings instead of snatches (10 swings).

And/or 5 burpees

Advanced Version:

x 10+ rounds

And/or perform 10 snatches per arm.

And/or jog instead of walk back down to start

And/ or eliminate the rest interval between rounds

Operators: consider wearing a weight vest 10-15lbs

20. ANAEROBIC CAPACITY

Jog 800m

Sprint 400m

Jog 800m

Sprint 400m

Jog 400m

Sprint 200m

Jog 400m

Sprint 200m

Finisher:

50 Plank Push-ups

This is best done at a track. Your sprints will be roughly 90%-95% of maximum effort. The above sequence is done continuously with no rest intervals – the jogging serves as a bit of a recovery period. After you've completed the session, perform 50 plank push-ups.

Basic Version:

Do 25 plank push-ups

Advanced Version:

Weight vest 5-10lbs

N/A

21. PEPPER POTTING

Rucksack/Backpack/ Weight Vest: 30-50lbs

1.5 Mile Route or 30 minute hike

Pepper Pot x 100M every 5 Minutes

This is more of a specialist drill. This is for you if you're preparing for bootcamp or infantry training. This exercise is patterned off infantry contact drills, fire and movement, or 'pepper-potting' as it's called in some places. It also happens to be a good way to develop anaerobic/aerobic capacity along with strength endurance and load bearing.

Find a 1.5 mile long route, a hiking trail or path is perfect but anything will do. Strap on a rucksack, backpack or weight vest, with a 30-50lb load. Set your timer to go off every 5 minutes.

Every time your timer goes off, you're going to pepper-pot for roughly 100 meters. Your job is to get across 100 meters as fast as humanly possible. What this means is you're going to break into a run. However, every 4^{th} or 5^{th} step, you're going to stop, and get on one knee. Make sure that knee touches the ground. Stay there for two seconds. Then you're going to get up as quickly as you can for another short bound. Take a knee again. Continue like this until you get across the 100 meters. Your goal is to get across that 100M as quickly as possible. Basically it boils down to bounding for a few yards, and then taking a knee, repeatedly until you get across that 100Ms. When I say 4^{th} or 5^{th} 'step', I'm referring to each footfall. So left, right, left, right, left, down. If you don't want to count footsteps, another trick is to mentally say to yourself 'up-he-sees-me-down.' On the up you're getting up, running as far as you can, on the 'down' you're immediately back down. As you can see, your bounds should be very short. To go military-geek, you're simulating moving while under fire, so, you don't want to stay upright and running long enough for someone to put you in their sites and pull the trigger. Without fail, as people get more and more tired, their bounds get longer and longer, which makes them an easier target. Or they stay down on the ground longer and start resting. If you catch yourself starting to do this, have the discipline to cut your bounds short. Your 5 minute timer re-starts after you complete 100M of pepper potting. Get through this 1.5 mile route as quickly as possible. The longer you take, the more pepper-potting you will have to do. I don't recommend this one unless you're starting a military contract – it's a very occupationally specific drill. I wasn't initially going to include it in this book. We normally use it strictly for clients preparing for bootcamp or infantry continuation training. It helps break in ruck muscles, gets clients used to working in combat boots, and gets them familiar with contact drill movements.

Basic Version:

Start with a lighter load: 20-25lbs

Advanced Version:

Use heavier weight, work up to 80lbs+

Alternative Version:

Find a football/soccer field and use a 50-100 meter stretch. Wear no weight or ruck, bodyweight only.

Get from one end to the other as quickly as possible, but roughly every five meters drop and do two burpees. Rest 2 minutes when you reach the end of your route. Turn around and repeat.

x 3-5 rounds

22. BUFFALO LAPS

Burpees x 10

400M Run

2 Handed Kettlebell swings x 10 (or 20 if 1 handed)

Rest 45-60 seconds

x 4 Rounds

This session was submitted by a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who used it to decrease his PARE time. The PARE is an RCMP physical fitness test designed to simulate the energy systems used for chasing, and wrestling with/arresting a suspect. Aerobic/anaerobic systems, and strength/power come in to play. The PARE is set-up in circuit fashion, with several easy obstacles/stairs, ending in a push-pull device designed to test strength after exertion. There is a time limit, with members averaging anywhere from 2 1/2 to 4 1/2minutes. The constable that submitted this session, used it to decrease his PARE from 3:15 to 2:54 which is significant. Anything in the two minute range is generally considered to be in the highest percentile and relatively few RCMP members are capable of sub 3 minute PARE times.

4 rounds of the above are done as quickly as possible for time, with no rest interval.

Basic Version:

Rest 60 seconds between rounds.

Advanced Version:

Use double kettlebell swings

Alternative Version:

If you don’t have access to kettlebells, you can use a dumbbell instead. Go for one handed db swings, 5 per side.

23. MEAT-EATER III

Double Kettlebell Clean and Press x 10

300 m sprint x 1

Lunge 100m Back to Start

x 4-6 Rounds

This session focuses on strength, power, and anaerobic system development. Use two kettlebells of equal weight at the starting line. Perform 10 double kettlebell (or dumbbell) clean and press. Drop the kettlebells and sprint 300 meters. If you're at the track, you'll lunge the remaining 100 meters back to your starting point, back to your kettlebells. Repeat

Stick with moderate weights to start, roughly 16kg-32kg. Scale as necessary.

Basic Version:

Do 5 kb C&Ps instead of 10

Skip the lunges and walk back the remaining 100m as your rest interval.

Advanced Version:

.Use heavier kettlebells/do 6 rounds +

Alternate Version:

If you only have one kettlebell, do 10 swings per arm/followed by 10 presses per arm

24. DEVIL'S TRINITY
COMBAT CONDITIONING CIRCUIT

Kettlebell Swings x 1 Minute

Burpees x 1 Minute

Heavy Bag x 1 Minute or Spar x 1 Minute or Shadowbox x 1 Minute

Rest x 1 Minute

x 5 Rounds

This deceptively simple, but very challenging session was provided by a British para. This was done solo or with a partner. When doing the partner version, the two paratroopers would spar with each other in place of the heavy bag work. For the solo version, set your timer for one minute rounds. Start with kettlebell swings (one or two handed) and do as many as you can within the minute. 12-24kg for men, and 8-16kg for women, scale accordingly. When your timer sounds immediately move on to burpees, and then finally the heavy bag. Maximum effort on the heavy bag, you can mix it up with straight punches, knees, kicks and elbows. Rest for one minute and repeat.

Basic Version:

2-3 Rounds

Advanced Version:

Work up to doing all 5 rounds without using the rest interval

And/or use double kettlebell swings

Alternative Version:

If you have a training partner, do light sparring in place of the heavy bag

Or Pad drills

If you don't have a heavy bag, shadow box while holding a pair of light dumbbells

GENERAL CONDITIONING SESSIONS

HIC sessions#25-36 develop work capacity, and general physical fitness. Many of the energy systems you've been developing will be brought together at varying intensities and durations.

Do not use these as the sole source of your HIC work. Mix them up with the aerobic/anaerobic HICs #1-24.

25. GC 1

(aka BEAT YOUR FACE)

Burpees x 3 Min

Rest x 3 Min

Burpees x 2 Min

Rest x 2 Min

Burpees x 1 Min

Rest x 1 Min

x 1-3 Rounds

Instead of push-ups, you'll be beating your face with burpees. How many burpees you can do in a set amount of time is a great indicator of general conditioning. When performing this session, do as many burpees as you can in the prescribed amount of time. Record your results and compare over time.

Basic Version:

Start with 1 round, work up over time.

Advanced Version:

Burpees x 5 Min

Rest x 2 Min

x 3-4 Rounds

And/ Or wear a weight vest + 5-15lbs for added challenge

26. GC 2

10 Pull-ups

10 burpees

10 squat jumps

10 Plyometric push-ups

….9/8/7/6/5/3/3/2/1

For Time

Perform 10 pull-ups, 10 burpees, continue moving down the list. After you finish the first round, repeat with 9 pull-ups, 9 burpees, etc. continue doing this until you reach 1 in this descending ladder fashion.

27. GC 3

AKA Brig Rat

Burpees x 30 sec

Dips x 30 sec

Burpees x 30 sec

Squats x 30 sec

Burpees x 30 sec

Back Extensions x 30 sec

Rest 1 Min

x 3-5 rounds

Squats are body-weight. A plank can be used in the place of back extensions. A plank can also be used every other round in place of back extensions.

Basic Version:

N/A

Advanced Version:

Wear a weight vest +10-15lbs for added challenge

28. GC 4

Pull-ups x 100

Run 400M

Push-Ups x 100

Run 400M

Kettlebell/dumbbell swings x 100

Run 400M

x 1 Round/For time

Can be done indoors using a treadmill or rower for the 400s. Or step out of the gym and run roughly 400m and come back in for your next exercise.

Basic Version:

Do only 50 reps per exercise

Advanced Version:

Use a heavy kettlebell 48kg+ or double kettlebells

And/ Or x 2 Rounds

29. GC 5

A

Max Dips x 1 Min

Rest 90 seconds

Max Push-ups x 1 Min

Rest 90 seconds

x 3 Rounds

B

5 Pull-ups

10 Burpees

x 3 Rounds

Dips can be done at dip station or using rings. Complete ‘A’ entirely, rest 2 minutes and move on to ‘B’.

Basic Version:

Dips + Push-ups x 30 seconds

Advanced Version:

Use a weight vest for dips/push-ups/pull-ups and/or burpees

30. GC 6

Sledgehammer/Tire Strikes x 10

Burpees x 5

Squats x 10

x AMRAP 5 Minutes

Rest 60-90 seconds

x 3

Cycle through the sledge/burpees/bodyweight squats as many times as you can in 5 minutes. Rest for 60-90 seconds and repeat. Total of 3 rounds. If you don't have access to a sledgehammer and tire, you can substitute kettlebell or dumbbell swings.

Basic Version

N/A

Advanced Version

10 Burpees instead of 5

5 rounds +

And/ Or wear a weight vest 5-15lbs

31. GC 7

Burpees x 50
Squats x 50
Diamond Push-ups x 50
Run 800M
x 3 Rounds
For Time

Basic Version:
x 1-2 Rounds

Advanced Version:
100 reps for each exercise
x 3-5 Rounds

32. GC 8

A

Kettlebell/Dumbbell Snatch x 10/Arm

Box Jumps x 25

Hanging Knees to Elbow x 25

Dips/Ring Dips x 25

Burpees x 5

4 rounds for time

B

Handstand – Static Hold x 60 Seconds

Rest 2-3 Mins

x 3

Complete all of A first before moving on to B. You can support yourself against the wall when doing the static handstand holds.

Basic Version:

Do 2 rounds of A

Do 1 round of B

Advanced Version:

N/A

33. GC 9

A

Pull-up x 3

Burpees x 5

Squats x 10

Complete as many rounds as possible in 10 minutes

B

10 x 100M Sprints

Complete all of ‘A’ before moving on to ‘B’. Aim for continuous work when doing ‘A’.

Basic Version:

5 x 100M sprints instead

Advanced Version:

Do muscle-ups instead of pull-ups

34. GC 10

A

Jog 2 Minutes

Burpees x 25

x 4 Rounds

B

Core or Grip Finisher of your choice

This session can also be done indoors with the use of a treadmill or rowing machine in place of the jogging. The jogging portion should be approached as active recovery, and the burpees should be completed as quickly as possible.

Basic Version

Burpees x 15

Advanced Version

Burpees x 50

And/ or wear a weight vest 5-20lbs

35. GC 11

(aka OUTSIDE THE WIRE)

A

Sprint x 100M

Bear Crawl x 50M

x 5

For Time

B

100 Sledge/Tire Strikes

For Time

Get through both A and B as quickly as you can. For A, there's no rest period in between sprinting and bear crawling. Immediately transition.

Basic Version:

N/A

Advanced Version:

Wear a weight vest 5-20lbs

Alternative Version:

Do 10 Muscle-ups for time in place of the sledge/tire strikes

Do 50 pull-ups for time in place of the sledge/tire strikes

Do 100 kipping pull-ups for time in place of the sledge/tire strikes

36. GC 12

A

1.5 Mile Run

For time

B

Barbell Push-Press x 20

Back Extensions x 20

Pull-ups x 20

x 3 Rounds/ For Time

For barbell push-press, use a light weight – approximately 15%-30% of your estimated 1 repetition max. No need to strictly calculate, just guess and err on the side of going lighter.

Basic Version:

1-2 Rounds of B

Advanced Version:

N/A

POWER DEVELOPMENT

HIC sessions# 37-39 focus on developing power, power-endurance and explosiveness. These sessions should not make up the bulk of your HIC training. Barring any specific goals, choose the majority of your HIC from sessions #1-36. Sprinkle in power development occasionally.

37. BW PLYO – POWER

A

Explosive Plyometric Push-ups x 10

Rest 90 Seconds

Explosive Jump Squats x 10

Rest 90 seconds

Explosive Plyometric Pull-ups x 5-10

Rest 2 Minutes

x 3 Rounds

B

50M sprints x 5

Your plyometric movements should be explosive and crisp.

Basic Version:

x 2 Rounds

And / Or 5 plyometric pull-ups

Advanced Version:

N/A

38. POWER COMPLEX

Barbell Push-Press x 5 / 60% -70% 1RM

Rest 1-2 minutes

10 Double kettlebell/dumbbell squat jumps 8kg-24kg

Rest 1-2 minutes

Kettlebell/Dumbbell Snatch x 5/arm 8kg-24kg

Rest 1-2 minutes

5 plyo pull-ups

Rest 1-2 minutes

x 3

All exercises to be performed with maximum speed and explosiveness, but **under control** with good form **at all times**.

Perform the push-press explosively. Fast on the up. Slower/controlled when lowering the bar back to start. Use roughly 60% - 70% of your estimated one repetition maximum. You don't want to go too heavy or too light, the goal is to move that weight with speed and explosiveness.

Same principle for the squat jumps, perform with maximum power. If it helps, you can jump up onto a box, but it's not necessary. Dumbbells can easily be used in place of kettlebells for both the squat jumps and snatches.

For the pull-ups, grasp the bar and pull yourself up as forcefully and quickly as you can until your chin is at the level of the bar or over it. Then release immediately and drop down from the top position. For this session, no need to lower yourself down under control. Just let go of the bar and drop. This is an exercise in power development, not maximum strength.

Basic Version:

x 2 rounds, work up to 3

Use the lighter end of the weight spectrum if necessary.

Start with 3 plyo pull-ups instead of 5.

Optionally, use bodyweight jump squats.

Advanced Version:

N/A

39. KINETIC CONDITIONING

Sprint 50M + Explosive Plyometric Push-ups x 5

Rest 2 Minutes

Sprint 50M + Explosive Squat Jumps x 5

Rest 2 Minutes

x 3

This session is designed to increase your power, speed and explosiveness. The trick behind this one is to perform each exercise at maximum intensity. Perform as explosively, powerfully, and quickly as you can.

Notice the longer two minute rest interval. This is done on purpose so that you're fully rested between each maximum effort. You'll only get the full benefit of this session by exerting a maximum effort on each rep – so it's paramount that you're well rested between attempts. Take more than two minutes of rest if needed. Err on the side of more rest for this one.

Basic Version:

x 2 Rounds

Advanced Version:

N/A

40. TRANSITION COMPLEX

Front Squat x 3 (85% 1RM)

Squat Jumps x 10

Rest 2 Min

Standing Overhead Press x 3 (85%1RM)

Plyometric Push-ups x 10

Rest 2 Min

Weighted Pull-ups x 3 (+10-50lbs)

Medicine Ball Slams x 10

x 2-3 Rounds

The heavy standard lifting (squatting/bench etc) primes your system for power work. After completing your set of front squats, immediately rack the bar, step back and perform 10 powerful, explosive squat jumps (bodyweight). Rest a couple minutes, and move on to the next exercise. Estimate your 1rms if needed, no need to be exact. Just ensure you're lifting heavy for front squat + SOHP + weighted pull-ups.

Basic Version:

Bodyweight pull-ups instead of weighted pull-ups

Advanced Version:

Do muscle-ups in place of pull-ups

Do plyo pull-ups in place of medicine ball slams

Alternative Version:

Do 10 plyometric or kipping pull-ups instead of medicine ball slams

CORE + GRIP

I've included a handful of core and miscellaneous workouts, including the 'Plank & Shank' finisher that can be tacked on at the end of regular training sessions. You'll also find an intensive core focused stand-alone session, and sessions designed to improve grip work, power and speed.

1. TB Plank & Shank
2. Full Core
3. Quarterdeck Core
4. Progressive Grip Circuit

1. PLANK & SHANK

Plank 1-5 minutes

Shank 1-5 minutes

Rest 1-2 minutes

x 1-3

The Plank & Shank is a quick all-in-one core training session, and makes a good finisher. The 'plank' is self-explanatory, the 'shank' refers to a **static** back extension/hyperextension. I have no idea why they're referred to as 'shanks' in this case. This was the term used by the training cadre that first introduced me to this combo. So I'm going to go with it. It rhymes and rolls off the tongue nicely. You can call it whatever you like.

The shank's best performed off a back extension bench. You're simply going to hold your back in the top position of a regular back extension. Like a reverse plank for the back. Just hold it for the designated amount of time. Don't do any up/down reps. Keep your spine relatively straight. You're simply holding a back extension at the top of the movement.

Some of you may be surprised at how difficult it is to hold the shank position, even if you can deadlift a horse. It's a good way to strengthen weak links in the posterior chain.

There are a couple ways to plank & shank. You can simply plank for 1-2 minutes take a short break and do the same for shank/repeat. Or you can superset. Plank for a minute, then immediately shank for a minute, for a certain number of rounds before resting and repeating. Or you can plank for longer than you shank, or vice versa.

Basic Version:

Plank and Shank for shorter reps to start – roughly 30-60 seconds for each movement. Work up to lengthier holds.

Advanced Version:

Hold a weight when shanking, or wear a weight vest for both plank and shank.

Use lengthier reps – 2 minutes + for each hold.

And / or get rid of the rest interval. Keep moving from one hold to the next for as many designated time cycles as you can.

2. FULL CORE

A

Romanian Deadlifts x 100 (20-30% 1RM)

Rest 3-5 Minutes

Hanging Knees to Elbows or Hanging Leg Raises x 100

B - Finisher

Plank & Shank x 3 (60 sec plank/45 sec shank x 3)

This isn't a finisher, this is a complete core focused session in and of itself. Simple, minimalist, and highly effective. Do sets of 3, 5, 10, 20, or more for your deadlifts and hanging leg raises. Rest as necessary.

I favor this minimalist approach to training. Rather than doing 10 different versions of sit-ups, medicine ball throws, and leg raises, I like selecting the least possible number of highly effective movements and hitting them hard.

Basic Version:

50 Deadlifts/Leg Raises instead of 100

Advanced Version:

Weight vest for plank & shank

And/ Or hold a weight when shanking

3. QUARTERDECK CORE

Plank Push-ups x 10

Back Extensions x 10

V-Ups x 10

Ab wheel/Rollout x 5-10

x 5-10

This is another good core finisher. It has a focus on the abdominal muscles along with some posterior chain development. Squats, deadlifts and overhead presses do work the core to some degree, but mostly the rear/posterior chain. They don't activate as much of the rectus abdominis (abs) as you think. So every once in a while it's good to put some direct focus on your abdominal muscles. I've minimized posterior/rear core work in this one, because the majority of the sessions in this book, along with your regular strength training, include things like kettlebell work, squats, deadlifts and presses. So this is a good finisher to tack on to one of your more posterior chain-heavy workouts.

The ab-rollouts can be done with a barbell if you don't have an ab roller or ab wheel. Google for video demonstrations. Rest as necessary between your roll-out sets.

Complete 5-10 rounds, rest as necessary.

Basic Version:

Perform 5 sets

Advanced Version:

Wear a weighted vest 10-20lbs.

4. PROGRESSIVE GRIP CIRCUIT

100M Farmer's Walk

10 DB Overhead Presses

100M Farmer's Walk

10 DB Forearm Reverse Curls

100M Farmer's Walk

10 DB Shrugs

100M Farmer's Walk

10 DB Hammer Curls

Rest 2-3 minutes

x 1-3

Use the same pair of dumbbells for the entire session. You won't be going very heavy right away - the way you might with a straight Farmer's Walk, due to the length of the session and the exercises. Start out with a conservative weight. I recommend 20-50lbs per dumbbell for men, and 5-30lbs per DB for women. Scale as necessary.

This is normally done at a 400 meter track, but any 100 meter stretch will do. Your goal is to get all the way around the track and do all the exercises without putting the dumbbells down. Farmer's Walk for 100 meters, stop and do the first exercise – 10 dumbbell presses. Continue walking without rest or putting the DBs down for another 100 meters. Stop and do 10 DB forearm reverse curls. And so on until you've completed the lap/circuit. All the dumbbell exercises are done both arms at the same time.

This is how long term progression works with this session. When you can get all the way around the track without putting the dumbbells down, bump the weight up by 5-10lbs per dumbbell. When you can't get all the way around the track, break the session into segments. Complete the first segment (100m walk + 10 DB presses) and then put the dumbbells down for a brief rest. Pick up and continue. Rest briefly after the second segment (100M + DB forearm curls) and continue. Work up to doing two segments in a row, then three and finally all four. Boom. Bump the weight up again by 5-10lbs per dumbbell. Over time, your goal is to go heavier and heavier with the dumbbells.

This doesn't have to be done at the track, you can do it in your gym. Instead of walking the 100 meters, you'll simple hold the dumbbells by your side for 90 seconds between each exercise. The static hold replaces the walk. So start off the session by holding the dumbbells by your side for 90 seconds. Then perform the presses. Back down to your sides for 90 seconds. Then do the reverse forearm curls. Etc. There are no basic/advanced options for this exercise.

CHALLENGE SESSIONS

If you want to truly test your limits, and brush up against the extreme, then these challenges will be of interest to you. Totally optional, and not recommended until you've achieved an above average level of conditioning.

I will warn you, these are difficult. Just completing a session is a huge accomplishment.

These sessions should not be a routine part of your training protocol. Try them once every couple months when you're fully rested. If you decide to do it, send me your results and any pics, and I'll post them up on the Tactical Barbell website. They'll act as benchmarks for future trainees foolish enough to try them.

1. Duku-Duku (aka Pretorian Hills)
2. Burpees for the Mentally Disturbed
3. Triska-Deka-Phobia
4. Beasting
5. Snake-Eater's Delight

Get cleared by your physician before attempting these challenge sessions, or any other training session in this book.

1. DUKU-DUKU

(AKA Pretorian Hills)

KB Goblet Squats x 5 (24kg for men/12kg for women)

Hill Run

KB Swings x 10

Walk Down

x 5

Here's the hard part;

The kettlebell can't touch the ground for the duration of the session.

Start at the bottom of the hill. Do 5 goblet squats with your new best friend. Run/scramble up the hill as fast as you can while carrying the KB. Carry it any way you like, as long as it doesn't touch the ground. At the top, complete 10 swings with the kettlebell. They can be done one handed, or two handed, doesn't matter. Just make the bell go up and down ten times. Don't put it down! Walk back down the hill carrying the kettlebell. Don't put it down. At the bottom, start up again with the goblet squats.

A former South African soldier introduced me to this torture session. He advised his training cadre would occasionally use a similar version as one of many candidate selection tools or exercises for their more elite units.

Candidates were given large iron weights, cumbersome ammo boxes, or heavy pieces of weaponry. They were made to do various drills at the bottom of the hill, then run up the hill still carrying their weight, for more exercises at the top. Back down, back up. As soon as a candidate put his item down, he was done. They ran this exercise as long as needed, until they were left with a pre-determined number of soldiers. Sometimes it was used as a game/challenge, until last man standing. It is a test of mental toughness, will power, pain tolerance, grip strength, cardiovascular conditioning, strength and strength endurance. It will develop all of those qualities.

There's a good chance, that even if you're in great shape you won't be able to complete all 5 rounds. So your goal is to work up to 5 rounds without putting your kettlebell down. Start conservatively, try doing 2 rounds with no rest. Then take a break put the bell down. Work up to 3, etc. This can be done with a dumbbell as well. And I probably shouldn't have to say this, but no you can't use a backpack!

Basic Version:

Use a light kettlebell

Put the kettlebell down and rest for 2-3 minutes after every round at the bottom of the hill.

Advanced Version/Operators:

10 rounds.

10 Goblet squats instead of 5

32kg kettlebell / work up to the 48kg beast

A word on choosing a hill. Go with something that takes you about 35-45 seconds to sprint up empty handed. Or go for a longer hill and go slower running up it. Either way you'll get the benefit/pain you're supposed to.

Alternatively, just make do with what you have. If it's a short hill, then do more rounds.

2. BURPEES FOR THE MENTALLY DISTURBED

Burpees x 10 Minutes – AMRAP

Record # of Burpees

Rest 3 Minutes

Burpees x 10 Minutes – AMRAP

For the second set of burpees, attempt to **do more** than you did on the first set. Don't cheat on that first set by pacing yourself or being conservative with your effort.

Basic Version:

5 minute rounds

Advanced Version:

Wear a weight vest+ 5-15lbs

3. TRISKA-DEKA-PHOBIA

Ruck March x 13 Miles (50lb load)
Run x 13 Miles
For Time

Goes without saying, drop the ruck when you're doing the run portion.

Basic Version:
6 mile ruck + run

Advanced/Operators:
80lb-100lb Ruck

4. BEASTING

Ruck + 48kg Kettlebell

3 Mile March / Hike

Every 10 Minutes:

100 Russian Swings

Or (alternate)

100 Weighted Squats

For Time

Carry a 48kg kettlebell or equivalent dumbbell in your ruck. Ensure that your ruck is padded extremely well. Perform a 3 mile march/hike as quickly as you can. Set your timer to go off every ten minutes. Alternate between 100 swings and 100 squats every 10 minutes. Drop the ruck when doing swings. Leave your ruck on with beast inside when doing your squats. Your 10 minute timer stops when you're doing kettlebell work and restarts when you ruck up and start walking again. Complete this march as quickly as possible. The longer you take, the more swings + squats you have to do.

Basic Version:

24 or 32kg Kettlebell + 2 Miles

Advanced/Operators:

Do both swings + squats every 10 minute stop. Enjoy.

And / Or 6 Miles instead of 3

5. SNAKE-EATER'S DELIGHT

Day 1

10KM Ruck March + 50lbs

10KM Run

For Time

PM – Sleep Deprivation

Day 2

10KM Ruck March + 50lbs

10KM Run

For Time

So if you really want a little taste of what some high speed military selections are like, this might be for you. Everyone comes to selection with prior skills and training. Private Jones might be an extremely fit runner, used to doing marathon and such in his off time. Private Smith might be able to pump out push-ups for days because he spends a lot of time in the gym. So just because Jones can run or Smith can do hundreds of push-ups with ease, does that mean they're unit material? Not necessarily. An important quality is how a candidate performs when he's brought to his *personal* breaking point, or past it. If it were as simple as using the best runners or strongest athletes, there would be very little need for selection.

Now here's the thing. I can run Jones all day and he won't reach that breaking point. I can give Smith pull-ups and push-ups sunrise to sunset, it won't tell me much about him. On a run, Smith will probably tire out faster than Jones. But Smith can do more pull-ups than Jones. Physical tests of endurance are one way to bring people around to that breaking point, but what if you have a candidate like Jones who was a marathon runner or triathlete in the past? For Jones, physical endurance may not really bring him there all the way. The military wants to compare what Jones and Smith are both like, when they both hit that same breaking point. So how do you get Smith, Jones, the course superstar, and the other 30 guys on selection to the same breaking point in a given amount of time despite varying physical ability?

The application of mental and physiological stress in addition to physical work. One tried, true, and very effective stressor, is sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation is the great equalizer. Doesn't matter how much you can bench press, how many hundreds of push-ups you can do, or how good of a swimmer you are, you will be brought to a level of weakness the same as everyone else after a few nights of no rack time. You can really see how someone's going to perform under pressure when you deprive them of sleep for a few days. Soldiers that initially looked like superstars turn into slugs, and slugs turn into superstars. Military units around the world have various versions of 'hell week' in which candidates are deprived of sleep for a week or more. Add to that extreme physical exertion, tasks requiring teamwork and some complexity, and you'll start to see pretty quickly who can persevere and who shuts down.

Take away a meal or two, add in the elements of cold and discomfort, now we're talking. There's a reason special operations units aren't simply comprised of the military's best runners or strongest athletes.

This session will give you a taste of this kind of discomfort and stress.

On Day 1, perform a 10KM ruck march with a 50lb load. After your hike, drop the ruck and run 10KM as fast as you can. Both events are done for time, complete both as quickly as possible and record your times.

Now you're done for the day. Now we introduce a little stress.

Stay awake for the entire night. No sleep. No catnaps.

Do whatever you like to stay awake. If you were in the military you might be setting up a defensive position, manning a perimeter point, or out on a recce patrol. You, however, can watch TV or play video games instead. Whatever you do, make sure you stay away.

You can begin Day 2 any time after 5AM. On Day 2, you'll repeat the ruck and run, and attempt to beat or match your previous day's timings.

Basic Version:

Sleep for 2-3 hours the night before Day 2. Go to bed at 2AM, wake up at 5AM, and do the run/ruck any time after 5AM. Sissy.

Advanced/Operators:

Do two nights of sleep deprivation in between your ruck/runs.

There is no benefit to this session beyond testing your personal limits. Sleep deprivation is unhealthy.

This session will appeal to a certain breed. Others will have no idea why any sane person would attempt this. If you have to ask…

III
EXECUTION

‘If you spend too much time thinking about a thing, you will never get it done.’
Bruce Lee

CONDITIONING – PROGRESSION

It would be nice if conditioning was similar to strength training, in that you could measure and incrementally force progression by way of percentages and numbers. Unfortunately it doesn't work with the same level of exactitude.

Conditioning is similar in that it is about putting the time and work in, and increasing the boundaries of your performance, as your body adapts.

However, you do have options for exerting a little more control over your improvement.

BASIC TO ADVANCED PROGRESSION

For those of you with OCD, this is my preferred method. Choose a cluster of your favorite conditioning sessions. So let's say you're running Black protocol, choose two or three HIC plus a couple E sessions.

For example. My favorite conditioning cluster consists of 600M Resets, Apex Hills, and LSS running. Very simple, but extremely effective. The Resets work on cardiac contractile strength, the LSS takes care of cardiac hypertrophy and vascular efficiency. Apex gives me aerobic/anaerobic work, kettlebells, incredible work capacity, plus all the other benefits hill sprints bring.

Start with the 'Basic' version of each conditioning session. Continue using that session in your weekly rotation until you are able to perform the 'Advanced' version. Then swap it out for a different session or change your focus.

You don't have to stick to only three sessions in your cluster. You can choose a handful, say 5 or 6, and rotate them in and out of your weekly progression, when you hit the 'Advanced' bench mark in each. Rotate a new session in to take its place.

VARIETY JUNKIE

With this one there's no fixed progression – you'll still get all the benefits, you just won't be able to quantify your improvement as easily. This is for you if your training needs to be fun, or have some variety. With this, just choose any conditioning session on the list and go. Some days perform the basic versions, other days you can try for the advanced. You can do the same conditioning sessions twice in a week, or never repeat etc. Basically anything goes, as long as you're following the overall protocol (i.e. number of HIC to E sessions per week etc.)

INCORPORATING OTHER CONDITIONING SESSIONS

The effectiveness of the Tactical Barbell conditioning system isn't based on the individual training sessions found in this book. The value lies in the overall structure and approach – building a base with correct technique, progressing certain attributes while maintaining others etc. The training sessions are great – simple, effective, and brutal at times, but they are only a means to an end. They exist to provide the stimulus we need to develop certain attributes.

Don't limit yourself to the sessions found in this book – I encourage you to incorporate other conditioning workouts, and to develop your own.

When importing a session, figure out where it fits – is it best suited to HIC, E, or maybe SE?

E sessions develop aerobic performance primarily through long steady state work. Continuous low level effort.

Some HIC sessions focus on anaerobic enhancement. You'll be working at higher intensities with *insufficient* rest between efforts. Other HICS hit the aerobic system – they make you work at higher intensities with *sufficient* rest between efforts.

Then there's work capacity. If your session is done 'for time', chances are its work capacity, and would fit into HIC – General Conditioning. Many Crossfit sessions fall in this general conditioning/work capacity category.

Bottom line, if it's a shorter, high intensity session that includes multiple tools and paces, it's probably HIC. If it's long steady state work, then it's an E session. Too easy.

Don't get too concerned with getting everything picture perfect. There's a lot of overlap between the energy systems, and you can always hit the big reset button by dropping everything and running a Base Building Block. So experiment away.

I also urge you to create your own sessions after you gain some experience. You can modify existing sessions found in this program, add in new tools, or throw in a new twist or variation. Use the existing sessions as guidelines.

The effectiveness of this system relies more on the overall framework and approach than on any one individual training session.

INCORPORATING SPORT/TRAINING

If you're a mixed martial artist, soccer player, or other athlete, there are many ways you can incorporate TB1 and 2 in your life.

You can do an off-season/in-season approach. Your off-season would consist of a high volume strength & conditioning load, which slowly tapers off into less S&C and more skills work. In season, your S&C goes into a minimalist/maintenance mode, and your sport and skills training take center stage. At this stage, you should be getting some conditioning from playing or practising your sport.

Another approach is to maintain your TB S&C year round, but substitute some of your sport/other training sessions in for your required weekly HIC and/or E.

So if you're in the infantry, and you go for a 20k ruck march for morning PT, you can cross one E session off your weekly list if you wish. If you're a mixed martial artist, and you have a hard session of sparring, that's one HIC. And so on.

I usually recommend this approach *after* doing at least one base building block, because people tend to incorrectly assume they're performing aerobic base building work when they're not.

One TB trainee that comes to mind is the perfect example. Jun was a recreational soccer player. He thought he was doing a lot of cardiovascular work, practicing soccer three nights a week with his team, running, doing drills, and playing the occasional game on the weekend. He always worked up a sweat and felt spent after practice. Yet, several years later he still couldn't complete a 3 mile run without stopping. So what was going on? Soccer practice wasn't developing Jun's aerobic system as efficiently as he thought. His practices involved a lot of stop and go running, hard intervals, like that. If you refer back to earlier chapters, you'll remember that certain important aerobic adaptations occur through uninterrupted long steady state work. At least 30 minutes of working at a low intensity steady pace, so you stimulate cardiac hypertrophy amongst other things. Now take another look at Jun's soccer practices – intervals, stop and go running. So he was getting very little of a fundamental kind of aerobic work. Jun added in an easy 45 minute morning jog every morning three to five times a week for two months. His cardiovascular performance skyrocketed, including his soccer. Within two months he was able to complete a 6 mile run with ease.

OPERATOR I/A TEMPLATE

Zulu was introduced as our flagship strength-template in Tactical Barbell: Definitive Strength Training for the Operational Athlete. It's a four day template, with very brief sessions. However, a large portion of our readers prefer 3 x week lifting. Zulu I/A tends to be favored by tactical law enforcement. Alternatively, Operator + Fighter remain popular with our military readers.

Three day templates like Operator are very easy to combine with a conditioning protocol. Three days a week of strength, three days a week of conditioning, one day rest. Every other day strength, every other day conditioning – done. No thought required. A great approach.

Operator is one of our most effective templates. Pick 2-4 main lifts, hit them frequently, but stay a few comfortable inches away from your edge. Op will get you very strong, relatively quickly. The drawbacks to using Operator are that as you hit advanced-intermediate loads, your sessions might run longer than ideal. This may be cause for concern if you're a multi-dimensional athlete. When you get to this point, we usually recommend you make the switch to Zulu. If you're primarily a strength athlete and not worried about longer gym sessions – then have at it – stick with it. Many of our civilian readers do just that. It can be very hard leaving Operator after you get a taste of the dense muscle and strength it brings.

So, just as Zulu has a Standard and I/A (Intermediate/Advanced) version, we're introducing Operator I/A. It's for those that want to stick to the three day Operator setup instead of transitioning to Zulu. It's designed to accommodate the flexibility needed by more intermediate/advanced trainees.

If you love Operator, but it's time to transition to a more advanced-intermediate template, here it is.

OPERATOR I/A

DAY	WEEK ¼	WEEK 2/5	WEEK 3/6
1	4-10 x 5/ 70%	3-5 x 3-5/ 80- 85%	3-4 x 2-3/ 90-95%
2			
3	4-10 x 5/ 70%	2-5 x 3-5/ 80- 85%	3-4 x 2-3/ 90-95%
4			
5	4-10 x 5/ 70%	1-2 x 3-5/ 80 -85%	3-4 x 1-2/ 90-95%
6			
7			

Sets x Reps / percentage of 1 rep maximum

As you can see, this an intermediate template with a lot of flexibility as opposed to 'do x amount of reps y times.' At TB, we approach strength training like practice, as preached by Pavel Tsatsouline and other Eastern Bloc coaches. You go into the weight room, practice, and 'groove' each lift as frequently as you can while staying fresh and unfatigued. The above was designed with the accompanying conditioning protocol in this book in mind.

During week 1, the focus is on volume work at a lower intensity. Intensity refers to load or percentage of 1 repetition maximum when it comes to strength training. Volume training develops work capacity. Higher volume prepares and readies the body for higher intensity. If you've stopped making progress, one way to address this is by strategically increasing volume. So week 1 is like your mini base building cycle. You're using higher volume/lighter

loads to build a foundation for the heavier weeks to come. Higher volume also gives you the option to increase muscular hypertrophy, so if that's a need, play in the higher set range.

Week 2 is a standard work-week. 80%-85% is that mid-range type of intensity that builds strength. These are the sessions where you have to be focused and pay attention to what you're doing. Notice you have the option to do anywhere from 2-5 sets per exercise midweek. This is to allow you to ramp down the volume to prepare for the upcoming high intensity week, and to be compatible with your various TB2 conditioning sessions.

Week 3 is your intensity week. You'll be lifting relatively heavy, for a low number of reps.

This coincides with TB2's 'Easy Week' conditioning principle. As your strength training increases and peaks in intensity, your conditioning load simultaneously decreases. And vice versa.

PROGRAMMING OPERATOR I/A EXERCISES

OPTION 1: A-B-A

Let's use the classic Bench/Squat/Deadlift/Overhead Press cluster. You can use an A-B-A set up. NOT an A-B-A, B-A-B. See the difference? I'll clarify as we go along. First choose two 'bread and butter' lifts. Let's use squat and bench press. Both major multi-joint compounds. That will be our A session. OHP and Deadlift become our B session. Your 'A' session are the two lifts that are most important to YOU – the only stipulation being they have to be balanced, i.e. lower body/upper body, or push-pull etc. You can't do Bench Press + OHP for your A session. With me so far?

So your schedule for the entire block will be like this. Every week will be the same:

Day 1: SQ/BP (A)

Day 3: DL/OHP (B)

Day 5: SQ/BP (A)

Week two will be the same. SQ/BP twice, DL/OHP once. We're using the same principle that made the original Operator so successful. Frequency with submaximal loads. We're hitting our two bread and butter lifts (SQ/BP) as frequently throughout the week as we can – at submaximal intensity – so we don't burn out or train at our edge. You're never lifting at 100%. Getting very strong in those two lifts will carry over to our slightly neglected deadlift and overhead press. Deadlifts don't need a lot of work to progress, and benching frequently will easily take care of your overhead press. Make sense? I urge you NOT to rotate A and B every weeks. **DON'T** do this:

Week 1:

Day 1: **A**

Day 3: B

Day 5: **A**

Week 2

Day 1: B

Day 3: **A**

Day 5: B

It may look like it makes sense, and is very tidy and attractive to the organized, ordered mind. One week you hit SQ/BP twice and DL/OHP once, the following week you hit SQ/BP only once and now DL/OHP get a turn to get hit twice. Even Steven. Here's the thing. You'll lose out on the magic that frequency brings. Spend more time taking a fewer things farther and your 'secondary lifts' will come along for the ride. The ABA/BAB method doesn't work well with the TB style of progression. The more frequently you can lift without overtraining = the more progress you can make at a quicker pace. More progress in your bread and butter lifts = stronger overall = more progress in your secondary lifts.

Since you're not training to step onto a powerlifting platform, your bread and butter lifts might be reversed. There is no rule in the TB approach that says squats have to be the focus of your strength programming, or included in your strength programming at all. Remember, you're training to be equally fit in multiple domains. So your A session might consist of deadlifts/OHP and your B is the squat and bench press. When deciding, take into account the rest of your training. Are you already doing a lot of posterior chain and/or pulling work within your conditioning protocol or skills training? If you're using kettlebells twice or thrice a week, then you might want to leave deadlifts as a once-a-week affair. If you're madly in love with deadlifts, and most of your conditioning work is track or hill based, then by all means pull twice a week. Within each Operator I/A session you'll have flexibility with volume, so you'll be able to adjust depending on how you feel that day. You had a particularly gruelling hill run the day before, so you decide to stick to 2 sets instead of 5 at 80%. Session after that you feel great and healed up, so you hit a full 5 sets. Too easy. Remember, you should only be running this I/A version if you're an intermediate and you have a good idea of how to adjust volume based on your needs.

OPTION 2: GO SPARTAN

This option is the same as Operator Standard found in TB1. Strip away the unnecessary. You choose a smaller cluster –maybe only two or three exercises, and you hit them all three times a week. Like this:

Day 1: OHP/ FSQ/WP

Day 3: OHP/FSQ/WP

Day 5: OHP/FSQ/WP

WP= weighted pull-ups/ OHP = Overhead Press/ FSQ = Front Squat

The rewards to this type of approach are great. Your strength, muscle density and progression will be like nothing you've experienced on more conventional programs. After the first week or two, most trainees actually feel squatting three times a week is easier then squatting only once or twice. Yup, you're "greasing the groove" in a way. Remember, with Operator you're never training at your maximums, you're always backing off before failure or fatigue sets in. Stay fresh and lift frequently.

The rewards with this exercise setup are great, but there are sacrifices. If you're a variety junkie and you like to do lots of exercises and have a laundry list of assistance lifts – this isn't for you. Stick with more conventional programming. However, after you taste what this kind of minimalist lifting can do for you, assistance lifts may not be as important to you anymore.

One of the toughest, and hardest-to-kill tactical-types I know uses standard Operator like this. He uses a minimalist cluster of bench press and squat. After he finishes his benching and squatting, he does 50-100 kettlebell swings with either a 48kg beast, or 32kg bell twice a week. That's all he does for his strength, and he is an absolute beast. The kettlebell work takes care of his posterior chain. He gets plenty of 'assistance' exercises during his conditioning sessions. Just scroll through the training vault and you'll see tons of kettlebell work, pull-ups, push-ups, dips, deadlifts etc. So balance isn't neglected. He can deadlift over 450lbs at any given time, even though he almost never deadlifts. Focusing simply on just squats and bench 3 x a week have made him extremely strong all over. Sometimes he'll swing heavy (48kg), other times he'll go lighter (24-32kg). Here's his setup, for those of you that want to give this a shot:

Day 1: SQ/BP + 100 Kettlebell swings (32kg-48kg)

Day 3: SQ/BP +

Day 5: SQ/BP + 100 KB swings (32-48kg)

His approach is genius in its simplicity and effectiveness. What you see above, is one of the simplest and most effective ways to get brutally strong relatively quickly. No other assistance lifts, nothing. Again, keep in mind this is done alongside conditioning sessions almost identical to what's found in this book – so if you take this approach you'll be getting a lot of assistance work through your conditioning sessions, directly or indirectly.

So to recap, you can run Operator I/A using a minimalist or standard cluster same as the original Operator. Choose wisely. Always take into consideration what other training you're going to be doing outside of your strength sessions, and how that'll impact your lifts. Don't take this approach with more than 3 exercises in your cluster. Two compound lifts + one weighted bodyweight exercise are ideal. But if your lifestyle permits and you can handle it,

there’s nothing saying you can’t do three big lifts.

You’ll remember that midway during your 80-85% weeks you have the option to do as few as 1-2 sets per exercise. One reason is to allow you to self-regulate based on how the rest of your week’s going. Another reason is for those that take the spartan approach, doing all lifts 3 x week. If you have three exercises you need to complete at 80-85%, you might be better off only doing 2 or 3 sets instead of 5 on certain days. Let’s say you’re using a Bench/ Front Squat/ Weighted Pull-up cluster. You’ve had gruelling conditioning sessions all week, and the idea of doing 3-5 sets for all your lifts seems a little troubling. You’ll have the option to do only 1-2 sets for each. That way you’re still “greasing the groove”, while staying relatively fresh. In a single session, you’re still getting a couple sets of squats, a couple sets of weighted pull-ups, and a couple sets of bench. You are still progressing while adjusting to accommodate your weekly workload, if necessary. If you want to go 3+ sets, you certainly have that option available. Or you can do 2 sets on certain lifts, and 3 or more on others etc.

Whatever approach you take, **all the guidelines for strength training found in TB1 still apply**. I also urge you to start conservatively, and use a training max when calculating loads.

SAMPLE 17 WEEK PROGRAM

TACTICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PROTOCOL

For those of you that like a 'do-this' approach, below is a complete TB2 conditioning template. It starts with 8 weeks of Base Building, followed by 9 weeks of Black. This is the same template we use to get clients prepared for entry into tactical law enforcement. The Black portion is to be run beyond 9 weeks, indefinitely until selection benchmarks are met.

PHASE I – BASE BUILDING – 8 WEEKS

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
1	SE 3 x 20	SE 3 x 30	SE 3 x 40	SE 1 x 50
2	LSS Run x 30M	LSS Run x 40M	LSS Run x 50M	LSS Run x 60M
3	LSS Run x 30M	LSS Run x 40M	Triples x 50M	LSS Run x 60M
4	SE 2 x 20	SE 2 x 30	SE 2 x 40	SE 1 x 50
5	Rest	Rest	LSS Run x 30M	Recovery
6	LSS Run x 60M	LSS Run x 60M	RuckUp x 120M	LSS Run x 90M
7	Rest	Rest	Rest	Rest
DAY	**WEEK 5**	**WEEK 6**	**WEEK 7**	**WEEK 8**
1	SE 3 x 50	TB Fighter	TB Fighter	TB Fighter
2	LSS Run x 45M	600M Resets	600M Resets	600M Resets
3	LSS Run x 45M	Recovery	Recovery	Recovery
4	SE 2 x 50	TB Fighter	TB Fighter	TB Fighter
5	Recovery	BOO-2	Oxygen Debt101	BOO
6	LSS Run x 45M	LSS Run x 30M	LSS Run x 30M	LSS Run x 60M
7	Rest	Rest	Rest	Rest

SE CIRCUIT

Kettlebells swings or Barbell Push-press

Push-ups

Goblet Squats (Light kettlebell/dumbbells)

Dumbbell Rows or Kipping Pull-ups

Back Extensions

Crunches

MAX STRENGTH

We recommend TB Fighter template, but any quality two-day program will suffice. We frequently use a Front Squat/Bench Press/Weighted pull-ups cluster with our clients for this phase, but again, your choice.

ENDURANCE

We like to keep things simple and use the most effective tools. We recommend staying very basic and using LSS Runs for your E sessions. Running is easy to control, guaranteed effective, and requires no special equipment or circumstances. Can be done outdoors or in. Running also tends to force physiological adaptations more quickly than other modalities. When you move on to your continuation protocol, that's the time to play with new sessions or training styles. Again, this is just a recommendation - you may have different circumstances or needs, so feel free to substitute other E sessions.

HIC

600M Resets

BOO

BOO-2

Oxygen Debt 101

We tend to use basic/simple meat & potato sessions with our clients. These are track based HICs, which are a highly effective way to train the aerobic/anaerobic system.

EASY WEEK PRINCIPLE

The Easy Week Principle is not used during Block I and doesn't apply. Do all sessions as per normal.

PHASE II – CONTINUATION - BLACK PROTOCOL

DAY	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3 (Easy)
1	Strength	Strength	Strength
2	GC (Your Choice)	GC (Your Choice)	GC (Choice/easy)
3	Strength	Strength	Strength
4	SE Ladders	BOO 2	Rest
5	Strength	Strength	Strength
6	Heavy Bag Resets	LSS Run x 45	Disarmed (Easy)
7	Rest	Rest	Rest
DAY	**WEEK 4**	**WEEK 5**	**WEEK 6 (Easy)**
1	Strength	Strength	Strength
2	GC (Your Choice)	GC (Your Choice)	Rest
3	Strength	Strength	Strength
4	Oxygen Debt 101	Meat Eater	Rest
5	Strength	Strength	Strength
6	Standard Hills	LSS Run x 45	Standard Hills (Easy)
7	Rest	Rest	Rest
DAY	**WEEK 7**	**WEEK 8**	**WEEK 9 (Easy)**
1	Strength	Strength	Strength
2	GC (Your Choice)	GC (Your Choice)	Buffalo Laps (easy)
3	Strength	Strength	Strength
4	BOO	LSS Run x 30	Rest
5	Strength	Strength	Strength
6	Standard Hills	Apex Hills	Grip Laps (easy)
7	Rest	Rest	Rest

TBII CONDITIONING – SUPPLEMENTS

Supplements aren't necessary, but they can be helpful and give you a bit of an edge. These are a few I've found that support an increased conditioning load.

PROTEIN POWDER: I strongly recommend you get 1 to 2gms of protein per lb of bodyweight when conditioning +strength training. It'll help maintain lean muscle mass and account for increased activity. Protein powders are an easy way to make up the daily difference you can't get from food. Get one in after activity and before bed. They don't have to be elaborate. Protein+water, Protein+bananas/milk, etc are fine.

BEETS or TMG: Beets have made a noticeable difference in my cardiovascular performance. There are studies indicating the same. I have noticed differences in energy while working/running, and increases in how long I can go for. I notice it takes longer for fatigue to set in. What I do is buy canned sliced beets. Then I blend them in water and drink a couple glasses a day. Fairly noticeable difference. I don't have the time or inclination to prepare fresh beets, but if you do then go for it. Otherwise canned beets will suffice. If you're lazier than me, then supplemental TMG (betaine) will work. But quality will vary depending on manufacturer, and it's more costly. Definitely not mandatory by any means, this recommendation is more for trainees that enjoy/utilize supplements and are looking for a bit of an edge.

MAGNESIUM/POTASSIUM/ELECTROLYTE SUPPLEMENT: Another supplement that's made a difference for me when it comes to endurance work. When you're training for lengthy periods of time potassium, magnesium and sodium get depleted fairly quickly in sweat. Any pre-workouts or caffeine/diuretic based products you use might speed the process. Magnesium is involved in ATP production. ATP is the fuel your body uses for energy production. So a deficiency will impact your performance. Highly recommended. Search runner/ultramarathon forums for effective brands/approaches.

BE AWARE OF YOUR IRON STATUS: This won't be a problem for most of us, but can be a deficiency in some. Iron is lost through perspiration, footstrike, bleeding, and overzealous zinc supplementation. If you feel unnaturally tired all the time, lethargic, pale, and aerobic work is feeling more difficult than you think it should, get your levels checked. A lot of these symptoms apply to a lot of different deficiencies – so test first. Supplemental iron is potentially dangerous.

CAFFEINE: This one isn't necessary by any means, I personally like the mental stimulation prior to a training session. Don't overdo it. A cup of coffee or 50-100mg 20 minutes before training should do the trick. Be aware of caffeine's diuretic effects on potassium and electrolytes. Caffeine may also have some small beneficial effect on fat loss.

UNCONVENTIONAL APPROACHES

The effectiveness of the TB2 conditioning system comes from its approach, principles and overall framework, not from any individual training session in the Vault. Here are some unconventional approaches from various clients to get you thinking.

A military client does a very unique version of Block 1 before switching to Black.

LSS Run 5 x week

Heavy Kettlebell swings 10 x 10 / 5 x week (32kg-48kg)

Pull-ups 5 x week

He runs in the mornings, does his pull-ups and kettlebell swings in the evenings. Now if you look closely, you'll see he adheres to all the principles of Block 1. He's getting his aerobic work in very effectively, along with an element of strength/strength-endurance. Simple. Effective.

Another simple approach by one of our first clients, with Black Protocol:

Apex Hills 2 x week

Jog/Bike/Swim 1 x week – 60 minutes

Strength training 2-3 x week

This guy is a physical specimen. He's worked up to Apex with the 48kg 'Beast' kettlebell, and is currently working toward double 48kg bells with Apex. Simple approach. Brutally effective. He's fitter than most I know that run complicated training with a hundred different toys and exercises.

Another unique approach by a LEO client:

Base Building x 8 weeks

Black x 9 weeks

Green x 9 weeks

Rest x 1-3 weeks

Repeat

Yup. He just cycles through each protocol year round. A machine.

CONCLUSION

Now if you are going to win any battle you have to do one thing. You have to make the mind run the body. Never let the body tell the mind what to do. The body will always give up. It is always tired morning, noon, and night. But the body is never tired if the mind is not tired. When you were younger the mind could make you dance all night, and the body was never tired... You've always got to make the mind take over and keep going.

Patton

Let's draw all the pieces together for one final summary. This program is pretty simple. Far from easy, but relatively simple. Stick to the basics:

1. Build a general aerobic/strength base.

2. Transition to a continuation protocol.

3. Black = 2-3 HIC sessions per week. 1 E session every other week. Every 3rd week is easy.

4. Green =2-3 E sessions per week. Every 3 to 6 weeks take it easy and skip a couple sessions.

5. Occasionally return to Base Building as required.

The devil is in the details, but the overall concept is simple.

The thing that separates successful trainees from the rest is easy - it's not special gear, supplements, or the latest workout techniques or routines. It's consistency. I see it every single time without fail. No matter what shape a client starts out in, the consistent ones turn into machines.

Consistency, consistency, consistency. Physically put yourself at your training session. Have a terrible session, have an easy session, walk it or go full bore cyborg-commando-on-meth, it doesn't matter. Miss a session or have a lazy week? It's alright, get back on track. Just show up and do it – and you will get results guaranteed.

Go look in the mirror. Get a look at what your body looks like right now. Now, shut your mind up for a year. A year will go by regardless of what you do. Follow this conditioning protocol consistently for a year. Avoid shopping for new techniques, programs, exercises, and diets for the year. These are all distractions that lead to indecision, paralysis by analysis, and procrastination. Go ahead and see what happens when you commit to something for a year. After the year's up, and if you still want to – go ahead and return to your previous habits. I have a hunch that won't be happening.

FAQS

I'm training for a marathon, triathlon, etc. should I use this program?

No. Training for a competitive result in a marathon requires specialized training. You will need a program designed specifically for marathon/triathlon racing etc. This program, Green protocol in particular, will give you a solid base of endurance which will make the transition *much* easier. Now, after training with TB2 for a period of time at the standard level, you should be able to pick up and run a half-marathon at any given time. However you'll still need a short period of specificity to tighten up your times and results if you want to be competitive.

I'm training for Tough Mudder, Spartan Race etc. should I use this program?

Running TB2 at the standard level should be more than enough for these types of races. Find out what your specific race entails and tweak/choose the TB2 sessions accordingly.

I want to be a Navy SEAL, CAG, JTF2 etc. should I use this program to prepare?

You can use this program to build up a high base level of fitness. Then transition to a program specific to the unit you're trying out for. Many units focus on different physical attributes. With SEALs there's an enormous swimming component, SAS do a lot of ruck marching and endurance work, etc. So a smart approach would be to introduce specificity in your training.

Here's the thing. Military Special Operations isn't just about fitness. If that were the case they would simply choose the fittest soldiers with the best run times and highest pull-up numbers from various feeder units and get on with it. There would be no need for a selection process. There is a huge mental component, and no program or person on earth will give that to you. You have to develop that yourself, and really want it.

I want to train for a tactical police unit, like ERT, SWAT etc. Can I use TB2?

In most cases this program will get you there using the standard version. All units are different, so first make sure you do a little research on the particular unit you're applying for, and learn what the specific requirements are. Tweak your training as required.

Do I have to use the Tactical Barbell strength training program for TB2 to work?

Absolutely not. Any quality *strength* training program will work. However, some specialized programs won't be a good fit – things like Smolov, Tactical Barbell Mass template, or high volume aesthetic bodybuilding programs.

Do I have to run/sprint etc., or can I do the whole program using the alternatives to running?

You can, but it'll take you much longer to reach a high level of fitness. Running is one of the most effective and quickest ways to force the physiological adaptations necessary for improved cardiovascular performance and conditioning. If you can't run because of injury,

then you don't have a choice. You will get far fitter than you are now using the alternatives, and you have the potential to take your abilities to a superior level. It just might take you longer, and you'll have to work a tad harder.

Do I have to do as many different training sessions from the Vault as I can to get the best results?

Absolutely not. Choose a handful of sessions you like and keep hammering away at them. Change them up when you feel like, or don't change them up at all. Here's a quote that hits home, that I've been waiting to use forever. From **Miyamoto Musashi:**

"Teaching people a large number of sword techniques is turning the way into a business of selling goods, making beginners believe that there is something profound in their training by impressing them with a variety of techniques. This attitude toward strategy must be avoided, because thinking that there is a variety of ways of cutting a man down is evidence of a disturbed mind. In the world, different ways of cutting a man down do not exist."

I believe the above easily applies to the state of physical training today. I would be just as happy to issue 5 sessions instead of 50. I have personally used only a handful for over a decade. I include so many training sessions because most people these days get bored very easily. If they are not having fun, they stop training. So if variety keeps them training, then why not? Then this program has achieved its goal. Eventually, when they reach a certain level of competence they start to realize themselves that simplicity is more desirable than having 100 circus tricks to perform. Another important reason I include so many sessions is to cater to the equipment and facilities available to TB users. Not all readers will have access to the same equipment, so I make sure they have alternatives to choose from. A large portion of TB trainees get deployed to places where gym equipment is substandard or non-existent. None of this applies to the variety found in individual GC sessions, that's a different sort of variety. Variety is included in GC by design, so the trainee can draw upon and use various energy systems during the same work session. But there is a time and place for GC. You can't use just GC all the time and call it your conditioning program – your program would be incomplete.

What about diet and food?

In my opinion, if you're following any sort of carb restricted diet or eating too little, your performance is going to suffer period. You are quickly going to get burned out, lose strength and muscle. You won't be able to complete training sessions. If you are one of the few that does well on low carb, and you're still as strong and unfatigued as ever, then congratulations. In my experience, almost no one I've met does well with a combination of intense conditioning + heavy strength training + restricted fad diet over the long term. But I don't give diet advice, so take it or leave it. If something's working for you – don't change it regardless of what I or anyone else tells you.

But what about fasting?

I haven't dealt with a large enough group of people that fast and train to come to any conclusions. Personally, I think occasional fasting (1-4 days a month) is excellent. My experiment with *daily* intermittent fasting didn't work for me. Mostly because of scheduling

reasons. I had to get a lot of food down range in that 8 hour window. I basically had to sit there for 8 hours after shift and make it my full time job to eat until bedtime. I'd also get frequently called-out to work which would then interrupt my feeding window. Which would then throw off my fast for the next day. Overall, it was more of a hassle than a convenience. Again, I'm starting to suspect it as more of a fad style of eating, and I'm back to simply eating intelligently. Quality meats, quality carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables in small portions several times a day. No crazy restrictions. I feel and perform my best when eating this way. However, I can't really come to any definite conclusions on intermittent fasting, because I was unable to really adhere to it properly for a long enough period of time due to variable work schedule. I personally keep my fasting to once or twice a month now.

After adding in LSS running and base building I feel great. My performance has improved dramatically in many areas, and I have that 'clear energetic' feeling in my lungs and body when I train now. I feel light on my feet sprinting up that hill now! Should I do even ***more*** *long steady state running? If a little bit is good, then more is better right?*

No. Unless you're an endurance athlete or following Green protocol. There is a point of diminishing returns. If you **overdo** the long steady state running, other attributes (strength, hormonal balance, muscle tissue) will suffer. All the scary things you initially attributed to long duration aerobic work may come to pass. Use the correct dose. Not too much, not too little. You can always periodically return to Block 1 and run a Base Building cycle, but don't overdo it.

Send me any questions you may have at www.tacticalbarbell.com

REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READING

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Periodization Training for Sports 2nd Edition
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Joel Jamieson

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