

The Marine Workout

by Men's Health

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The Ultimate Strength-and-Conditioning Plan to Blast Fat and Pack on Muscle

Train Like a Marine

The U.S. Marine Corps keeps its [combat-conditioning program](#) engaging by frequently mixing in cool new workouts and physical challenges. The routines aren't designed to wage war on a man's body, but that's exactly what they'd do if you jumped into the program headfirst. So we created a plan to gradually prepare you [physically](#) and mentally for the demands of its [military training](#).



During the first week, you'll master the cornerstone combat-conditioning exercises. Next, you'll improve your overall fitness by pairing power moves with sprints. For the third week, you'll take on an intense athletic drill to train your total body for strength and speed. Finally, you'll be fully prepared for a real U.S. Marine Corps fitness challenge, and you'll have the muscle to prove it.

1. Sandbag Squat

Grab a heavy dumbbell (marines use sandbags) and stand holding it vertically, by one end, against your chest. With your elbows pointing down, bend at the hips and knees to lower your body until your thighs are at least parallel to the floor. Return to the start.

Slide your elbows past your knees.



2. Sandbag Deadlift

Stand holding a heavy dumbbell (or sandbag) with both hands under the top of the weight and your arms hanging down in front of you. Keep your chest up and shoulders back. Next, lower your body until the weight touches the floor. Now stand up again.

Be sure to touch the weight to the floor in every rep.



3. Dumbbell Clean and Press

From the starting position (A), dip your hips and explode upward, pulling the weights up. As the weights come close to your chest, dip under and "catch" them on top of your shoulders. Stand, press the weights overhead, and then reverse the move.

Push the weight up forcefully, rising onto your toes.



4. Dumbbell Swing

Stand holding a dumbbell with both hands. Push your hips back and lower the weight between your legs until it's under your butt. Drive back up to a standing position and swing the weight up, keeping your arms straight. Return to the starting position.

Raise the weight until your arms are parallel to the floor.



5. Pullup

Grab a chinup bar with an overhand grip (palms forward) and your hands slightly more than shoulder-width apart. Hang with your arms straight and pull your shoulder blades down. Pull yourself up, and then lower back to the starting position.

Try to pull yourself up so the top of your chest is even with the bar.



6. Front Squat to Push Press

Stand holding a barbell across the front of your shoulders and bring your elbows forward. Push your hips back and then bend your knees to lower your body. Now quickly stand back up while pushing the bar above your head until your arms are fully extended. Lower the weight. That's 1 rep.

Keep your upper arms parallel to the floor as you squat.



7. Pushup

Assume the classic pushup position (legs straight, hands beneath your shoulders). Keeping your body rigid, bend your arms to lower yourself until your chest is just off the floor. Push back up until your arms are extended.

Keep your back flat and your chin down.



8. Side Bridge

Lie on your side with your forearm on the floor under your shoulder and your feet stacked. Contract your glutes and abs. Push your hips off the floor, creating a straight line from ankle to shoulder and keeping your head in line with your spine. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds and repeat on the other side.

Place your elbow directly beneath your shoulder.



Directions

Complete three workouts a week, resting at least a day between sessions. Start your routine with core moves. Marines use planks, side bridges (shown), hanging leg raises,

and Supermans, among other exercises. For a complete core routine, go to MensHealth.com/marines.

Week 1

Perform each exercise in the Marine Corps arsenal in the order shown. Do 1 set of 8 to 10 repetitions for each move except the side bridge. (Hold the side bridge for 20 to 30 seconds on each side.) Rest up to 60 seconds between exercises.

Week 2

Using the Week 1 exercises, you'll perform a strength move followed immediately by a sprint. This is called a double.

For each set of sprints, run as fast as you can for 8 to 15 seconds. Then walk back to the starting line and begin your next set of exercises.

Day 1: Do 2 doubles of pushups and sprints. Rest 60 seconds; do 2 doubles of squats and sprints. Perform 12 reps of each exercise.

Day 2: Perform 2 doubles of pullups and sprints. Rest 60 seconds; do 2 doubles of swings and sprints. Aim for 8 pullups and 20 swings.

Day 3: Do 2 doubles of pushups and sprints. Rest 60 seconds; do 2 doubles of squats and sprints. Perform 12 pushups and 20 squats.

Week 3

A triple is an upper-body exercise followed immediately by a lower-body exercise and then chased with a sprint.

For sprints, charge hard for 8 to 15 seconds and then return to the start. Do a total of 6 triples in each workout, resting 60 seconds between triples.

Day 1: Perform 20 squats followed by 12 pushups, and then sprint.

Day 2: Do 25 dumbbell swings followed by 12 clean and presses, and a sprint.

Day 3: Perform 25 reps of the front squat to push press, and a sprint. Then drop down for 20 pushups.

Week 4

Here are two of the Marine fitness challenges. Rest at least a day between them. Begin each session with the side bridge and plank (pushup position, but on your elbows). Hold

each move for 1 minute, rest for 30 seconds, and repeat. Then, at the end of the week or the beginning of the next week, take the fitness test in "Semper Fit," in this issue.

MARINE CHALLENGE 1

Go for a quarter-mile run. This will be your sprint distance for your doubles. For your first double, do 15 reps of the clean and press, and then run. Next, do another double of 20 deadlifts followed by a run. Finish with a double of 25 squats, and then run. Try it again in a month, with the goal of beating your total time by at least 1 minute.

MARINE CHALLENGE 2

Perform 20 dumbbell swings immediately followed by 20 pushups. That's a superset. Do as many supersets as you can in 20 minutes. Repeat the challenge after 4 weeks, and try to complete an additional superset.

BY THE NUMBERS

661: World record in pounds bench-pressed in the 220-pound weight class, tied by Gunnery Sergeant Michael Green

50: Number of miles officers had to march for the first required Marine Corps physical-fitness test, in 1908

3: Number of days they had to finish the march

6,142: Average calories burned during the 54-hour "crucible" conducted at the end of Marine Corps basic training

24: Weight in pounds of a fully loaded M249 machine gun carried by U.S. troops

91: Greatest number of pullups ever performed in succession by a marine recruit