

On the road to fitness: Major drops 60 pounds through diet, exercise

Published: Thursday, June 5, 2008 8:55 AM CDT
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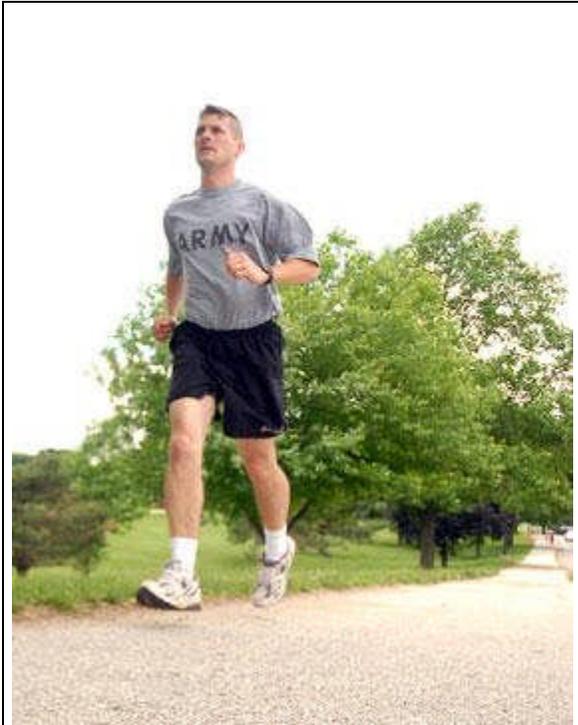
Maj. Anne E. Waggoner | Army Physical Fitness Research Institute

CARLISLE BARRACKS, Pa. - Maj. Scott Dellinger, a student at Command and General Staff College, was one of hundreds of CGSC students who participated in the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute's Executive Health and Fitness Assessment program in December 2007. This program is an expansion of the APFRI program from the Army War College.

"Ever since commissioning, I have always exceeded height and weight standards, but met the body fat, Dellinger said." I convinced myself I was just a 'big guy' and could never shed the pounds."

After returning from Iraq in 2006, Dellinger said his body started to "break down." Problems with his legs and feet were exacerbated during the deployment. He had four surgical procedures on his legs and feet, which limited his ability to exercise, thus causing him to gain more weight.

"The results of my physical condition from the APFRI assessment were embarrassing," Dellinger said.



Command and General Staff College student Maj. Scott Dellinger jogs along the path between Trails West Golf Course and Munson Army Health Center on Pope Avenue June 4. Dellinger found success with the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute. His physical transformation was achieved through diet and exercise. He said he runs with significantly less pain now after two years of surgeries to correct leg and foot injuries.
Lamp photo by Prudence Siebert.

The APFRI physical assessment includes blood work, body composition testing, strength and flexibility testing, a submaximal treadmill test, and an out-brief with a qualified professional who reviews the results and communicates a plan of action for each individual. Results from Dellinger's physical assessment were not optimal, and he knew that he could do better. He was unable to perform the aerobic fitness test because of the multiple leg and foot surgeries. His blood pressure was pre-hypertensive and cholesterol levels were not within the healthy range.

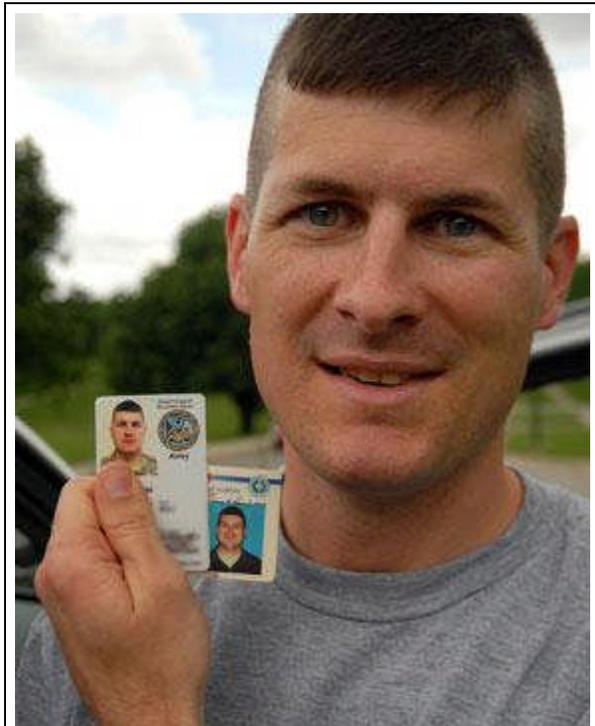
Based on these results, the APFRI out-briefer provided Dellinger specific educational material on diet and exercise to help him improve his blood pressure, weight, and fitness level.

"I must give all the credit to the nurse who performed my out-brief, Ms. Dee Connelly. The packet of information she gave me was invaluable," Dellinger said. "Dee showed me the right way to eat and exercise. APFRI gave me the tools to help myself."

Dellinger said that he has lived by three large glossy handouts depicting the caloric, sodium, fat and cholesterol content of foods.

"No medication - just 100 percent diet and exercise," Dellinger said. "The first two weeks after receiving the results, I obsessed about all the negative data without taking any action, and then my wife found the APFRI folder that I was hiding. We had a long talk regarding the reasons for me to make some dramatic personal changes: family, self-confidence and career. My family is an important part of my story and my reason for getting fit.

"The only reason this was such a wake-up call is because the APFRI assessment was all on one easy-to-read sheet of paper that laid everything on the line," he said.



Command and General Staff College student Maj. Scott Dellinger reveals his driver's license and military identification card, comparing photographs of himself then to his appearance now after his weight loss. Since participating in the APFRI program and following the advice given to him, Dellinger has lost over 53 pounds.

Dellinger's plan of action was to review and learn all he could from the AFPRI handouts. Dellinger learned that his resting metabolic rate, given to him from the Bod Pod results, was 1,959. He then subtracted 10 percent from his RMR and created a daily diet plan of 1,750 calories. His goal was to eat three meals of 500 calories and two snacks of 100 calories daily. He eliminated all fried foods from his diet and increased his intake of dark green vegetables such as broccoli, green beans, and asparagus. Physical therapy has been a challenge for Dellinger because of continued surgeries on his legs and feet. His orthopedic surgeon, Maj. (Dr.) Jeffrey Dean, and the Physical Therapy Department at Munson Army Health Center assisted Dellinger in developing a cardiovascular plan. He is now running approximately three miles, four times per week. Weight training is limited to push ups and sit ups with light free weights and plenty of repetitions.

"I've never felt better," Dellinger said.

To help track his success and end goal, Dellinger developed a line graph and charted his weight every morning. "I am a bit addicted to the chart now, and I obsess over weight gains."

Now that Dellinger is well within his height and weight limits, he has increased his calories to 2,000 and he's still losing weight. His eating habits and physical training plan are now a routine part of life.

"Making these changes was really hard for the first 4-6 weeks," he said. "Now, it is just normal."

After only three months of lifestyle modification, Dellinger had his blood retested. The results were amazing. His total cholesterol went from a very high 273 mg/dL to 158 mg/dL, triglycerides dropped from 175 mg/dL to 73 mg/dL, LDL "bad" cholesterol went from extremely high 205 mg/dL to 112 mg/dL and HDL "good" cholesterol went from 31mg/dL to 33 mg/dL.

His initial weight was 237 pounds. As of May 8, his weight is 177 pounds.

Dellinger lost a total of 53.7 pounds of fat mass - his body fat percentage went from over 30 percent to 16.8 percent. His cholesterol levels are now in the normal range and his body composition, along with physical and aerobic fitness, has greatly improved.

"I think my take-away is that APFRI was my personal 'tipping point,' making it possible to get healthier," Dellinger said.

"Major Dellinger did a phenomenal job with the educational materials offered by APFRI," Connelly said. "He took to heart the information and guidance we provided and changed his exercise and food intake habits - likely with long-lasting results."

A somewhat higher caloric intake, at least meeting the resting metabolic rate calories, would have been equally effective and safe, particularly for a very physically active individual, said Maj. Heidi Kaufman, registered dietitian for APFRI.

If your goal is to lose a significant amount of weight, it would be wise to consult a registered dietitian first, said Kaufman, who is one of three registered dietitians on staff who can help in estimating your target calories and provide ongoing feedback.