

Army Combat Fitness Test

Plank Exercise: Initial Guidance to the Field

Background: core strength and endurance are critical to physical task performance and injury prevention, especially during loaded foot movements. During the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) transition year (FY21), the “Plank” exercise is authorized as a bridge (gap) assessment of core static strength and endurance. The ultimate objective is for all Soldiers to execute multiple repetitions of the Leg Tuck (LTK) on the ACFT. During the transition year a Soldier must first attempt the LTK and fail to execute one (1) repetition before attempting the Plank exercise. Soldiers will not intentionally “fail” the leg tuck in order to execute the plank. Once the LTK event has been attempted and failed (indicated by the inability to complete 1 full repetition), Soldiers will be immediately assigned to an alternate test grader; with a limit of 5 graded Soldiers per grader. Upon the receipt of five Soldiers, the alternate test grader will conduct the Plank event. Once the two minute Plank test has elapsed, Soldiers will return to their original grader and recover for the 2 Mile Run event.

Testing Conditions: the Plank shall be conducted following a LTK failure, prior to the start of the 2-mile run (2MR), and on grass, artificial turf, or suitable surface that is flat and free of debris. Concrete, hard-top, gravel and dirt surfaces are not recommended for the Plank; they increase the risk of injury to Soldiers. Alternate graders may start the Plank exercise as soon as there are enough Soldiers to grade. The 10 minute rest period will begin once the last Soldier has completed the Plank/Leg Tuck however it does not change / increase the 90-minute individual maximum time to administer the ACFT.

Testing Instructions: the Plank exercise should be conducted as follows:

1. Ready Position: on the command “GET READY” hands must be on the ground, either in fists with pinky side of the hand touching the ground or lying flat with palms down, no more than the grader’s fist-width apart; elbows will be bent, aligned with the shoulders, forearms flat on the ground forming a triangle; hips should be bent with one or both knees resting on the ground.
2. Once all Soldiers are in the Ready Position, the grader shall issue the command “GRADERS READY, GET SET”, and then “GO.” On “GO” the Soldier lifts both knees off the ground and moves the hips into a straight line with the legs, shoulders, head and eyes focused on the ground, similar to the “front leaning rest” position.
 - a. Feet may be up to the graders’ boot-width apart.
 - b. Elbows should be aligned with the shoulders with forearms forming a triangle.
 - c. Ankles should be flexed with the bottom of the toes on the ground.
 - d. Maintain a straight body alignment from the head to the ankles.

3. After the command "GO", the grader will call out 15 second time intervals until the 2:00 minute completion of the exercise. Time is tracked with a stopwatch.

Grading Instructions: The head, shoulders, back, hips, and legs shall be straight from head to heels and must remain so throughout the test. Feet, forearms, and fists/palms shall remain in contact with the floor throughout the exercise.

1. The Plank exercise is terminated when the Soldier:
 - a. Touches the floor with any part of the body except the feet, forearms, or fists,
 - b. Raises a foot or hand off the floor,
 - c. Fails to maintain the straight-line position from head to heels.
2. Graders will give one verbal warning to correct failure to maintain a proper straight-line position or the hands/feet slide from the required position. If the Soldier is not able to correct or fails to maintain the proper straight-line position, the test will be terminated.
3. Shaking or trembling as a result of maximal exertion is permitted as long as the proper Plank position is maintained.
4. The grader to Soldier ratio will be no more than five Soldiers to one grader.

Scoring Instructions: the Plank is a pass/fail exercise for a maximum of 60 points. The Soldier may only attempt the Plank following a LTK failure. The Soldier must maintain the proper Plank position for 2:00 IOT earn 60 points. For Soldiers who successfully execute the 2-minute Plank, a score of 2:00 will be entered on the ACFT scorecard in the LTK block followed by the letter PLK (for the Plank). For Soldiers who cannot successfully execute the 2-minute Plank, a score of 0 will be entered on the ACFT scorecard in the LTK block followed by the letter PLK (for the Plank).

THE PLANK
Temporary Substitute For Leg Tuck
ACFT 2.0

ALTERNATIVE EVENT: The Plank

Plank for a minimum of 2-minutes

- During ACFT Transition Period, Soldiers may temporarily utilize the Plank exercise in lieu of the Leg-Tuck to assist in transitioning to the full test.
- Soldier will first attempt a LTK. If they are unsuccessful, they will be authorized to attempt the Plank event to pass the ACFT.
- The Plank event consists of maintaining a proper plank position for a minimum of 2-minutes; maximum score for the Plank is PASS/60 points.

2-MIN PLANK PASS / Maximum 60 POINTS