

OPS Fit

OUTCAN Personnel Staying Fit

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Welcome to OPS Fit (OUTCAN Personnel Staying Fit), the quarterly OUTCAN Physical Fitness Program newsletter. This newsletter contains information related to healthy living and physical fitness training for OUTCAN personnel and their families.

If you have any questions, input, or material you would like included in this section please contact Todd Cirka, VCDS OUTCAN Physical Fitness Coordinator at **Todd.Cirka@forces.gc.ca** or at **613 852 7059**.

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OUTCAN Member Profile **Captain Michael Zelenski,** **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**



In the June issue of the OPS Fit newsletter we focused on cycling safety regarding road cycling. In this issue, we thought we would introduce another genre of cycling, mountain biking (MTB), and the benefits it can offer to your overall fitness regime.

Captain Zelenski (aka ZMan) and his wife moved to Oklahoma City in September of 2016 for an exchange posting at the US Air Force's Advanced

Instrument School (AIS) as a pilot instructor. Shortly after settling in, one of ZMan's pilot colleagues, LCol Adam Jung, invited him to join for a short ride on a local mountain bike trail. It only took that one ride on the tight and demanding trails of OK for ZMan to get hooked. Having been an expert motocross racer in his youth, the "fangs" came out again! He purchased a used bike from a local pawnshop and

both he and his wife, Keeley started riding several times a week. Oklahoma offers a fair climate throughout the winter and cycling offered the couple an outdoor sport in lieu of the skiing.

It was February of 2017, when ZMan and Keeley entered their first state race (only weeks after their first ride). The event was the second USA Cycling sanctioned race for the 2017 season; they had missed the



OUTCAN Member Profile **continued**

first race, which was held weeks earlier. Both will readily admit they were ill prepared for their 1st race; they had not pre-ridden the course, nor had they ever watched a race prior to the competition. Still, they finished unscathed, but humbled by the skillset of their fellow riders.

Oklahoma's State MTB Series, Tour de Dirt, includes 10 mountain biking races throughout the state over a 10 month period. There are three different categories of racers starting with Cat 3 – Novice, Cat 2 – Advanced and Cat 1 – Expert/Professional. The top finishers in each of the categories advance up the following year. The length and difficulty of the races depend on the category in which a person competes. As ZMan and Keeley were new to the sport, both registered as Cat 3 racers in their respective age brackets and this meant that their races would be between 60 and 90 minutes in duration. The Cat 3 field of riders is quite large with good competition throughout,

many racers having years of experience under their belt.

The couple began to train both on mountain bikes and road bikes, ate healthy and properly prepared for upcoming races. The Tour de Dirt series offered them a way to visit various places throughout the state and they started to look forward to weekend getaways to train and also driving hours after work to get pre-rides in on the tracks they would be racing at.

By the end of the 2017 race season ZMan had lost 30+ pounds and had placed 1st place in the Men's Cat 3 while taking home the coveted State Gold Jersey, his wife had secured a 3rd place podium place in the Cat 3 women.

This year, with three races remaining, ZMan is leading the Cat 2 State Championship Tour de Dirt for 1st place and his wife in on track to win the state for the Women's Cat 3. They both won Gold at the 2018 Kansas State Summer Games and even managed to

race during their holidays in Nova Scotia in the Kentville Canada Cup.

The couple agrees that the sport has provided far more than just a fitness element to their lives, it has introduced them to new friends, a new lifestyle, and has eased the transition to a new location.

Mountain biking has significant health benefits.

Over the last few decades, mountain biking has remained a popular outdoor recreational activity. According to the Outdoor Industry Foundation, nearly 40 million people mountain bike every year in the U.S.

As public health concerns including obesity, heart disease, and diabetes are on the rise, physical exercise, especially in the outdoors, is becoming more critical to our health as individuals and as a society.

Mountain biking is a fun and exciting way to enjoy the



OUTCAN Member Profile **continued**

many health benefits of regular fitness and cardiovascular exercise including:

1. Improved Heart Health

Regular exercise is known to improve cardiovascular fitness. Mountain biking uses large muscle groups that require a lot of oxygen. This makes the heart work steadily, increasing your heart's fitness by 3-7%.

2. Less Stress on the Joints

Mountain biking is a low impact sport, meaning it puts less stress on your joints than other aerobic activities such as running thus reducing the risk of injuring them

3. Decreased Risk of Diseases

Regular moderate exercise is known to strengthen your immune system and keep you healthy. Researchers at the University of North Carolina found that people who cycle for 30 minutes, 5 days a week take half as many sick days off work compared to their sedentary counterparts!

4. Reduced Stress and Improved Mood

The vigorous demands of mountain biking stimulate your body to release natural endorphins, which are the body's way of feeling good and getting more energy. Exercise also boosts serotonin, an important

neurotransmitter in the brain, which helps to prevent depression and anxiety. The focus and attention needed to ride a challenging single-track can become a form of moving meditation; ultimately helping to relax and weather life's stressors by acting as a distraction from negative thoughts that may contribute to anxiety and depression. Gaining new skills and improving your mountain biking abilities also helps to build confidence and self-esteem.

5. Increased Brain Power

Researchers at Illinois University found that a 5% improvement in cardio-respiratory fitness from cycling led to an improvement of up to 15% on mental tests. This is in part due to building brain cells in the hippocampus – the region of the brain responsible for memory. "It boosts blood flow and oxygen to the brain, which fires and regenerates receptors, explaining how exercise helps ward off Alzheimer's," Professor Arthur Kramer said.

6. Whole Body Workout

It's no doubt you'll recognize the defined calf muscles of an avid cyclist, but you may not realize that mountain biking uses the muscles of your whole body. Of course, cycling builds strong legs, thighs and calves and helps you get that nice tight butt. The balance required to stay upright strengthens your abdominal



and core muscles. Climbing and maneuvering turns also strengthens your upper body. And as an added bonus, mountain biking doesn't require an expensive gym membership or a personal trainer to get a good workout.

7. Improved balance and coordination

Unlike plodding on a treadmill or stair stepper, mountain biking is a dynamic activity that requires the rider to constantly adjust to varying terrain, pitch, and elevation. Staying steady and secure on a mountain bike not only keeps you from crashing, but strengthens neural pathways and reinforces muscle memory.

8. Sleep Better

You may immediately feel tired and worn out after a ride, but it will ultimately lead to improved regenerative sleep when you need it at night. The exercise of riding decreases cortisol, a hormone that keeps us awake. Being an outdoor activity, mountain biking exposes you to daylight which helps to maintain the body's natural circadian sleep/wake cycle, not to mention raising your body's production of vitamin D.

9. Social Benefits

It's common for mountain bikers to strike up a conversation on the trailhead with fellow riders, volunteer at local mountain bike events and pop into their local bike shop just to say 'hello'. Like most sports, mountain biking creates a strong connection between fellow athletes and their community.

10. Enjoy Nature

What better way to experience the great outdoors than to eat some dust and get intimate with thorny bushes on the trail? Seriously though, mountain biking, more than any other activity, allows you to quickly get off the beaten path and enjoy the solitude and majesty of nature.



CAF Sports Day 2018



CFIOG Det Hawaii posing prior to hiking the Makapu'u Lighthouse Trail



Staff and family from NATO Defense College, Rome, Italy looking forward to some volleyball



Members at NOPF Whidbey Island ready for a run/walk along the seaview trail



CAF Sports Day 2018 **continued**

Canadian Det Joint Base Lewis-McChord challenged their National Guard counterparts to a game of softball. Although they were mercilessly defeated 27-3 they're looking for revenge at the annual Can-Am hockey game in the spring.



Detachment personnel and family members at Vandenberg AFB enjoy some fresh ocean air on the Orcutt Trails



Personnel posted to CDLS(W) participated in a morning of sports including football, rugby, ultimate Frisbee and kickball



Annual MCpl Gregory MacCheyne Memorial Award

Pikes Peak, Colorado

The annual MCpl Gregory MacCheyne Memorial Award was contested on 27 July 2018 at Pikes Peak, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The award recognizes the fastest male and female CAF member to climb the 7,000 feet to the 14,110 foot summit of Pikes Peak.

The award is in memory of MCpl Gregory MacCheyne who was posted to CFSU(Colorado Springs) from July 2007 to April 2011. He was a leader who inspired CAF personnel to follow a fit and healthy lifestyle by leading by example. He was an accomplished runner and cyclist who also represented CFB Esquimalt at basketball regionals. He is alleged to have held the record for the quickest ascent to the top of Pikes Peak. Sadly, he passed away to cancer in April 2011 at the young age of 36 years old.

The recipients of this year's MCpl Gregory MacCheyne Memorial Award are LCol Jody Hanson (plaid shirt) in 7 hrs:41 mins and Cdr Vincent Bellingham (red jacket) in 5 hrs:04 mins.



Stay Mindful with 4 Tips for Holiday Eating

Reviewed by Jill Kohn, MS, RDN, LDN, Published December 19, 2017



The holidays are a time to enjoy friends, family and food. And, contrary to popular belief, you can have all three without putting on the extra pounds!



Stay Mindful with 4 Tips for Holiday Eating continued

On average, **Americans gain approximately one to two pounds during the holiday season.** While this weight gain isn't dramatic, research shows it tends to stick and accumulate over the years. Luckily, those pounds can be avoided through mindful eating in moderation and a few simple strategies.

In preparation for a big holiday party or feast, do not skip meals throughout the day as this may result in overeating. It is especially important to have breakfast, as research shows that those who eat this important morning meal tend to consume fewer calories throughout the day. Include lots of fiber in your diet by eating fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Fiber-rich foods are high in volume and will satisfy hunger, but are lower in calories.

Holiday meals tend to be large, buffet-style and include second and third helpings. While one might not eat an entire cake, a common mistake is eating large portions of foods that are perceived as healthy. It's important to include nutrient-rich foods in your diet, but also remember that these foods have calories as well and should be eaten in moderation. Using this approach at the holiday dinner table will allow you to maintain a healthful eating plan — one that can also include dessert.

For more information on how to eat healthfully, contact a **registered dietitian nutritionist** in your area.

There are many strategies to help you avoid overeating. Using a smaller plate, for instance, allows you to put less food on your plate and encourages proper portion sizes. Also, start by filling your plate with vegetables and salad before going to the entrees and desserts. Eating a salad before your meal can help you eat fewer calories overall. Eat slowly and savor every bite, and before you go back for seconds wait 10 minutes to see if you really are still hungry.

Finally, after dinner, get some physical activity. This is a great time to go for a walk and catch up with family members, or play catch or a game of basketball with the kids.



Exercise a hard habit to make

By Jill Barker

We've all heard the excuse about being too busy to exercise. But with most Canadians spending 18 hours a week watching TV, it's clear there's some wiggle room in the hours not already claimed by work and family commitments.

And being busy isn't the only excuse offered up by those who try and fail to make exercise a habit. A University of Alberta research team wanted to know more about why 50 per cent of new exercisers hang up their workout gear within six months of starting. They interviewed exercise dropouts and grouped their reasons into four general themes.

THE RESULTS DON'T LIVE UP TO THE HYPE

With so much written about the benefits of exercise, it's no surprise that most newbies are anxious to reap the results of a good sweat. And according to the researchers, they aren't disappointed by how they feel in those first few weeks of a

workout routine. They have more energy during the day, sleep better at night, have more endurance and feel stronger while performing everyday chores.

But as welcome as these results are, they aren't enough to sustain the enthusiasm of those first couple of months when the benefits of regular exercise are so acutely felt. Instead, that initial satisfaction is outweighed by the effort it takes to overcome the many barriers - lack of time, inconvenience and so forth - associated with maintaining an exercise routine.

"Whereas participants expressed pleasure with the physical and psychological outcomes they experienced through participation in the exercise program, many participants also expressed disappointment with a failure to obtain all of the outcomes they had expected or hoped for, especially when it came to visible results," reported the researchers.

It's better to set performance goals, which are more easily achieved.

SCHEDULING DIFFICULTIES

Reserving a regular block of time in an already-packed schedule is a significant challenge for new exercisers. Struggling to manage the day-to-day routine, combined with any unforeseen and often non-negotiable demands that pop up, makes getting to the gym difficult.

Exercise veterans are faced with these same challenges, but are better able to take them in stride, adjusting their schedule and their workouts accordingly. Novice exercisers, however, are more likely to forgo their workout when making scheduling decisions. They're also less tolerant or less flexible when it comes to adjusting their workout around some of the downsides of exercise, like having to do a workout during



Exercise a hard habit to make **continued**

peak gym hours, when wait times to use the machines can be frustrating.

New exercisers are so vulnerable to hiccups in their workout schedule that one change to their routine - an illness or injury, a sick family member, a demanding project at work - is often reason enough to give up exercise altogether. Even the most dedicated exercisers struggle to stay on track every now and again; the difference is, they see interruptions to their routine as temporary, not permanent.

TROUBLE PRIORITIZING EXERCISE

The change in mindset needed to move exercise up the list of priorities and keep it there is hard to master. Sure, family and work come first and second, but the difference between committed exercisers and exercise dropouts is that the committed believe they are better parents and better

employees with exercise in their lives. As such, they see taking valuable minutes away from work and/or family for a quick workout not so much of an indulgence, but as a vital part of their physical and emotional well-being.

Those hooked on exercise head to the gym or out for a run, swim, walk or bike ride when the stress of everyday life hits hard. They also urge their family to join them in being active, making exercise a part of, not a distraction from, family life.

GOING SOLO

Most new exercisers need a push to get off the couch, like the extra accountability that an exercise buddy or trainer offers. The importance of social support from family and friends is often overlooked by new exercisers who tend to go it alone.

But study after study suggests that having an exercise buddy or someone else to hold you accountable increases the chance of success.

Sharing your frustrations and successes makes those early days of exercise more palatable.

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Follow-up from Capt Garneau-Bégin's participation in the *Fire and Ice* Ultramarathon

1. From Monday August 27th to Saturday September 1st, I completed a 250 km ultramarathon in Iceland, considered one of the most difficult endurance foot race. The race started in the Icelandic Highlands, at the base of a Volcano, and finished near Akureyri, near the North coast of Iceland.

2. A total of 63 competitors started the race, and 59 competitors finished (4 runners did not finish due to injuries). I finished in overall 14th position.

3. The race was very challenging. The terrain was technical, with constantly changing topography, from lava fields with sharp rocks covering the land to small tracks and tall grassy ground. The weather was the coldest seen in years, with minus 7 degrees the night few days at night, we were hit by snowstorms in the Icelandic highlands in the first few days. I sustained few minor toe blisters and an ankle tendinitis, which resolved within 1 week.



The Canadian Embassy in Venezuela is on the run



WO Aaron Martyn using the new Precor R40 treadmill provided by the OUTCAN Physical Fitness Program. The treadmill was purchased in Canada and shipped to the Canadian Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela by GAC. A great example of cooperation by multiple organizations to support the fitness and health of OUTCAN personnel around the world.

Upcoming events

December 2018 to February 2019

USA

MHP West Palm Beach

- FORCE Evaluations – 11-12 Dec
OPI Maj Craig Griffiths

San Diego

- FORCE Evaluations – 18 Dec
OPI Mr. Todd Cirka

Peterson AFB

- Unit pt – Mondays and Wednesdays
OPI Capt Nisha Venkatesh

Ft McNair

- FORCE Evaluations – 13-14 Feb
OPI MS Geoffrey West

Tinker AFB

- FORCE Evaluations – 6-7 Feb
OPI MCpl Patrick Porter

Europe

Geilenkirchen

- FORCE Evaluations - Tuesdays and Thursdays at 0900
OPI Guy Boudrias

SHAPE

- FORCE Evaluations – 7 Feb
OPI WO Tammy Thomas

Brussels

- FORCE Evaluations – 12 Mar
OPI Cpl Francis Desnoyers

Ruislip

- FORCE Evaluations – 13-14 Feb
OPI Clarisa Smallwood

Monthly OUTCAN Fitness and Health Initiatives



November/December – DFit.ca bodyweight training program

January – Calorie Crusher

***Contact your local Sports Officer or the OutCan Physical Fitness Coordinator to register



Featured Exercise **Birddog in Plank**

Start: Adopt a plank position supported with the hands and feet on the floor, and arms and legs extended.

Action: Keeping the hips extended reach one arm straight out in front by raising the arm above the head. Simultaneously raise the contralateral foot off the floor and towards the ceiling by extending the hip, keeping the leg straight throughout.

End: Lower the raised hand and foot back to the floor. Repeat the movements with the opposite arm and leg. Continue to raise and lower the arms and legs, alternating sides with each repetition. Complete 5-10 reps per side.

Target: Full Body, Core

Equip.: Body Weight

Level: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced

