

Ranger School Preparation



1. Attrition

The majority of attrition in Ranger School happens during the Ranger Assessment Phase (RAP). The first four days of Ranger School are commonly referred to as RAP Week. 45% of all students who start Ranger School fail to graduate. Over half of those are dropped because they failed a RAP Week event.

RAP Week incorporates several key Must Pass Events that require a GO in order to continue your Ranger training. The RAP Week Must Pass Events are the Ranger Physical Assessment (RPA), Combat Water Survival Assessment (CWSA), Day/Night Combined Land Navigation, and the 12 Mile Foot March. The RPA accounts for approximately 25% of all RAP Week failures. Most of the RPA failures occur during the Push-Up event.

The bottom line: RAP Week Attrition is a direct result of students that are **physically unprepared** to achieve the **minimum** standards. 33% of all Ranger School graduates are recycled, at least once, for failure to meet the standard - - they either lack the knowledge or basic Infantry skills that are required in Ranger School. Additional focus on the Ranger Common Tasks (Section 4) and Battle Drills prior to attendance is a must in order to complete your preparation for Ranger School.

2. RAP Week Preparation

a. RPA (Ranger Physical Assessment)

Standard: The RPA is administered to the standard as depicted in FM 3-22.20. The event consists of the push-up, sit-up, FIVE-mile run, and chin-ups. Regardless of age, the student will be tested in the 17 to 21 year old age bracket, and you must score 70 points per event. This means 49 push-ups, 59 sit-ups, 5 mile run in 40 minutes or less, and 6 chin-ups (with palms facing you), as a minimum, must be achieved.

The prospective Ranger student goal should be 100 points per APFT event and 12 chin-ups prior to attending Ranger School. Units should ensure that their Ranger candidates are able to pass the RPA well beyond the minimum standards prior to reporting to Ranger School. Slow, steady push-up repetitions executed to standard (elbows are locked, your body forms a generally straight plane, and you break the plane on the way down) will ensure you're a GO.

b. 5-Mile Run

Standard: Five mile run in 40 minutes or less (8 minute, + or - 15 sec pace per mile)

5-Mile Run training should include stretching and a calisthenics session with sufficient intensity to produce Total Muscle Failure (TMF) in a moderately fit soldier. This warm-up drill will be conducted during RAP Week. You must train yourself to conduct a thorough warm-up and calisthenics session prior to your long training runs so you will be prepared for the cumulative effect that results from the RPA, CWSA, and the stress of Day 1 Ranger School.

Goal: Your end goal should be to run 5 Miles at a 7:30 pace per mile (total time of 37:30).

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c. Chin-Ups:

The chin-up event is conducted immediately following the 5-Mile Run of the RPA. You must complete a minimum of 6 chin-ups to pass. The start position is achieved by mounting the bar and coming to a motionless hang with palms facing towards your body and arms fully extended overhead. On the command "GO" you will begin by pulling your body up to a motionless pause with your chin over the top of the bar then lower the body down to the start position -- this is one repetition. Remember that you will not be allowed to swing or otherwise use your legs to assist your movement.

Begin your training by assessing your current ability.

d. CWSA (Combat Water Survival Assessment)

Standard: The CWSA consists of three stations:

1. The Log Walk Rope Drop is the first obstacle that must be negotiated. This consist of climbing a 35' tower, followed by walking 70' across a log, negotiate three steps in the center of the log climb out on a rope, commando crawl along the rope, over the water, then drop the 35' into the water. This is done wearing ACU's, boots and a Personnel Floatation Device (PFD)
2. The Ranger Candidate will then swim out of the pond and move to the Suspension traverse (Slide for Life) where he will climb a 75' tower, slide 150 meters down a cable and release into the water when instructed. This is also done wearing a PFD.
3. The final assessment is the Removal of Equipment and 15 Meter Swim.

Equipment Removal: starting at the side of the pond the candidate will enter the water and immediately submerge, discard rifle and remove LCE then begin the 15 meter swim. The 15 Meter Swim out of the pond is conducted wearing ACUs and boots. (NO PFD) Any swim stroke is authorized except the back stroke.

NOTE: All swim events must be accomplished without showing fear.

e. Land Navigation

Standard: Combined (Night into Day) land navigation test: Must find 4 of 5 points in five hours during examination in the Ranger course. Uniform is ACUs, Boots, Patrol Cap, with camelback and a 10 pound DSTARs (GPS) tracking system.

The key to passing the Land Navigation test is practice. Your training must be realistic. You must conduct your training in the same uniform during practice sessions as you will be tested in Ranger School. The Ranger School land navigation test is a combined Night (two hours) into day test approximately 10 kilometers in length. The start time will be adjusted to ensure the Ranger Student has 2 hrs of limited visibility (night) and 3 hrs of daylight. The test starts with the night portion first. Therefore, you must train until you can successfully locate at least 2 points during 2 hrs of limited visibility or you will not make 4 out of 5 points in 5 hours. Most of the Land Navigation failures do not make the time standard. The only way to get faster is to practice.

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Route planning is a skill commonly overlooked by Ranger School's land navigation failures. Keep it simple by using checkpoints (road intersections, streams, prominent terrain, etc) along your route to keep you on track. Another good technique is to pick a backstop to let you know you have gone too far on a given leg of your route. Examples are improved roads, railroad tracks, trails, creeks, and prominent terrain. Picking the furthest point away from your start point during hours of darkness may not be your best bet. Unless you are experienced with land navigation, you should attempt to locate the closest points first. Remember, keep it simple.

f. 12 Mile Foot March

Action: Conduct a 12 mile Foot March, mass start release.

Conditions: Given a Ranger Company in ACU's, boots, FLC, individual weapon, patrol cap, and rucksack containing the appropriate seasonal packing list weighing a minimum 35 lbs (without water), on a 12 mile measured course. Standards: Each Ranger must complete the established distance of the foot march at no slower than a 15-minute per mile pace. Students must complete the foot march with the appropriate packing list.

Historically, there are only a few foot march event failures during RAP Week (varies from 1 to 14 per class). Nevertheless, training for the foot march will set you up for success for the other 8 weeks of Ranger School. Once RAP Week has ended, you will continuously walk with a rucksack over varying terrain while patrolling and conducting technique training in each phase. Soldiers who train for the foot march have fewer injuries and infections from blisters than those soldiers who failed to incorporate foot marching into their preparation program. Focus on toughening your feet as well as strengthening your back (use back specific weight machines and free weight exercises) and abdominal muscles to mitigate injuries and increase your potential for success. Remember to train for the maximum pace standard – not the minimum. This approach will aid you in dealing with the cumulative effect of all the RAP Week events as well as varying weather conditions (i.e. hot/cold).

***Cumulative Effect:**

The physical RAP Week events, when taken individually, are not very difficult. However, RAP Week's cumulative effect will make each task a serious challenge for any Ranger. You must train to the maximum standard on all events to mitigate the cumulative effect produced by these events over a one week period. Lack of sleep, food deprivation, heat and/or cold weather, and the overall stress induced in Ranger School will add to this cumulative effect. You must get yourself ready now.

***Heat Acclimatization:**

Heat Acclimatization is defined as improved tolerance to exercise in heat. Acclimatization does not reduce, and may actually increase, water requirements. The acclimated soldier displays increased sweating to enhance the evaporative cooling capacity of the body. The primary benefit of heat acclimatization is increased work output with reduced cardiovascular, thermal, and metabolic strain on your body. Bottom line: the acclimated soldier can perform at a higher level with decreased risk of personal injury in the heat.

Recent medical studies state that total heat acclimatization requires up to 14 days. Although individuals adapt at a varying rate, significant benefits can be gained in as little as 5-7 days. Therefore we recommend that prospective Ranger students plan to arrive in the Fort Benning area one week prior to their Ranger Class start date. This recommendation is even more critical to those soldiers assigned to moderate or cold climate duty stations.

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4. Ranger Stakes

Knowledge of the 27 Ranger Common Tasks will directly affect the Patrolling grades and Peer Evaluations of each Ranger Student. Ranger candidates need a base knowledge of these tasks in order to be an asset to your squad and platoon while patrolling. Do not become a liability to your squad or platoon because you could not perform one of these common tasks.

Ranger Common Tasks:

1. Maintain a M240B MG
2. Load, Fire, Reduce Stoppage, unload, and clear a M240B MG
3. Maintain a M249 MG
4. Load, Fire, Reduce Stoppage, unload, and clear a M249 MG
5. Prepare a Range Card, M240B MG
6. Employ a M18A1 Claymore Mine
7. Place into Operation and Troubleshoot AN/PRC-119/119A Radio
8. Send Radio Message (Operate SINCGARS Single-Channel)
9. Use Night Vision Device AN/PVS 14's
10. Call For and Adjust Fire
11. Camouflage yourself and your Individual Equipment
12. Navigate from One Point on the Ground to Another Point While Dismounted
13. Determine Grid Coordinates of a Point on a Military Map
14. Determine a Magnetic Azimuth Using a Lensatic Compass
15. Determine the Elevation of a Point on the Ground Using a Map
16. Determine a Location on the Ground by Terrain Association
17. Measure Distance on a Map
18. Convert Azimuths
19. Determine Azimuth Using a Protractor
20. Orient a Map Using a Lensatic Compass
21. Orient a Map to the Ground by Map-Terrain Association
22. Locate an Unknown Point on a Map and on the Ground by Intersection
23. Locate an Unknown Point on the Map and on the Ground by Resection
24. Prepare an M136 Launcher for Firing
25. Navigate Using the Defense Advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) Receiver (DAGR)
26. Operate Multi-Band Inter/Intra Team Radio (MBITR)