Pre and Post Assessments of Indiana National Guard Soldiers on Cardiorespiratory Endurance

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION: Cardiorespiratory endurance (CRE) is a reflection of health and is related to the circulatory, respiratory, and musculoskeletal systems. Soldiers of the National Guard are expected to have sufficient CRE; however, many soldiers fail this portion of the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT).

PURPOSE: To evaluate the success of home exercise prescriptions in improving CRE between the Indiana National Guard (ING) soldiers’ pre- and post-tests.

METHODS: Participants were 21 ING soldiers (25±6y) who failed or had a history of failing a record APFT and who had completed a pre- and post-testing day ranging from spring 2015 through spring 2017. Soldiers completed a timed two-mile run, push-up and sit-up tests per APFT regulations. Additional health measures were collected or self-reported, including height, weight, resting heart rate, blood pressure, handgrip strength, sit-and-reach scores, waist and hip circumferences and 3-site skinfolds. SPSS V.24 was used to perform descriptive statistics and univariate analysis of variance to assess differences between pre- and post-assessment CRE.

RESULTS: There were no significant differences between pre- and post-tests for CRE (p=0.639). Furthermore, there were no significant differences between preand post-tests for any of the other health parameters assessed. However, trends were observed in the desired direction according to the program’s desired goal of passing the APFT; indicating minor improvement.

CONCLUSIONS: CRE is an integral part of the APFT. Although there were no significant differences found between the pre- and post-testing for CRE, there was a trend observed indicating the potential for the home-based exercise prescription program to have success. Limitations include the length of each soldier program between pre- and post-tests and the efficacy of each soldier completing the home-based exercise prescription. Therefore future research should assess CRE improvements in soldiers of the ING over a longer follow-up period and using a method to track adherence to the exercise prescription.

Background

Stage One: Pre-testing and initial exercise prescription given
Stage Two: Improvement exercise prescription created and sent
Stage Three: Post-testing, review of exercise since stage one
Stage Four: Maintenance exercise prescription sent

Conclusions and Summary

- Pre- and post-testing CRE values were not significantly different.
- Pre- and post-tests for CRE showed potential success from home-based exercise prescriptions.
- Soldiers’ program length between pre- and post-tests varied.
- Limited by soldiers’ commitment to home-based exercise program.
- Future research should encourage stricter adherence guidelines.