

## 5.1 Introduction to Fitness

Key Question: Why is fitness important and how can cadets develop a lifelong habit of regular activity?

This activity introduces cadets to the Cadet Program's physical fitness element. It begins with a brief discussion about why cadets need to be physically fit. However, the activity's main focus is the five aspects of the Active Cadet Fitness Program.

### Suggested Instructors

A cadet officer or NCO should lead this activity

### Duration

30 min

### Objectives

1. Defend the need for physical fitness being in the CAP Cadet Program
2. Describe the five facets of the Active Cadet Fitness Program
3. Identify the CPFT standards required to qualify for promotion to Cadet Staff Sergeant

### Special Equipment

New Cadet Guide Super Chart HFZ Standards

## LESSON OUTLINE

### Warm up

5 min

Start this class with a quick activity from CAPP 60-50, Cadet Physical Fitness Manual, 2-5. Bean Bag Hockey and Rock, Paper, Scissors with Legs are recommended, but any quick physical activity can be used.

### Discussion Questions

5 min

1. Why is fitness part of the Cadet Program?

### *Anticipated Response*

CAP aim to develop the whole person. We want to develop your intellectual firepower, your character and sense of personal honor, and we want to encourage you to be physically fit. Being physically active is one of the most important steps that Americans of all ages can take to improve their health.

2. What types of fitness-related activities can you do in CAP?

### *Anticipated Response*

Hiking, orienteering, geocaching, team sports, calisthenics, obstacle courses, rappelling, etc. Activities are a huge part of the Active Cadet Fitness Program.

3. What expectations do you think CAP has in terms of physical fitness?

*Anticipated Response*

The main expectation is simple: CAP wants cadets to be healthy. And to that end we want you to develop the habit of exercising regularly. If you participate in gym class a few times a week, that counts. If you're in sports, that counts. If you do calisthenics at home or ride bikes with a friend, that counts.

TRANSITION

Physical fitness is one of the four main program elements of the Cadet Program along with leadership, aerospace and character. The Active Cadet Fitness Program has five facets to support cadet health: Activities, academics, attitudes, assessment and awards. We've just been discussing some activities you'll be participating in. Activities are the heart of the cadet fitness program. You'll experience a range of fun, structured activities at squadron meetings and weekend events.

Discussion Questions

15 min

1. What about that next facet, academics? What might that mean in a fitness context?

*Anticipated Response*

To get the most benefit from the program it's important that cadets understand the concepts of fitness, training, nutrition and more. You'll learn about these ideas in both classroom and hands-on lessons, and then put them into action in their daily lives.

2. What about "attitudes"? What might that mean here? Raise your hand if you consider yourself an athlete, you love a physical challenge. Now raise your hand if you'd rather do anything else before you play volleyball. Anyone want to share about their attitude towards fitness?

*Anticipated Response*

So I see some of you already have a positive attitude, and some may need some encouragement. That's ok, that's where the attitudes facet comes in. No one wants to do something that makes them feel miserable. Developing a positive relationship with fitness is what this facet is all about. Our squadron is a supportive environment no matter where you are on your fitness journey. We'll help you identify activities that you find enjoyable.

3. To plan where you're going, you have to know where you are. CAP will host quarterly fitness tests to help you identify your current fitness levels for personal goal setting and progress evaluation. The fitness assessment is aligned with the Presidential Youth Fitness Program, so you may be familiar with it from school. Has anyone here done the PACER test/beep test before? What was that like?

*Anticipated Response*

Yeah, the PACER is tough! It's a test where you run at an increasingly fast pace until you're too tired to keep it up, by definition that's uncomfortable! That's why we try not to do it too often. But it's a great feeling when you see your score going up. Other tests on our Cadet Physical Fitness Test, CPFT, include the mile run, curl-ups, push-ups, and the sit & reach.

We'll do the fitness test at our next meeting, but don't worry, we'll practice a bit beforehand. For this first assessment, we just want to get a picture of where we all are. We'll use that information to set some goals. There's no pass or fail for the CPFT at this point. To earn the Wright Brothers Milestone Award and become a Cadet Staff Sergeant you'll need to score in the Healthy Fitness Zone. Go ahead and pull out your New Cadet Guides and turn to the Super Chart. You can see the fitness standards there. If that looks easy, great, we'll find some more challenging goals for you! If those look hard, that's ok, we'll help you make a plan to reach them.

4. So what happens if a cadet does poorly in fitness? Maybe fails to achieve a goal or doesn't meet the HFZ suddenly after passing easily before?

#### *Anticipated response*

We're all human and the most important thing is that you keep showing up and learning. CAP believes physical activity is a positive thing and not a punishment, so you won't have to "drop and give me 20." Cadets need to have a CPFT in the Healthy Fitness Zone from the past six months to promote starting with the Wright Brothers Award. By testing quarterly, this gives you a chance to improve your fitness before it holds you back from promotion. If you don't have a current HFZ credential you will be held in grade until it improves. We'll assign you a fitness mentor to help get you on track.

4. And there was one more facet of the Active Cadet Fitness Program, awards! Yeah, we like to celebrate your efforts. *Discuss local awards and recognitions, squadron hall of fame, personal best boards, Presidential Youth Fitness Award, Presidential Active Lifestyle Awards, etc...* This is also a good place to discuss group or wing fitness competitions.

#### Conclusion

1 min

Now that you know what is expected of you, you can start developing that habit of exercising regularly if you don't already. There's a Run/Walk training plan in your New Cadet Guide that you might find helpful. In the next class we'll learn about the CPFT exercises and get some practice taking those tests. Then we'll do a fun fitness activity.