

THE ARMY PHYSICAL TRAINING CONTINUUM

Every Soldier Physically Tough

“Soldiers face great physical demands in all theatres of operations—even without the additional demands of close combat. Preparation for these demands requires a systematic approach to conditioning that continues to develop both physical strength and endurance. This cannot be achieved through organised physical training alone. Physical toughness requires that individuals commit themselves to continuous physical conditioning.”

I’m an Australian Soldier

Physical fitness is an essential requirement for military service. The ability of a person to conduct the tasks for which they have been trained under arduous conditions will be more readily achieved by a person who is physically fit. We know that physical fitness is closely related to mental fitness and, as such, if you are physically well prepared for your enlistment or appointment, this will greatly assist during your recruit and initial employment training.

What are the physical expectations on your journey to become a soldier or officer?

Army capability is dependent on maintaining every soldier and officer, regardless of gender, at the appropriate level of fitness to perform the tasks expected of them in accordance with the employment category or trade they are employed in.

How do you achieve the standard?

You are not expected to be at the Army Physical Employment Standard for your particular employment category from day one. Army has a well-structured conditioning program that will assist you to reach the required physical fitness standards before you commence in your employment category.

What are the physical assessments and standards?

The physical assessments and standards outlined below are provided to give you an insight into the physical requirements of service in the Army. You can rest assured knowing that the Army will provide you with all the assistance and training required to meet these standards throughout your training. To do this Army will need you to meet and ideally be able to exceed the PFA standards (outlined below) to provide a baseline level of fitness for the Army to help you build upon throughout training.

- **Pre-Enlistment/Appointment Fitness Assessment (PFA).** This is the first and lowest level of physical assessment. You are required to pass the PFA at Defence Force Recruiting (DFR) before you enter the Army, and again during the initial stages of your training at the Army Recruit Training Centre (ARTC) or Royal Military College (RMC)/Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA). The standards are gender specific and are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: PFA Standards

	Push-Ups	Sit-Ups (feet held)	Beep Test
Male	15	45	7.5
Female	8	45	7.5
Special Forces Direct Recruiting Scheme (M&F)	30	60	10.1

- **Basic Fitness Assessment (BFA).** This is the second level of physical assessment and is conducted within Units on a six-monthly basis to ensure you maintain an adequate level of fitness and relates to maintaining Army Individual Readiness compliance. The standards are gender and age specific and are listed in Table 2 (male) and Table 3 (female).

Table 2: BFA Standards – Male

Age Group	17-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60
Push-Ups	40	35	30	25	20	10	6	5
Sit-Ups	70	65	60	50	35	25	20	15
2.4 km Run (min:sec)	11:18	11:48	12:18	12:42	13:12	13:48	14:30	15:30
5km Walk (min:sec)					44:00	45:00	45:00	50:00

Table 3: BFA Standards – Female

Age Group	17-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	56-60
Push-Ups	21	18	15	10	7	3	3	3
Sit-Ups	70	65	60	50	35	25	20	15
2.4 km Run (min:sec)	13:30	14:00	14:30	15:00	15:30	16:00	16:30	17:00
5km Walk (min:sec)					45:00	47:00	47:00	52:00

- **All Corps Soldier Physical Employment Standards Assessment (ACS PESA).** This is the third level of physical assessment all trainees are required to achieve, regardless of employment category, during Recruit Training at ARTC. This assessment is gender neutral and is conducted approximately eight weeks into training. ACS PESA is also the baseline standard for all employment categories (less those required to conduct the general Combat Arms or Infantry PESA) and is conducted periodically. Officers complete the ACS PESA prior to graduation from RMC. The ACS PESA requirements are detailed in Table 4.
- **Combat Arms (CA) PESA.** This is the fourth level of physical assessment and is expected to be achieved by most combat arms employment categories during the Initial Employment Training course. The standard is gender neutral and applies to Armour Corps, Artillery Corps (see Note) and Engineer Corps, although it should be noted that some employment categories within these corps have more difficult standards. Officers complete the CA PESA before graduation from RMC if they are allocated to an Arms corps. The CA PESA requirements are detailed in Table 4.
- **Infantry PESA.** This is the most demanding physical assessment and is expected of Infantry Corps (including those undertaking the Special Forces Direct Recruiting Scheme) during the Initial Employment Training course. The standard is gender neutral. Officers complete this during the Regimental Officers Basic Course following graduation from RMC. The Infantry PESA requirements are detailed in Table 4.
- **Note:**
 - PESA requirements for each employment category are subject to change based on Service requirements.
 - RAA Officers posted to 20 STA are required to achieve ACS PESA.

Table 5 shows the Physical assessment Timeline for all Trainees applying to become Officers or Soldiers.

Table 4: PESA

Overview	Level 1 (All Corps)	Level 2 (Combat Arms)	Level 3	Level 4
March with load at a rate of 5.5km/h (11min per km)	5km – 23kg load	10km – 35–40kg load Time: 100–110 minutes	15 km – 40–45 kg load Time: 150–165 minutes	
	Time: 50–55 minutes			
Complete 6m bounds (every 20 secs) to a cadence track. Start from prone firing position at start of each bound. Pers have 5 seconds to reach 6 m mark. Adopt a knee prior to re-adopting prone position.	12 x 6 m bounds	16 x 6 m bounds	1 km move in 8 minutes – 16 x 6 m bounds	
		+ 18m leopard crawl	+ 18 m LC	
Carry 2 x 22 kg jerry cans in 25 m legs to a cadence track. Soldiers put down jerries at completion of 25 m leg, turn around and lift carry in opposite direction (in accordance with cadence).	6 x 25 m legs	11 x 25 m legs		
Lift a weighted box from the ground to a 1.5 m high platform (UNIMOG tray) using a prescribed lifting technique.	25 kg	30 kg	35 kg	40 kg

Learn more about the exercises in the table above [here](#)

What happens if I do not meet the physical standard?

If you are unable to pass the PFA at DFR you will not be recruited into the Army. For female candidates, you may be eligible for the Army Pre-Conditioning Program (APCP). Please speak to your Recruiter.

If you arrive at ARTC and are unable to pass the PFA within the first week, including a retest, you will be removed from your allocated recruit course to undertake a four week physical conditioning program. Following this conditioning period, if you pass the PFA you will return to recruit training however you need to be aware that due to the delay resulting from your inability to pass the PFA, you may no longer be eligible to continue in the employment category you were offered, as you

may miss the next course start date. In this case you will be given alternate options for transfer to another employment category, dependant upon what vacancies Army has in the training pipeline. If you do not pass the PFA after the conditioning period you will be discharged from Army.

If you are unable to pass the ACS PESA at ARTC, you will be withdrawn from training to undertake further physical conditioning for up to 28 days. If you are unable to pass after the 28 day period you may be discharged from Army.

For trainees who are unable to pass the CA or Infantry PESA, the same process as the ACS PESA applies in that you will be given a 28 day period of further physical conditioning. You may be offered an alternate employment category option for employment in a non-combat Corps if training vacancies exist.

Summary

Once you have passed the PFA as part of the entry conditions, Army will prepare you to achieve these more demanding physical standards. This information has been provided to ensure you are aware of the physical employment standards that will be required of you.

Table 5: Physical Assessment Timeline

