

FIELD MANUAL • FM 01



THE VETERAN'S FIELD MANUAL FOR
NUTRITION, TRAINING & MENTAL
TOUGHNESS

*You gave everything for the mission. This is the playbook
for the most important one left — the fight for your own
health, strength, and life after the uniform.*

ACTIVE • TRANSITIONING • RETIRED | **EARN IT EVERY
DAY**

SHRED ARMY

THE VETERAN'S FIELD MANUAL

*Nutrition, training, and mindset for those on active duty,
returning from deployment, and living the retired life.*

SHRED ARMY: The Veteran's Field Manual for Nutrition, Training & Mental Toughness. First Edition.

This book is an educational resource. It is not medical advice and is not a substitute for care from a licensed physician, registered dietitian, physical therapist, or mental-health professional. Always clear a new training or nutrition program with your doctor — especially if you have a service-connected injury, chronic condition, or take medication. If any exercise causes sharp pain, dizziness, or chest discomfort, stop immediately and seek care.

If you are in crisis: the Veterans Crisis Line is available 24/7. Dial **988, then press 1**, or text **838255**. You are not alone, and reaching out is a show of strength.

FOR THE ONES WHO SERVED

*“The discipline that carried you through
basic, through deployments, through the
worst days of your life, did not expire the
moment you took off the uniform.*

It is still yours. Let's put it back to work.”

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THE SHRED ARMY FOUNDATION

Every unit runs on doctrine — a shared set of principles that hold up whether the mission is easy or the worst day of your life. This manual has one, and it fits in five letters. When motivation is gone, when the alarm goes off, when the plate is in front of you, you fall back on the doctrine. You fall back on **SHRED**.

SHRED ARMY is not a supplement, a fad, or a 90-day "transformation" that leaves you worse off in month four. It is a way of operating — the same disciplined, repeatable approach that made you effective in uniform, aimed now at the one objective that outlasts every deployment: **your own body, mind, and years on this earth.**

The five pillars below are the whole book in miniature. Everything that follows is just detail, drills, and reps.

S STRUCTURE

The military gave you a frame for every day — wake, train, eat, work, rest, on a schedule you didn't have to negotiate with yourself. When that frame disappears, health falls apart fast. Pillar one is rebuilding the frame on your own terms. Structure beats willpower every time.

H HABITS (FUEL)

You cannot out-train a bad chow plan. Pillar two is the nutrition system: eating on a rhythm again, hitting your protein, and treating food as fuel for the mission rather than a way to manage stress. Small habits, run daily, win the long war.

R RESISTANCE

Muscle is armor. It protects your joints, guards your metabolism, keeps you independent into old age, and it is the single best insurance policy against the weight that creeps on after service. Pillar three is lifting — and everyone, from 19 to 90, trains it.

E ENDURANCE

Your heart is the engine. Pillar four is conditioning — the rucks, intervals, and steady work that keep your engine strong, your head clear, and your blood pressure off the VA's watch list. Endurance is what lets you do everything else for decades.

D DRIVE

The final pillar is the one that runs the other four: mindset. Finding a new mission, using discipline when motivation quits, protecting your sleep, and never soloing the hard days. Drive is what turns a good week into a good decade.

Motivation gets you off the couch once. Doctrine gets you off the couch a thousand times.

THE SHRED ARMY RULE

PART I

KNOW THE TERRAIN

UNDERSTAND THE FIGHT
BEFORE YOU START IT

*You never walked into an operation blind. Don't walk
into this one blind either.*

THE FIGHT CHANGES SHAPE

Nobody warns you that the hardest transition isn't the deployment — it's coming home. The threat is quieter, slower, and it doesn't wear a uniform. It's the couch, the drive-thru, the desk job, the 2 a.m. scroll. And it wins by default unless you decide to fight it.

Here's the truth that the recruiters and the discharge paperwork skip: your body was built by a system. The military handed you mandatory PT, a mess hall on a schedule, a chain of command that expected you to pass a fitness test, and a peer group all doing the same. Strip that system away overnight and even the fittest soldier can lose the thread — fast.

This isn't weakness. It's physics and biology doing exactly what they do when the inputs change. The good news: the same laws work *for* you the moment you rebuild the inputs. That's what this manual does.

32.7%

OF U.S. VETERANS
ARE OBESE — AND
RISING TOWARD THE
NATIONAL AVERAGE

~30%

CARRY A SERVICE-
CONNECTED
DISABILITY THAT CAN
LIMIT ACTIVITY

3×/wk

EXERCISE SHOWN TO
MEASURABLY LOWER
PTSD SYMPTOMS

Sources: Yale/VA national study of 3,000+ veterans; VA transition health research; meta-analysis of exercise interventions for veterans with PTSD. Full citations at the back of this manual.

Why it hits veterans harder

The transition out of service stacks several forces on top of each other at the same time. Knowing the enemy's playbook is the first step to countering it.

▲ THE METABOLIC CLIFF

In uniform you might have burned through thousands of calories a day on training and movement. Many civilian jobs are sedentary — you can drop from constant motion to eight hours in a chair almost overnight. Your appetite doesn't get the memo for months. The gap becomes stored fat.

THE STRUCTURE VANISHES

Mandatory PT is gone. The mess hall's fixed meal times are gone. Suddenly every meal and every workout is a decision you have to make and defend, dozens of times a day, with no one checking. Decision fatigue quietly wins. Meals get skipped, then replaced with whatever's fast — and meal-skipping followed by fast food is a proven recipe for blood-sugar swings and fat storage.

SLEEP GETS WRECKED

Deployment sleep patterns, hypervigilance, and PTSD-related hyperarousal don't switch off at the airport. Poor sleep scrambles the hormones that govern hunger (ghrelin and leptin), so you wake up hungrier and with less energy to train. It's a loop, and it tightens.

STRESS FINDS THE FRIDGE

Depression and anxiety are common during transition — and both drive emotional eating and kill the motivation to move. Food becomes a coping tool the same way it does for anyone under pressure, except a veteran is often carrying more pressure with less structure to absorb it.

THE MISSION IS GONE

This is the quiet one, and often the deepest. In uniform, your fitness had a *purpose* bigger than you — the mission, the unit, the person to your left and right. Take that away and "working out" can feel pointless. Pillar D exists precisely to give you a new one.

★ BATTLE-TESTED TRUTH

None of these forces are permanent, and none of them are a character flaw. They are predictable results of a system being removed. Rebuild a system of your own — which is exactly what SHRED does — and the same biology that worked against you starts working for you within weeks.

WHERE YOU STAND RIGHT NOW

This manual serves three groups of warriors. The doctrine is identical; the application shifts with where you're standing. Find yourself below — you'll come back to your track in every chapter.

The Active-Duty Warrior

Still in, still tested, still expected to perform. Your job here is **performance and durability** — training that improves your PT score and your job capability while protecting the joints and back you'll want intact for the next fifty years. You also have a rare asset: the structure is still handed to you. Use it to build habits that will outlast your contract.

The Transitioning Veteran

Recently out, or on your way. This is the highest-risk window — the structure just disappeared and the new one isn't built yet. Your job is to **rebuild the frame** before the metabolic cliff and the couch set the terms. Start smaller than your ego wants; consistency now beats intensity that burns out in three weeks.

The Retired Veteran

Years or decades out. Maybe carrying old injuries, extra weight, or a diagnosis or two. Your job is **longevity, strength, and independence** — training that keeps you strong, mobile, off medications where possible, and able to do everything you want to do at 60, 70, 80 and beyond. It is never, ever too late. Muscle and cardiovascular fitness respond at every age.

► SET YOUR OBJECTIVE

Before you turn the page, name your track and write one sentence: *"By the end of the 30-Day Boot-Up, I will _____."* Make it specific and modest enough that you'll actually hit it. Winning the first objective is how you earn the belief to chase bigger ones.

PART II

FUEL

PILLARS S & H —
STRUCTURE & HABITS

*You cannot out-train the fork. Win the kitchen and
everything else gets easier.*

EAT LIKE THE MISSION DEPENDS ON IT

Because it does. Food is not a reward, a punishment, or a way to manage a bad day. It's fuel and building material for the body you're asking to carry you through the next several decades. Fuel it like equipment you can never replace — because it is.

Step 1: Rebuild the rhythm

Before you count a single gram, fix the **when**. The mess hall wasn't magic — it was a schedule, and a schedule is what kept your blood sugar, energy, and appetite stable. Rebuild it:

- Anchor **three meals at roughly the same times** every day — including weekends. Your body runs on rhythm.
- Do not skip breakfast and then demolish a 1,000-calorie dinner. That swing is exactly what drives fat storage.
- Build a "**meal, not a snack**" **default**: a plate you sit down to, not a bag you graze from.

Step 2: Build the plate

Forget complicated diets. Use the **SHRED Plate** — a field-expedient rule you can run in any chow hall, kitchen, or restaurant on earth, no scale required.

HALF THE PLATE	A QUARTER	A QUARTER	A THUMB
Vegetables & fruit	Protein	Smart carbs	Healthy fats
Color and volume — broccoli, greens, peppers, berries. Fills you up, low calorie, loaded with what your body repairs itself with.	Palm-sized: chicken, beef, fish, eggs, Greek yogurt, beans. The build-and-repair pillar.	Rice, potatoes, oats, whole grains. Your training fuel — earn them with movement.	Olive oil, nuts, avocado. Small amounts; supports hormones and joints.

The SHRED Plate — a no-math template for every meal. Adjust the carb quarter up on hard training days, down on rest days.

Step 3: Win the protein war

If you change one thing about how you eat, make it this. Protein is the nutrient that builds and defends muscle, keeps you full so you eat less without trying, and costs your body the most energy to digest. Most veterans who gain weight after service are chronically *under* on protein and over on everything else.

★ THE NUMBER TO HIT

Aim for roughly **0.7 to 1.0 gram of protein per pound of your target body weight** each day (about 1.6–2.2 g/kg — the range research consistently supports for building and keeping muscle). A 200-lb veteran targeting a lean 190 is looking at roughly **140–190 g/day**. Spread it across your meals — 30–50 g per plate.

PROTEIN SOURCE	SERVING	PROTEIN
Chicken breast	6 oz cooked	~50 g
Lean ground beef (90/10)	6 oz cooked	~46 g
Canned tuna / salmon	1 can	~40 g
Eggs	3 large	~18 g
Greek yogurt (plain)	1 cup	~23 g
Cottage cheese	1 cup	~24 g
Whey protein	1 scoop	~24 g
Black beans / lentils	1 cup cooked	~16 g

Keep two or three "fast protein" options (eggs, yogurt, tuna, a shaker of whey) on hand at all times.
Removing friction is how you win the habit.

FROM CHOW HALL TO HOME KITCHEN

You already know how to follow a system — you just need a civilian one. These are the field-expedient habits that do 90% of the work.

Hydrate first

Thirst masquerades as hunger constantly. Start every day with a big glass of water and keep a bottle within reach. A simple target: **half your body weight in ounces** per day, more on training days or in heat. If your urine is dark, you're behind — drink.

Cook once, eat three times

Meal prep is just pre-mission planning for food. One or two cooking sessions a week — a tray of chicken, a pot of rice, a pan of roasted vegetables — and you've removed every "what do I eat" decision that would otherwise send you to a drive-thru. Prepared food beats good intentions.

Engineer your environment

Discipline is easier when the terrain favors you. Don't rely on willpower at 9 p.m. — win the fight at the grocery store.

- **Stock the win:** if it's in the house, you'll eat it. Fill the fridge with protein, fruit, and vegetables you actually like.
- **Add friction to the loss:** don't keep the chips and ice cream on the counter. Out of sight genuinely means out of mouth.
- **Default to water:** liquid calories — soda, sweet coffee, energy drinks, alcohol — are the easiest place to be drinking a second dinner without noticing.

△ THE ALCOHOL BRIEF

Alcohol is a triple threat to every goal in this book: it's dense empty calories, it wrecks the sleep that governs your hunger and recovery, and it lowers the guard that keeps you from a 1 a.m. run to the drive-thru. You don't have to be a monk — but if the weight won't move and the training won't stick, this is very often the hidden reason. Cut it to weekends, then to occasions, and watch what happens.

Supplements: what's actually worth it

Save your money. The supplement industry sells the illusion that a powder replaces the work. It doesn't. But a short list has real evidence behind it:

- **Protein powder (whey or plant):** not magic — just a convenient, cheap way to hit your protein number on busy days.
- **Creatine monohydrate (5 g/day):** the most studied, most reliable performance supplement there is. Helps strength, muscle, and increasingly, cognition. Cheap and safe for healthy adults.
- **Vitamin D & omega-3s:** worth a conversation with your doctor, especially if you're indoors a lot or eat little fish.
- **Creatine before pre-workout:** skip the mega-dose stimulant tubs. Coffee does the job for a fraction of the cost.

Always run new supplements past your physician or pharmacist, especially alongside prescription medication or a service-connected condition.

▮ THE ONE-WEEK FUEL ORDER

Don't overhaul everything. This week: (1) hit your protein target every day, (2) eat three meals at set times, (3) make water your default drink. Master those three and you've done more than most fad diets ever deliver. Add the next layer next week.

PART III

TRAIN

PILLARS R & E —
RESISTANCE & ENDURANCE

*Muscle is armor. Your heart is the engine. Build both, for
life.*

THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Before the programs, the principles. Follow these and almost any reasonable plan works. Ignore them and the fanciest program on the internet will still get you hurt or nowhere.

1. CONSISTENCY OUTRANKS INTENSITY

The best program is the one you'll still be running in six months. Three solid sessions a week for a year beats a two-week "beast mode" blitz that ends in an injury or burnout. Show up. Volume of showing-up is the whole game.

2. PROGRESSIVE OVERLOAD IS THE MISSION

Your body only changes when you ask it to do a little more than last time — one more rep, five more pounds, one less minute of rest. Keep a simple log and beat your last number. That's it. That's the secret the whole industry is built on.

3. TRAIN MOVEMENTS, NOT JUST MUSCLES

Build your training around the six human movements you'll use until the day you die: **squat, hinge, push, pull, carry, and walk/run**. Get strong at these and you're functionally strong for real life — lifting a grandkid, moving furniture, standing up off the floor at 80.

4. RECOVERY IS WHERE YOU GET STRONGER

Training is the stimulus; you actually adapt while resting and sleeping. More is not better — *better* is better. Two to three quality strength sessions plus movement most days beats grinding yourself into the ground daily.

5. WARM UP, THEN WORK

Five to ten minutes: light cardio to raise the temperature, then easy versions of the day's movements. This is non-negotiable insurance for backs, shoulders, and knees that may already have miles on them.

★ READ YOUR TRACK

Next up are three programs — **Active Duty**, **Transitioning**, and **Retired**. Run the one that matches where you stand. They share the same DNA; they differ in load, volume, and how hard you push. You can always start one track down and graduate up — earning the next level is the point.

PROGRAM A

ACTIVE DUTY

Objective: Perform and endure. Improve your PT score and job capability while armor-plating the joints and spine you'll need for the next fifty years. **Structure:** 4 days — two strength, two conditioning — plus daily movement.

DAY 1 & 3 — STRENGTH (ALTERNATE A/B)

MOVEMENT	SETS × REPS	NOTES
Back squat (A) / Deadlift (B)	4 × 5	Heavy, clean form, full rest
Bench press (A) / Overhead press (B)	4 × 6	Control the lowering
Pull-ups / Rows	4 × max-8	Add weight when you clear 10
Walking lunge	3 × 10/leg	Dumbbells or ruck
Loaded carry	3 × 40 m	Farmer or ruck — brace the core
Hanging knee raise / plank	3 sets	Direct core work

DAY 2 & 4 — CONDITIONING

DAY	SESSION	TARGET
Day 2 — Intervals	6–8 × 400 m run, or 30s hard / 90s easy on any machine	Builds your PT-test engine
Day 4 — Ruck / Long	45–75 min ruck (25–35 lb) or steady run/row	Zone 2 — conversational pace

▮ ACTIVE-DUTY EDGE

You still have the structure most veterans wish they had back. Don't just coast on unit PT — use these years to build strength and habits that survive your ETS date. The soldier who lifts and rucks with intent leaves service with a body and a routine already built. That's the real head start.

PROGRAM B

TRANSITIONING

Objective: Rebuild the frame. Re-establish a training routine that survives contact with civilian life — a new job, a new city, no one making you show up.

Structure: 3 full-body days a week. Simple, repeatable, hard to skip.

This is the highest-risk window, so the plan is deliberately **simple and forgiving**. Three days, same template each time, movements you already know. The goal for month one is not a personal record — it's *not missing sessions*. Prove to yourself the routine is back before you chase numbers.

MOVEMENT	SETS × REPS	SWAP IF NEEDED
Goblet or back squat	3 × 8	Box squat / leg press
Push-up or bench press	3 × 8–12	Incline / knee push-up
Dumbbell row	3 × 10	Machine row / band row
Romanian deadlift	3 × 8	Hip hinge with light DBs
Overhead press	3 × 8	Landmine / seated press
Plank + carry finisher	3 rounds	Any core you can do pain-free

Run this same session Monday / Wednesday / Friday. Add a little weight or a rep whenever a set feels easy.

CONDITIONING — ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET

On two or three non-lifting days, **walk or ruck for 20–40 minutes**. That's the whole cardio prescription for now. Walking is the most underrated tool in this manual — it burns fat, clears the head, costs nothing, and you'll never be too sore or too rusty to do it. Build the walking habit and you build the base everything else stands on.

★ THE TWO-MINUTE RULE

On the days you least want to train, make the deal with yourself to *just show up and do two minutes*. Put on the shoes, do one set. Almost every time, you'll finish the session — and on the rare day you don't, you still kept the streak and the identity alive. Missing is the only real failure. Everything else is reps.

PROGRAM C

RETIRED

Objective: Longevity, strength, and independence. Keep the muscle, mobility, and heart that let you live life on your own terms — and stay off the surgeon's and the pharmacist's list as long as possible. **Structure:** 2–3 strength days plus daily walking.

Hear this clearly: **it is never too late, and you are not too old.** Muscle and cardiovascular fitness improve at every age — studies put people in their 70s, 80s, even 90s on strength programs and they get stronger. After 50, the body sheds muscle every year unless you fight for it, and that lost muscle is what steals independence. Every set you do is a direct deposit into staying strong, steady on your feet, and free.

MOVEMENT	SETS × REPS	FOCUS
Sit-to-stand (chair squat)	3 × 8–12	The single most important movement for independence
Incline / wall push-up	3 × 8–12	Upper-body strength, joint-friendly
Seated or supported row	3 × 10–12	Posture and pulling strength
Hip hinge (light) / bridges	3 × 10	Protects the low back
Step-ups (low step)	2 × 8/leg	Legs, balance, stairs for life
Balance holds + calf raises	2–3 rounds	Fall prevention — a big deal

Use light dumbbells, bands, or bodyweight. Move slowly, breathe, and never train through sharp joint pain. Two sessions a week is enough to change everything.

CARDIO & MOBILITY

Walk every day you can — aim to build toward 7,000–8,000 steps. Add gentle mobility or stretching for the areas that get stiff. Swimming and cycling are outstanding if your joints prefer them. The dose that matters most is the one you'll repeat.

► TRAIN AROUND, NOT THROUGH

Old injuries and service-connected conditions are the norm, not the exception, in this group. They are reasons to modify — not reasons to quit. There is almost always a version of every movement you *can* do pain-free. A physical therapist (the VA can refer you) is worth their weight in gold for building a plan around what your body allows today.

RECOVERY & THE BEAT-UP BODY

Every veteran carries some mileage. The mission is to train for decades — which means respecting recovery as part of the work, not a break from it.

The recovery checklist

- **Sleep 7–9 hours.** The single most powerful recovery tool that exists. More on this in Part IV.
- **Eat your protein.** You can't rebuild tissue without the raw material.
- **Take rest days seriously.** Soreness is normal; sharp or joint pain is a signal — listen to it.
- **Move on off days.** A walk or easy mobility work speeds recovery more than lying flat.
- **Deload occasionally.** Every 6–8 weeks, take a lighter week. You'll come back stronger.

▲ PAIN VS. DISCOMFORT

Discomfort — burning muscles, heavy breathing, general soreness — is the work; push through it. **Pain** — sharp, stabbing, in a joint, or that lingers for days — is a stop sign. Don't be the tough guy who trains through a real injury and loses six months. The disciplined move is to back off, modify, and get it looked at.

Working with the VA

Use what you earned. The VA offers physical therapy, the **MOVE!** weight-management program, whole-health and fitness resources, and referrals to specialists. If you have a service-connected condition, a professional can build these programs around it. Asking for that help isn't weakness — it's using your assets, same as you always did.

PART IV

DRIVE

PILLAR D — THE ENGINE
OF THE OTHER FOUR

Discipline when motivation quits. Purpose when the mission is gone. You've done harder things than this.

DISCIPLINE OVER MOTIVATION

Motivation is a mood. It shows up when it wants and leaves without notice. You already know the thing that got you through basic, through the ruck when your feet were destroyed, through the deployment — and it wasn't motivation. It was discipline. That's still in you. This chapter is about pointing it at yourself.

Fall back on the standard, not the feeling

Waiting to "feel like" training is how civilians fail. You were trained differently. You don't negotiate with the standard — you meet it. Decide your training days in advance, put them on the calendar like a duty, and then simply **do the thing whether you feel like it or not**. Ninety percent of the battle is deleting the daily debate.

★ SYSTEMS BEAT WILLPOWER

Willpower is a battery that drains through the day. Systems don't. Lay your gym clothes out the night before. Train at the same time daily. Prep your food on Sunday. Every decision you make *once*, in advance, is a decision you don't have to win with willpower forty times later.

Find the new mission

In uniform your fitness served something bigger than you. That "why" is the most powerful fuel there is, and losing it is why so many veterans drift. So **build a new one**. It has to be yours, and it has to be bigger than the mirror:

- **People:** being here, strong and present, for your kids, your spouse, your parents, your battle buddies.
- **Purpose:** a goal with a flag on it — a ruck event, a first pull-up in years, coaching, a charity race for the fallen.
- **Standard:** refusing to become a statistic. Deciding that the discipline that defined your service still defines you.

Write your why down. Put it where you'll see it on the hard mornings. When motivation is gone — and it will be — the mission is what remains.

You were never the type to quit on your unit. Don't quit on the one person who has to carry you the rest of the way.

THE SHRED ARMY RULE

SLEEP, STRESS & THE MIND-BODY FRONT

Training and nutrition are two legs of the stool. The third is what's happening between your ears and on your pillow — and for many veterans, it's the leg that needs the most attention.

Guard your sleep like a perimeter

Sleep is not lazy — it's the window where your body rebuilds muscle, balances the hormones that control your hunger, and clears your head. Poor sleep alone can stall fat loss and torch your motivation. Defend it:

- **Same wake time** every day — even weekends. Anchors the whole system.
- **Wind-down SOP:** screens down, lights low, room cool and dark for the last 30–60 minutes.
- **Cut caffeine** after early afternoon and **alcohol** near bedtime — both wreck deep sleep.
- **If PTSD, nightmares, or hyperarousal own your nights**, treat it as a real, treatable injury — because it is. Talk to the VA or a provider. You don't have to white-knuckle it.

Exercise is medicine for the mind

This isn't a motivational slogan — it's in the research. Studies of veterans show that regular physical exercise can **measurably reduce the symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety**. In controlled trials, programs combining aerobic and strength training a few times a week — and practices like yoga — produced real drops in symptom severity, working through the same reward and activation systems that trauma disrupts. No study found it made things worse.

► TRAIN FOR THE HEAD, NOT JUST THE BODY

On the days the weight loss or the muscle feels far off, train anyway — for the 90 minutes of calmer, clearer mind that follow a hard session. Many veterans find the gym or the trail becomes their most reliable tool for managing stress, anger, and the dark days. That alone is reason enough to show up. It is an adjunct to real treatment, never a replacement — use both.

Never solo the hard days

You didn't operate alone, and you weren't built to heal alone either. The **battle-buddy system** is as powerful for your health as it was downrange:

- Find one person to train with, or just to text "done" after every session. Accountability you'll actually feel.
- Plug into a veteran fitness community — there are groups built entirely around getting vets moving together again.
- Watch your six, and let someone watch yours. If a buddy's going dark, reach out. It works both ways.

▲ REACH OUT — IT'S STRENGTH, NOT WEAKNESS

If you're struggling with your mental health, thoughts of self-harm, or just can't find the ground under you, get backup now. The **Veterans Crisis Line** is confidential and staffed 24/7: dial **988 then press 1**, or text **838255**. Making that call is the same courage you showed in uniform — pointed, this time, at saving your own life.

PART V

THE 30-DAY BOOT-UP

YOUR FIRST MONTH BACK
IN THE FIGHT

*Don't plan the year. Win the first thirty days. Momentum
does the rest.*

ORDERS FOR THE FIRST MONTH

Thirty days is enough to prove the doctrine works and to feel the change. The plan is intentionally modest — the objective is a **perfect attendance record**, not heroics. Run your training track from Part III inside this weekly frame.

WEEK	FUEL FOCUS (H)	TRAIN FOCUS (R+E)	DRIVE FOCUS (D)
Week 1 Set the frame	3 meals at set times. Hit protein daily. Water as default drink.	3 strength sessions. Walk 15–20 min on off days.	Write your "why" and set your one 30-day objective.
Week 2 Add the reps	Build the SHRED Plate at every meal. Prep food once this week.	Add a little weight or a rep. Walks to 25–30 min.	Recruit a battle buddy or accountability text partner.
Week 3 Tighten it up	Cut one liquid-calorie / alcohol habit. Keep protein locked in.	Add one conditioning/interval or ruck session.	Lock a consistent wake time and a wind-down routine.
Week 4 Prove it	Run the whole system on autopilot — no perfection, just consistency.	Beat a Week-1 number. Note what's easier now.	Review your objective. Set the next 30-day mission.

Miss a day? You haven't failed — you've done what every operator does: adjust and continue the mission the next day. Only quitting counts as failure.

Daily standard — the non-negotiables

- ☐ Hit my protein target
- ☐ Three real meals, water as my default drink
- ☐ Train or walk — movement happened today
- ☐ Protect my sleep window

☐ Checked in with, or on, a battle buddy

★ THE ONLY METRIC THAT MATTERS IN MONTH ONE

Not the scale. Not the mirror. **Attendance.** Count the days you kept the daily standard. Aim for 25 out of 30. Do that, and the body composition, the strength, the mood — all of it follows. Consistency first; results are its shadow.

THE MISSION IS YOU

You already have everything this takes. Not because a book gave it to you — because the service did. The discipline, the toughness, the ability to do hard things on days you didn't feel like it, the habit of showing up for something bigger than yourself. None of that expired.

The country asked a great deal of you, and you gave it. This is the part where you give some of that same commitment back to the one person who carried the mission on their own two feet the whole time: **you**.

Run the doctrine. Structure your days. Build your **H**abits around real fuel. Put on the armor of **R**esistance training and the engine of **E**ndurance. And keep the **D**rive burning with a mission worth getting up for.

Not perfectly. Not all at once. Just today — and then again tomorrow. That's how every long campaign was ever won.



*Same discipline.
New mission.
Earn it every day.*

WHERE TO GET BACKUP

IMMEDIATE MENTAL-HEALTH SUPPORT

Veterans Crisis Line — 24/7, confidential. Dial **988**, then **press 1**; text **838255**; or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net. For any veteran in distress, or worried about one.

HEALTH, FITNESS & NUTRITION

- **VA MOVE! Weight Management Program** — free, evidence-based weight and lifestyle support for veterans.
- **VA Whole Health & physical therapy** — ask your VA provider for a referral to PT or whole-health coaching, especially with a service-connected condition.
- **Veteran fitness nonprofits** — several organizations exist specifically to get veterans training again, including those focused on combat-injured vets. Search "veteran fitness foundation" plus your area.
- **Your primary-care provider or a registered dietitian** — the right first call before any major training or diet change.

SELECTED SOURCES BEHIND THIS MANUAL

Yale University / VA national study on veteran obesity (32.7% obesity prevalence, rising toward the national average).

Research on military-to-civilian transition and its effects on weight, metabolism, meal structure, sleep, and mental health.

Meta-analysis of exercise interventions for PTSD in veterans (aerobic, resistance, and yoga; measurable symptom reduction; no adverse effect on symptoms).

Sports-nutrition consensus on protein intake for muscle (~1.6–2.2 g/kg body weight per day).

VA physical-fitness and weight-management program resources.

⚠ ONE LAST STANDING ORDER

This manual is education, not medical advice. Before you change how you train or eat — especially with an injury, a chronic condition, or medication — clear it with your doctor. Then get after it.

SHRED ARMY • EARN IT EVERY DAY