



FACT SHEET

PFA Cycle 2021, Plank and Row

In order to continue to mitigate COVID-19 impacts to the fleet, Navy will conduct one Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA) cycle in calendar year 2021 from 15 March to 15 September 2021, dependent upon local conditions and operational requirements. Shifting the PFA cycle to March allows Navy to execute the PFA after the primary influenza season, while also leveraging outdoor venues as the weather warms for the conduct of the test.

The forearm plank has replaced the curl-ups as the abdominal muscular endurance assessment. The forearm plank was determined to be a better test of core strength and abdominal muscular endurance. The repeated movement of the curl-up may aggravate lower back injuries and does not strongly challenge the body's core muscles. The forearm plank, however, develops muscles more relevant to shipboard tasks involving pushing, pulling, lifting and carrying. Training for the forearm plank will strengthen the core, improve posture and reduce the risk of sustaining lower back injuries throughout a Sailor's career.

The 2,000-meter row on the "Concept-2 Rower" will serve as another alternate cardio option in addition to the 12-min stationary cycle, 500-yd/450-m swim and 1.5-mile treadmill run. The 2,000-meter row is a non-weight bearing, low impact exercise, which reduces stress on the legs. More importantly, rowing provides a great full-body cardio workout because it engages 80 percent of the body's muscles.

What you need to know

Plank	2,000m Row	Single PFA Cycle in 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The plank and row will begin with the 2021 PFA cycle.• Plank will be performed on a flat, level surface. Blankets, mats or other suitable padding may be used, but the member must be entirely on or off the padding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once the member starts rowing, he or she should remain in constant and continuous motion until the 2000 m test is complete.• A member may only stop rowing for safety purposes (retie shoelace or tighten strap) or remove hands from the handles momentarily (wipe sweat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will run from 15MAR-15SEP• Echelon II Commanders may waive the PFA cycle if COVID-19 conditions prevent commanders from executing safely.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You may only receive two corrections on form. If you are corrected a third time, your plank will be stopped and recorded.• Service members who do not meet the minimum passing score for the plank will not receive a "fail" for the 2021 cycle PRT only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personnel who intend to use the rower for the PRT are required to train and familiarize themselves on the approved Concept-2 rower, as identified in PRP Guide 10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Sailors must participate in PFA cycle 2021 (i.e., the excellent or above validation from the previous cycle does not apply).• Service members who meet the criteria for "Validation" in PFA cycle 2021 will be exempt from participation in PFA cycle one 2022.
Policy Guidance:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NAVADMIN 304/20		

Plank and Row

~ Questions and Answers ~

Questions and Answers

Q1. When will the plank and row start?

A1. The plank and row will begin with PFA cycle 2021.

Q2. Why is the Navy only doing one PFA cycle in 2021?

A2. The Department of Defense (DOD) requires service members to do one physical fitness assessment per year. Conducting a single PFA cycle allows the Navy to meet this requirement while allowing the Navy to execute the PFA after the primary influenza season, leverage outdoor venues as the weather warms, and acknowledge the fact that the timing and impact of vaccines and therapeutics remain unknown.

Q3. I scored an excellent on my last PRT, do I still have to do the PRT in 2021?

A3. All Sailors must participate in the single PFA cycle in 2021. If you validate again in 2021, you will be exempt from the first cycle in 2022.

Q2. Why were curl-ups replaced by the forearm plank?

A2. The forearm plank was determined to be a better test of core strength and abdominal muscular endurance. The repeated spinal flexion movement of the curl-up is not operationally relevant, may aggravate low back injuries and does not strongly challenge the abdominal musculature.

Q4. Why was the 2000-meter row added as another alternate cardio option?

A4. The 2000-meter row is a non-weight bearing, low impact exercise, which reduces stress on the legs. More importantly, rowing provides a great full-body cardio workout because it engages 80 percent of the body's musculature.

Q5. What will be the new PRT event sequence?

A5. The new PRT event sequence is as follows:

- (1) push-ups
- (2) forearm planks
- (3) cardio or alternate cardio

Q6. Why are push-ups done first? Won't that tire out a person's shoulders and arms for the plank?

A6. This sequence of events permits maximal performance on the push-ups and the forearm plank performance standards to account for any residual fatigue from push-up execution. During the study to develop the new forearm plank standards, push-ups were conducted first and the forearm plank was conducted second.

Q8. Where can I go to read how the forearm plank and the row will be conducted?

A8. To better assist CFL/ACFLs and members participating in the Navy's PFA, the new standards, tutorial videos, PRP Guides and other training resources are available on the Navy Physical Readiness Program website (https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/21st_Century_Sailor/physical/Pages/default2.aspx)

Q9. I still have questions about the new PRT, who can I contact?

A9. For additional information, contact the Physical Readiness Program at (901) 874-2210/DSN 822 or via e-mail at PRP@navy.mil.