ENDURANCE  
STRENGTH  
STAMINA  
FLEXIBILITY  
INTENSITY  
ATHLETICISM  
AGILITY  
BALANCE  
DURABILITY  
OFFENSIVE MIND
“Better to live each day with discipline than to suffer a life of regret”

--Mark Divine, founder, SEALFIT

Few would argue that Navy SEALs are extremely fit and competent at their chosen profession of maritime special operations. The environments that SEALs must operate in and the missions they take on require an uncommon level of physical and mental fitness. Because the stakes are much higher than what most individuals and teams face, the training that SEAL operators do must be more comprehensive and
include mental skills as well. Mission success depends on the operators developing and maintaining a broad scope of skills, which is what I designed SEALFIT™ for. It just so happens that these domains of mastery are extremely valuable for all athletes and leaders, so I offer them for consideration here.

The run-swim-rinse-repeat, or hit the weight room for the standard strength routine of back, legs, arms and core work, dominated the fitness scene for too long. What resulted were skinny runners and puffy, inflexible weight lifters as the models for fitness. Physical training did not inspire the masses, who were led down the disastrous path of “easy street” in training and diet. Fortunately our culture is breaking this pattern and showing signs of promise with emergent hybrid cross- and integrated training models. I am not suggesting that endurance and strength training are not important – rather that they should be trained in a manner that also incorporates other important physical capacities. SEALFIT is one such hybrid program, which I originally developed to prepare SEAL and other Special Ops candidates for their military training. The training turned out to be popular with other endurance and warrior-athletes, so has been expanded to include anyone willing to step up to the workload and ethos we espouse.

So just what does it mean to be SEALFIT? The obvious answer is that it means to be fit like a Navy SEAL. However, there is more to this statement than just getting buff and looking good in board shorts sporting your tats. Before getting into specifics, it is helpful to know that the term “SEAL” is an acronym for “Sea, Air, Land,” denoting the environments that SEALs must master - especially the harshest conditions in these environments. The rigorous training of the SEALs has them develop functional fitness and mental resiliency so that they can achieve mission success while operating in the cold abyss of the North Atlantic Ocean, the parched Arabian Desert or the rugged, rocky steppes in the Hindu Kush Mountains. Most of the work of a SEAL is done at night, adding even more of a challenge. Let’s just say that the training of a Navy SEAL is REAL DEAL training – which is why SEALFIT focuses on ten domains of mastery to forge not just better athletes, but better warriors and leaders too. These ten domains, stated as practical operator needs, are:
1. **Endurance:** the ability to go long to get to the target.

2. **Strength:** the ability to carry your share of the load.

3. **Stamina:** the ability to work over long periods of time with that external load.

4. **Flexibility:** the ability to bend like a reed when the wind blows, and to change your plan and thinking instinctually.

5. **Intensity:** the work capacity to engage at super high intensity for short durations.

6. **Athleticism:** the ability to shoot, move and communicate with a high degree of coordination and accuracy.

7. **Agility:** the ability to acquire new targets quickly and shift fire.

8. **Balance:** the ability to maintain your center in movement, in conflict and in life.

9. **Durability:** the ability to avoid injury or illness and remain an effective teammate.

10. **Offensive Mind:** the ability to stay in the fight until victory is achieved.

Let’s take a closer look at why each of these ten domains is uniquely important to achieving the level of physical and mental fitness required of the SEALs, and why it may be equally important to you. We will wrap up with a comprehensive “Operator Workout” from SEALFIT.
NO DOUBT YOU are familiar with endurance training. For some years I focused a lot on endurance as a competitive swimmer, rower and triathlete. It was one of the reasons that running the beaches and swimming in the ocean in San Diego during SEAL training came so naturally to me. It wasn’t until I reached the team that I realized I had major gaps in my training arsenal. Developing a foundation of endurance is crucial. The term means to develop your oxidative energy pathway (aka “cardio-respiratory system”) to gather, process and deliver oxygen (and CO2) to your body for fuel. It is typically associated with a mono-structural movement that allows for movement of the body over long distances (i.e. running, swimming, hiking or biking). In the SEALs, endurance training was very functionally oriented – in that we endured a loaded ruck, or an equipment swim in the ocean. Though we did also do a lot of slick (no weight) road running and pool swimming, we never lost sight of the need to move the body with load in rougher environments. First and foremost, SEALS are endurance athletes and ensure they will survive the elements while moving to and from their targets.

Mental endurance means that you develop the capacity to stay at a task for the long haul. Getting a black belt, finishing college, becoming a SEAL, all take mental endurance alongside the physical endurance. In everyday life it requires emotional and spiritual endurance to raise a child or provide hospice care for a parent. You must master endurance at all levels to live life well.
LET’S FACE IT - being weak is a liability to yourself and your team. Strength elevates confidence and utility in challenging situations. As strength coach Mark Rippetoe likes to say: “Strong people are generally more useful and harder to kill.” I concur. SEALs win most of their battles because they train to be strong - both mentally and physically. They push themselves harder than others, and ensure that they can handle a relative share of the workload. Strength is measured by the ability of your muscular system to apply force to overcome resistance – typically by picking up, pushing overhead, or squatting down with a load. How much load makes one strong? It depends on your body size and composition, but at SEALFIT we want you to be able to pick up and move with your own body weight at a minimum. Typically guys and girls can do much more, especially with the classic strength movements of the dead lift, back squat and push press. Grip strength and core strength are also important aspects of a SEALs training – recall the functional focus on mission accomplishment.
IF ENDURANCE IS King and strength is Queen, then stamina joins the court as a Prince in our training program. Stamina is your body’s ability to use overall energy for work over time – essentially to overcome resistance on a repeated basis over a period of time or distance (usually both). Pick something up, then again, and again and then move with it. It requires serious stamina to buddy carry an injured teammate for a mile out of the danger zone. A SEAL who has strength and endurance, must also develop the stamina so they can continue to work when other’s have cashed it in. A SEAL will never be the guy who says, “I can’t,” when called on to pick up something heavy and move fast with it. Mentally, stamina allows us to maintain an unwavering focus on our task in spite of fatigue and boredom.
“SEMPER GUMBY” IS a term we used in the SEAL Teams to mean possessing a mindset of flexibility. We learned be bendy, like Gumby. Being bendy led to fewer injuries and quicker recovery. Though we didn’t really get into the physiology of why being bendy was important, we performed both dynamic and static stretching every time we trained. The dynamic movements were part of a warm-up and continued during our extensive “Grinder PT” sessions as interludes between the hard output. Additionally we used active stretching, or even yoga (later on in my career) to ensure we remained flexible. Now I understand just how important a good stretching and mobility routine is that includes range of motion, joint and spinal integrity drills.

Mentally it is important to be a Gumby as well. Learning to rapidly flex to new realities on the fast paced battlefield was key to survival and mission accomplishment. Interestingly, developing a flexible body also has the effect of honing a more flexible mind.
WHEN THE BULLETS start flying, SEALs run toward the sound of the gunfire, demonstrating an intensity of focus and ability to throw the heart of a lion into the fight. This intense “work capacity” is found by developing the ability to recruit and deploy explosive power and speed simultaneously. Think of an ambush or a mission that requires a team to enter a hornet’s nest of bad guys to clear them out. The work is hard, chaotic, fast paced. It requires every ounce of focus and energy that can be mustered. Power and Speed are cultivated with short, high intensity workouts and by using ballistic movements. Kettle bells, Olympic Lifts and sprinting are the primary allies for this effort. At SEALFIT we like to sprint while pulling or pushing an object (such as buddy pulls, sled pushes, and other fun drills). Intensity training has the added benefit of increasing confidence and functional utility during a crisis. You’re more likely to spring into action knowing that you have the power, speed and work capacity to forcefully succeed.

Speed is the rapid repetition of a muscular pattern – typically with low levels of resistance such as when sprinting. Intensity is also found when you can increase the load and still move safely fast. Most SEALs (and most folks in general) don’t need to run like a gazelle to be effective lifetime athletes – but increasing your speed and power allows for more effective results and a much higher tolerance to pain. This pain and workload tolerance co-develops your mental intensity and focusing power. You can make decisions faster and are less likely to become confused or decision impaired when the pain reaches intolerable levels in a training or real life event.
SEALS TEND TO develop great athleticism as the result of refining accuracy and coordination. Sport training and fitness training have evolved into two separate disciplines in the past 40 years. However, I believe there is an athlete locked inside all of us, even if you do not see yourself as one. Developing athleticism leads to much more enjoyable training, and you are able to have more fun out of the gym doing athletic things. What I love most about CrossFit™ is the need to get pretty good at the Clean, Jerk and Snatch, and also many gymnastics movements I hadn’t done since grade school (of course kids these days don’t get to do any gymnastics unless the join the YMCA or a CrossFit kids program). When you take on these complex whole body system movements, magic happens. You begin to develop more grace and body awareness. All the other components of your training improve demonstrably in quality.

Most important, training for accuracy and coordination gets you out of your training rut and learning again. You can set specific skill-based goals for learning, rather than just achievement-based goals based on loads, reps and time. Formerly most of this work was locked in the more sophisticated skill development of athletic programs. Not anymore...get out of the mindset that you have to get on a machine or strap on running shoes to get in a good workout. Try mastering the muscle up, the GHD sit-up, L-sit, and the snatch. Consider running an obstacle course and then testing your accuracy in throwing a ball at a target (or if you can, firing your rifle accurately as with the biathlon). These complex skills requiring accuracy and coordination will enhance your overall fitness and bring inspiration back into your training routine.
AGILITY ALLOWS ONE to transition from one mode of movement to another quickly without losing any momentum or getting disoriented. Physical agility is important during intense work because there is a lot of juking and jiving that goes on when you are in the arena. Imagine being in a firefight needing to run and gun, jump over obstacles and dive behind barriers. Agility is very helpful in these situations to translate your weight forward, aft, and side-to-side, while maintaining your center of gravity and keeping your eye on the target. Mentally, agility is a skill closely aligned with flexibility. The ability to be agile in decision making means you can assess situations quickly, size it up, and shift on a dime to meet an emergent demand.
BALANCE IS THE ability to control your body’s alignment over its base and centerline. Balance is clearly involved in athleticism (accuracy and coordination) as well as agility. In fact those four skills are what separate elite athletes from everyone else. For SEALFIT balance takes on a new importance when you load a trainee up with weight, then have them ruck at night up a windy mountain road for twenty miles. Or when the athlete must climb a swinging caving ladder up the side of a ship while being whipped by the wind and sea. Having a balanced body also supports a balanced mental state – which leads to patience, equanimity and more life balance in general.
9. DURABILITY

A SEAL’S DURABILITY allows them to stay in the game over the long haul. You’re no good to the team if you get hurt before a mission, or worse, if you get injured on an op due to inadequate physical preparation. Durability comes from a combination of hard and soft skills. The hard skills include muscular strength, joint mobility, tendon and myofascial elasticity and nutritional support. The soft skills include deep body awareness, intuition and learning how to manage your energy. Most injury accidents occur due to a lapse into a lower state of awareness from fatigue, boredom or just messing around. A combination of the following is the SEALFIT prescription for a durable athlete:

- Core engagement exercises from SEALFIT Grinder PT
- Flexibility & mobility movements
- Fueling & hydration planning
- Rest (no training, sleep)
- Active Recovery training (yoga, light endurance, light bodyweight training)
- Myofascial release (foam rollers)
- Targeted supplementation
- Awareness development
- Planning and emergency readiness

Training for durability is part education, part skill development and a lot of slowing down and paying more attention to the details. Proper prior planning prevents poor performance!
DURING OUR IMMERSIVE Special Ops Academy I drill the “Big 4” skills of mental toughness and emotional resiliency until the athletes can recite them in their sleep and use them on demand. These skills include effective goal setting, arousal control, attention control and visualizing success. Though they may sound simplistic, the impact on your resiliency and the key attributes of mental toughness is profound when they are merged with physical training. I try hard to embed the big 4 into our physical training workouts, called the “Operator Workout of the Day” (OPWOD for short).

Below I present an example of a daily training session to get a feel for how the ten skills are developed through SEALFIT training, one day at a time. Over a period of months the training forges the character of what it takes to be fit like a SEAL. Don’t try this workout unless you have been training in CrossFit or other similar system for some time.

The Advanced Operator Workout

The OPWOD integrates the skills described above and is representative of a Navy SEAL platoon’s workout session. Here it is:

**Baseline:** Brief, visualization and box breathing. Then Range of Motion drills. Then complete 5 rounds of: 10m sled push (heavy) + 10m sprint (rest as needed between efforts).

**Strength:** Front squat – Warm up then, 3-2-1-1-1-1-1 (Work up to a max for the day)
**Stamina:** 4 rounds, not timed: 10x 2-arm KB front squats (53# to 70# men / 35# to 44# women), 5x box jumps (30-36in box men / 24-30in box women), 50m buddy pull with heavy band.

**Work Capacity:** Complete the following for time:

- 100x double unders
- 80x chest to bar pullups
- 60x pistols, alternating
- 40x GHD sit ups
- 20x DB snatch, alternating (70# men / 50# women)

**Durability:** SEALFIT Yoga Mobility drills. Hydrate and fuel within 30 minutes. Journal post training session SOP.

If you are new to SEALFIT (and I assume you are for this e-book), here is a one week program to get you started on your way to developing the Ten Domains of SEALFIT. Run through it at least once to see how you feel, then jump in with both feet by joining the SEALFIT Online Training. With numerous ongoing training programs to choose from, to include the:

- Operator workout (OPWOD)
- A ramp up program (OnRampWOD)
- A masters program for those over 50 (MastersWOD)
- A special ops prep workout (SOFWOD)
- Online Training also includes coaching, special content and a community of training peers / partners, SFOT is your next stop for SEALFIT.

Good luck with your training. Hooyah!

–Coach Divine, Encinitas, CA
“Welcome to the Grinder”
Starter Program
Day 1

Complete as fast as possible with perfect form:

1. As many perfect, strict push-ups as you can in 2-minutes
2. 10 minutes rest
3. As many sit-ups as you can in 2 minutes
4. 10 minutes rest
5. As many pull-ups as you can before you gas out
6. 10 minutes rest
7. A 500-meter swim (or 2,000 meter row)
8. 10 minutes rest
9. A 1.5 mile run
10. Record your repetitions and times in a journal

If you don’t have access to a pool, substitute a 2,000-meter row. Record you repetitions and times in a journal! You will see this again later to measure your progress. Check online at www.sealfit.com/screeningtest to compare your results to the SEAL standards. Get it done. Then come back and read the end of this chapter. Good luck!

Day 2

Warm-up: perform range of motion drills, then practice 25 perfect air squats.

Work Capacity: Five rounds for quality:

• 20x air squats
• 20x burpees
• 200 meter run

Cool Down: 1-mile jog and long stretch.
Coaching Notes: Perform the air squat with feet apart at shoulder width, heels firmly planted into the ground. Extend your arms directly in front of you and pretend someone is pulling on your wrists. Now push your bottom slightly backward and sit down without bending your back. Keep your lumbar arch engaged and tight, keep your heels firmly planted, get your hips below the knee line. At the bottom wiggle your toes to ensure your weight is on your heels. Upon standing, stand up in an explosive movement and push your hips slightly into hyper-extension. Full depth, open hips at the top, engaged lumbar arch and firmly planted heels is the key.

Start your burpees from the standing position. Drop your body vigorously to the ground by kicking your feet backward, land in the push-up position and lower yourself with expedited speed till your chest is touching the ground. Explode from the ground to the standing position and conduct a 6” inch jump as well as clapping hands overhead one time.

📅 Day 3

Warm-up: Perform range of motion drills, then 10-perfect reps of each exercise in work capacity.

Work Capacity: Complete 21-15-9 reps as fast as possible with great form of:
- butterfly sit-ups
- kettle bells swings (55 pounds men, 35 pounds women)
- push-ups
- 400 meter run after each set of repetitions.

Cool Down: 1-mile walk or jog and long stretch.

Coaching notes: hydrate and re-fuel.

Perform the butterfly sit-up with the soles of the feet placed together and close to the crotch. It better isolates the abdominal muscles.
and eliminates the stress on the hips and quads. Also don’t brace your feet or place hands behind neck. Place them straight above head with arms extended. Throw the arms forward and pull the body up into the sitting position. Sit all the way up and touch the toes with both hands. Placing a rolled up towel or using an Ab Mat under the lumbar arch will greatly increase the success of this exercise.

Assume the push-up position with your knees off the ground. Lower yourself until your right cheek touches the ground and then rapidly explode upward until your arms are fully locked. Repeat touching the left cheek to the ground.

📅 Day 4

**Warm-up:** Range of motion drills, then 50 air squats, then 25 tuck jumps (knee to chest).

**Work Capacity:** Five rounds for quality and time of:
- 15x box jumps (20 or 24 inches)
- 18x sit-ups
- 20x air squats
- Row 500 meters (substitute sprint 500M)

**Cool down:** jog or walk 1 mile. Stretch

**Coaching Notes:** Hydrate, re-fuel and journal results. This workout is about sustained workload across a broad time domain. It should take you around 30 minutes. Do your best to maintain the same pacing throughout all rounds. You don’t want to use all your energy in the beginning, but you also don’t want to save it till the end. The box jump is great for building strong bones and explosive power. Scale the height so you’re certain you won’t miss and ding your shin (a common occurrence at SEALFIT HQ). When you land on top of the box open your hips and stand completely erect. I want you to learn to open your hips all the way because it’s essential for the Olympic lifts you’ll learn later on. It doesn’t matter whether you jump or step down.
Day 5

Warm up: Dynamic stretching and range of motion drills

Work Capacity and Stamina: Grinder PT – one, two or three rounds of the following as fast as possible with good form:

- 10 x Run & Drop
- 10 x DB Squat Jumps (20 to 40# dumbbells)
- 20 x Push-ups
- 20 x Leg Levers
- 15 x Burpees
- 15 x 4ct Jumping Jacks
- 15 x Tuck Jumps
- 20 x DB Thrusters (front squat followed by push-press in one flowing motion)
- 20 x Push-ups Narrow
- 20 x Cross-leg Jumping jacks

Cool down: 1 mile jog or walk. Stretch.

Coaching notes: Journal your results. This is your first grinder PT session – try 2 or 3 rounds as a goal. If you simply can’t handle the load yet, stop at one or two.

The Grinder is an open training space at the Navy SEAL BUD/s’ training command, mirrored at our SEalfit HQ compound. On it we “grind down” and re-build character. It looks like a relatively simple body weight training session on the surface. When led by trained instructors, it quickly becomes a team crucible with a heavy mental toughness component. Here you’ll use Grinder PT to develop work capacity, stamina and core strength. Grinder PT sessions occur for 20 to 45 minutes every Wednesday of advanced training.

At HQ, Grinder PT can include any exercise or drill that the coaches conceive on the fly. A classic example of our grinder sessions includes the “deck of cards” workout where each suit is an exercise, the face value being the rep count. Flip a card, do the number of the
exercise prescribed (jack, queen and kings are 11, 12 and 13 respectively, aces high at 14). The best grinder PT sessions are improvised by an inspired coach and fed by the team’s energy. Typical exercises include jumping jacks, push-ups of all variations, sit-ups of all variations, pull-ups, leg levers, flutter kicks, wave-offs, mountain climbers, eight-count body builders, burpees, squats, lunges, jumping lunges, bear crawls, prisoner walks, and more. For this first one research the videos on sealfit.com if you’re unsure of the exercise.

For more information about SEALFIT please visit www.sealfit.com or call the SEALFIT Training Center at (760) 634-1833. Our SEALFIT Online Training community is a great place to get started and get some coaching.