

RAMC Exercise Challenge

As we continue to deal with the challenges that COVID-19 has put in front of us, you may have been finding it challenging to get back into the swing of things in regards to exercise. This four week challenge is designed to help you get back into a regular exercise routine by performing exercises that will target the upper body, lower body, and core. Cardiovascular exercises, such as walking, running, bicycling, and swimming, to name a few, can also be performed in addition to strength training exercises. Each week there will be new exercises and/or progressions to exercises from the week before.

The ACSM recommends 150 minutes or more of moderate paced cardiovascular activity each week. Strength training is also recommended to be performed at least two times per week. If you're not sure what moderate paced cardio feels like, you can perform the talk test as you exercise. If you can recite the pledge of allegiance, but not sing a song, you are working at a moderate tempo. If you are still able to sing a song, you are working at too low of an intensity threshold. Another great tool if you have it is an activity tracker like a smart watch. If you have fitbit, garmin, apple watch, or other device, you can give yourself a target heart rate to stay at during your exercise.

The American Heart Association recommends a heart rate zone of 50 – 70% of your maximum heart rate to achieve a moderate intensity. To determine your estimated max heart rate and subsequent zone to perform moderate paced activity, use the following equation:

$$\text{Estimated Max Heart Rate: } 220 - \text{age} \times 50 - 70\%$$

$$\text{Example: } 220 - 45 = 175 \text{ BPM; } 175 \times 50 - 70\% = 87 - 122 \text{ BPM}$$

Once you have your zone determined, exercise at a pace that is challenging but not impossible to maintain when performing steady state cardio, such as walking or running. As you continue to perform cardio regularly, it will get easier. You can then adjust your zone accordingly to increase the challenge!

Please use the provided tracking log to record the number of sets and reps you perform for each exercise. If applicable, also record the weight you used for certain exercises (ex. 15lb. weights for bicep curls). Try to progress each week. If you perform 2 sets of 12 reps in week one, try to perform 3 sets of 12 reps in week two, or 2 sets of 15 reps. You may surprise yourself with what you can achieve!

Also included is a 4 week calendar with suggested methods of exercise and scheduled rest days for each day of the month. NOTE: If you choose to use a second rest day during the week instead of a high intensity cardiovascular exercise workout, you should add an additional 10 minutes of exercise to the moderate intensity cardiovascular workouts to achieve 150 minutes for the week. If you've been sedentary for a prolonged period of time, work towards building yourself up to 150 minutes per week of cardiovascular activity plus strength training twice per week throughout the course of the four weeks.

Some examples of moderate intensity and high intensity activities can be found in the attached form titled "General Physical Activities Defined by Level of Intensity." The examples provided follow CDC and ACSM guidelines.

Exercise Demos



Bodyweight Squat: Set up with feet shoulder width apart, toes slightly open. Cross your arms, placing your hands on the opposite shoulder. Standing tall, initiate the movement by hinging your hips as if you were going to sit down in a chair. Lower your body until the tops of your thighs are parallel with the floor, and return to the starting position. Weight should stay through the heels and mid foot, and knees should not pass in front of the toes.

Modifications: Use a chair to help with achieving the correct depth. Squat until your butt touches the chair and return to the starting position.



Goblet Squat: Set up with feet shoulder width apart, toes slightly open. Hold one head of the dumbbell in your hands, near the collarbone. Standing tall, initiate the movement by hinging your hips as if you were going to sit down in a chair. Lower your body until the tops of your thighs are parallel with the floor, and return to the starting position. Weight should stay through the heels and mid foot, and knees should not pass in front of the toes.



Alternating Lunge: Start with feet parallel, standing tall. Step forward with one leg, far enough to keep your knee over your mid foot while keeping your heel on the ground. Push yourself back to the starting position.

Modifications: If you struggle to maintain balance, hold on to the back of a chair or countertop. If you would like to increase the difficulty, hold onto weights in each hand.



Glute Bridge: Lying on your back, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Push your hips towards the ceiling and drive your heels into the floor, making a straight line from shoulders to knees. Return to starting position.



Single Leg Glute Bridge: Lying on your back, bring one knee towards your chest, keeping the other foot on the ground. Push your hips towards the ceiling and drive your foot into the floor, making a straight line from shoulders to knee. Return to start position.



Alternating Step Up: Start with one leg on the step, standing tall with hands to the side. Push your foot into the step as if you are trying to drive through it, and raise your opposite knee. Make sure your foot is on the step entirely. If you cannot maintain your balance, you can place the opposite foot down on the step instead of driving the knee up.



Chest Press: Lying on the ground, place your feet flat on the floor. With dumbbells in each hand, stack your wrists directly over the top of your elbows. Your elbows should be slightly lower than your shoulders. Press the dumbbells towards the ceiling, extending the elbows fully. Lower back to the starting position.



Bent Over Row: Stand tall in good posture, feet about hip width apart or narrower. Keeping the back flat, hinge at the hips and bend your knees to lower into the rowing position. Let the arms hang freely. To initiate the movement, drive your elbows back and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Return to the starting position.



Biceps Curl: Stand tall with good posture. Hold the dumbbells at your side in a briefcase carry grip. As you curl the dumbbells to your shoulders, rotate your wrists so that your palms face your shoulders. Be sure to finish at the shoulders and not below, and try not to brace your elbows into your sides.



Overhead Triceps Extension: You can perform this exercise seated or standing. For the seated variation, sit with tall posture, keeping the back flat. Hold a dumbbell in both hands behind the head, and extend the dumbbell towards the ceiling. Squeeze your core muscles to prevent the low back from arching. Lower the dumbbell back to the starting position.



Push Ups: Starting in a high plank position, squeeze your core muscles and fully extend your legs, creating tension in the quadriceps. Lower yourself to the floor, maintaining a flat back and tight core. Press yourself back to the starting position.

Modification: If you cannot perform a quality, full repetition, modify the exercise by placing your knees on the floor. Still maintain an active core, lowering yourself to the floor while keeping your back flat. Press yourself back to the starting position.





Plank: On the floor, place your forearms on the floor with your knees down. To start the plank, extend your knees, keep your back flat and core tight. Be sure to maintain controlled breathing during this exercise.



Reverse Crunches: Lay on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Squeeze your core and bring your knees to your chest, lifting the hips off the floor. Keeping your knees bent, lower your feet back to the floor in a controlled tempo.



Bird Dog: Start on the floor on your hands and knees, maintaining a neutral spine. Extend the opposite arm and opposite leg and hold the extended position for 2 – 3 seconds. Focus on keeping your core tight and maintaining a neutral spine. Return to the starting position, and perform the movement on the opposite side.