

Ed's Stirling Adventure

The University of Stirling is a diverse and multicultural university with staff and students from across the globe. In the spirit of this internationalism, I wanted to attempt something a little bit out-with the typical sporting activity.

I am not someone who is particularly keen on exercise... I own a t-shirt with the phrase 'Armchair athlete: est. 1989' – the year I was born.



But my baby girl is growing fast, and getting quicker on her feet, I'm beginning to feel the strain of my bad habits – smoking, and the cola, and the junk food... I need to get healthier; I can't say I'm ready to join a sports society,

sports club or even a gym. I'm not yet confident enough to do sports.

So this combined set of reasons and thinking, led me to begin the long process of getting fit through a 'gentle' daily exercise plan. Called the [5BX](#) plan (available in [PDF](#)), or the [XBX](#) plan for women (also in [PDF](#) form), it was developed for the Canadian Air Force in the 1950's.

The principle of the plan is to do 5 exercises within 11 minutes. There are six charts, each with a scale of 12 steps from D- to A+, and there is 'where you should be' to be at your peak physical fitness for your age.

The number of times you do each exercise increases with each level of the scale, everybody starts on D- of Chart 1 and works their way up to their level.

For each exercise you're set a limited time, and the ½ mile run and 1 mile walk option (as seen on chart 1) can replace exercise five.

PHYSICAL CAPACITY RATING SCALE

Level	EXERCISE					½ mile run in minutes	1 mile walk in minutes
	1	2	3	4	5		
A+	20	18	18	13	400	5½	17
A	18	17	17	12	375	5½	17
A-	16	15	16	11	335	5½	17
B+	14	13	15	9	320	6	18
B	12	12	14	8	305	6	18
B-	10	11	13	7	280	6	18
C+	8	9	12	6	260	6½	19
C	7	8	10	5	235	6½	19
C-	6	7	8	4	205	6½	19
D+	4	5	6	3	175	7	20
D	3	4	5	3	145	7½	21
D-	2	3	4	2	100	8	21
Minutes for each exercise	2	1	1	1	6		

In my case I managed to raise myself from D- to D+ in 7 days. The plan states you must spend a minimum of 2 days at each level, however 'experienced' you are.

So I did 3 days at level D- and D, and then the final day was D+... as someone who struggles to walk up the hill from Pathfoot to Cottrell, this was an incredible feat.

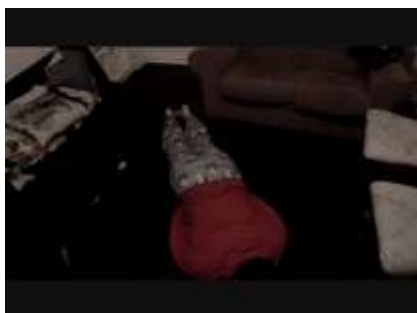


The first exercise is where you stand, feet apart, and bend down to your toes, back up and behind, to count as 1, in chart 1. I need to 2 of these in 2 minutes. This particular exercise quite often leads to the odd crack of your joints.

As you progress through the charts (so chart 2 onwards, each exercise becomes more complex).



The second exercise is to lie on your back with your legs about 6 inches apart, and your arms by your side, to lift your head and shoulders up, from the stomach area, so you can see your heels.

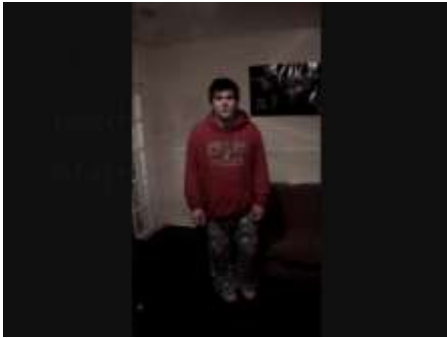


For the D- level I had to do 3 of these in 1 minute.

Regarding the third exercise, you're lying on your belly, legs together, hands palm up under your thighs and you lift head and one of your legs (kept straight) then you're back down, followed by lifting your head again at the same time as the other leg, this counts as 1 of the 4 needed for the D- level of this exercise. This was a particularly difficult exercise for me, some of the noises I made during this were unearthly, but I did get better, as the week progressed. At D- this has to be done in just 1 minute.



Exercise four is to lie face down with your palms down at your shoulder level, with your legs together, to push yourself up using just your arms and hands, to the knees, but keeping them on the ground, move your hands until they're straight down from the middle of your torso, and push yourself down again so your chest touches the ground, then return your hands to their original position underneath your shoulders. That's 1, but I had to do 2 and level D- in 1 minute.

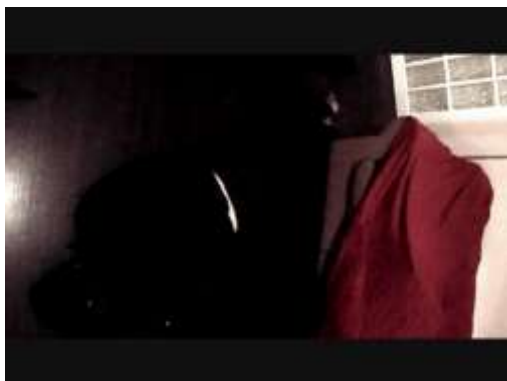


Exercise five is the most rigerous and tiring, in 6 minutes you have to run on the spot (that is 100 steps, where everytime your left foot touches down counted as a step) after the first 75 steps you do 10 Scissor jumps, being a bit bad at co-ordination, I opted for star jumps, which is the requirement of chart two instead of scissor jumps). Then you do the last 25 steps.

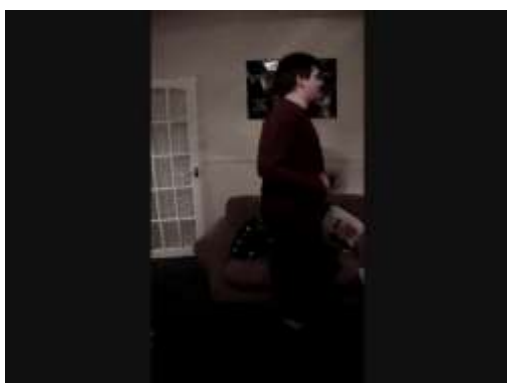
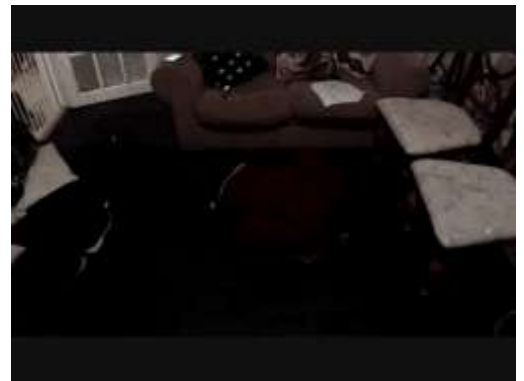


That's a D- and boy was I knackered at the end of this.

At level D, exercise 1 becomes 3 times in 2 minutes...



exercises 2, 3 and 4 become 4, 5 and 3 times in 1 minute.

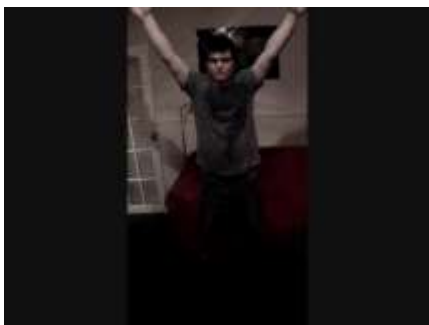


And the number of steps in Exercise 5 becomes 145, which means 75 steps, 10 star jumps and then 70 steps.

I decided on day six to replace the on-the-spot run with the 1 mile walk in 21 minutes around the Stirling Campus, mainly from the bus stop at the Wallace monument down to Pathfoot, and back up to Cottrell, and back down to Pathfoot! That took a little longer than 21 minutes, but it was definitely longer than a mile.

The final day was the biggest jump personally, but instead of rushing through step five I took it in my stride, and made it through.

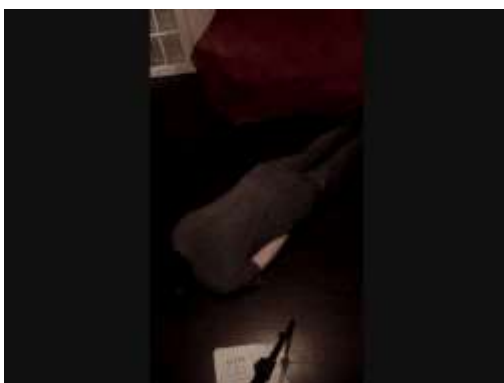
D+ required 4 x of Exercise 1 in 2 minutes



5 x of Exercise 2 in 1 minute...



6x of Exercise 3 in 1 minute...



3 of Exercise 4 in 1 minute...



175 Steps for Exercise 5 (and 20 scissor jumps, that's 2 lots of 10 scissor jumps every 75 steps)... This one left me breathless, but I would have struggled to finish at the start of the week...



At the end of the week...

I severely struggled, but I succeeded. It is a gentler way to build up stamina and improve your exercising, and it only takes 11 minutes, so I plan to continue until I am healthy enough, and confident enough to join one of the many sports societies at Stirling University. My goal is to join the Athletics society, if they'll have me. The only thing I will do is reduce my pace from 3 days at each level to 7 days, just so I can cope a little better with the jumps, which should help me build more confidence. You should be able to follow my journey via Twitter @EdThomas where I'll be using #EdsStirlingAdventure, for weekly updates on getting fit and improving my confidence enough to do sports...

Tags

Eds Stirling Adventure, Exercise, Fitspo, University of Stirling, Healthy, Healthy Living, Sport, Running, Body, Stirling Sports, Athletics

Social Media Plan

Weekly Twitter updates to engage students, to encourage them, with videos of me doing the exercises around the campus, as my personal confidence improves I would include being shown 'alternative' versions of the exercises by different societies and staff at the Sports Complex.

The aim to engage students in sport could be met running some challenge sessions, where myself and members from different sporting societies compete to do each set of exercises within the required time frame, this could be a regular event, Live Streamed on Facebook Live (and YouTube).