

"Shape Up"

Is More Than Buzzwords Aboard This Cruiser

By Ltjg. Sarah A. O'Hare,
USS Port Royal

Physical fitness is a top priority aboard the Aegis-class, guided missile cruiser USS *Port Royal*. "Physical fitness affects every aspect of your daily life," explains the command master chief, ETCM(SS) Mark S. Marshall. "In *Port Royal*, we acknowledge this and strive to push each crew member to the maximum fitness level of which he or she is capable."

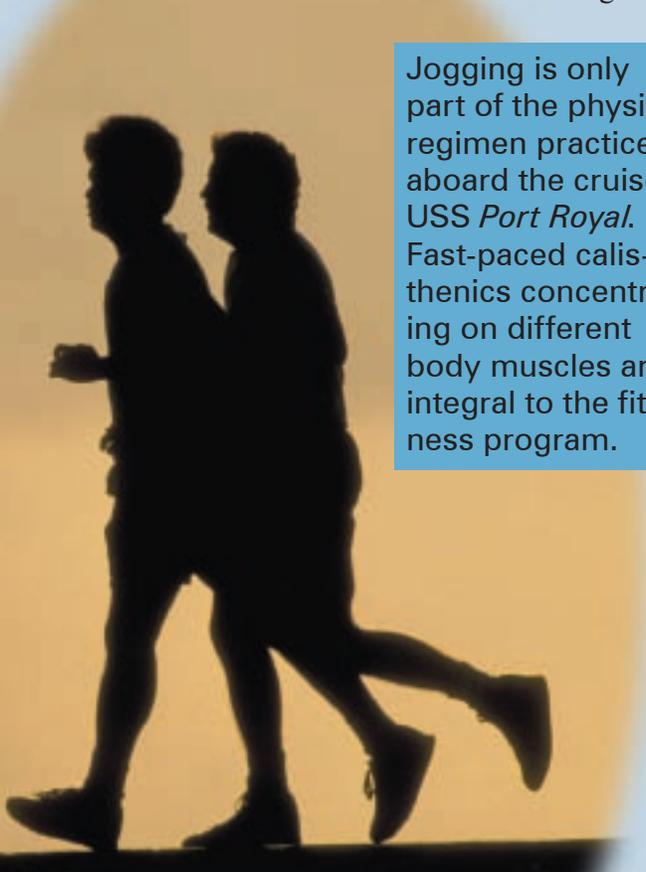
To achieve this, the ship requires each Sailor to attend two intensive, command physical-training sessions weekly. All crew members who fail to meet Navy physical fitness standards must enroll in the ship's Fitness Enhancement Program. There is also another program, "Chow This," for interested crew members.

FCC(SW) Shaun Hilton, the command fitness leader, and Ltjg. Bill Nesbitt, the fitness officer, pair up every Tuesday and Thursday morning to motivate and physically challenge *Port Royal* crew members during command physical training. "The great thing is that we recognize the benefits of a solid physical-fitness program. I've often heard others say they don't have the time for command physical training. They couldn't be more wrong," exclaims Ltjg. Nesbitt. "A physically fit crew is capable of accomplishing more in less time than a crew with poor physical-fitness standards."

While the command physical-training program is meant to be challenging, safety is still of paramount concern. Chief Hilton makes sure each morning session begins with a 15-minute warmup-and-stretching routine. "I've been involved with command fitness for just over four years. One thing I've learned is the importance of a thorough

warmup-and-stretch routine. This greatly reduces injuries," he explains.

After the warmup, the chief turns things over to Ltjg. Nesbitt. On Tuesdays, the exercise regimen consists of fast-paced calisthenics, followed by a one-and-a-half-mile-plus run. Ltjg. Nesbitt has a large repertoire of exercises, many he learned during his years at the U.S. Naval Academy. As he demonstrates each exercise, he explains the muscle group the exercise is intended to build. Usually, he chooses a combination of exercises concentrating



Jogging is only part of the physical regimen practiced aboard the cruiser USS *Port Royal*. Fast-paced calisthenics concentrating on different body muscles are integral to the fitness program.



Some crew members don't limit their exercise to taking part in shipboard physical-fitness training. They supplement it with exercising on their own and use routines they learned from participating in the ship's program.

on a particular area. "I have several routines," Ltjg. Nesbitt explains. "Some concentrate on legs, others on the back and upper body, and numerous concentrate on the abdominal muscles. My routines are pretty fast-paced, with stretching incorporated between exercises."

Once the lieutenant finishes exercising the crew, it is time for the run. Each participating runner sets his or her own pace for the mile-and-a-half course.

On Thursday mornings, the crew musters for very different physical training because Thursday is circuit-training day. "Chief Hilton starts things with the usual warmup and stretching," explains Ltjg. Nesbitt. "Then, I divide the crew into seven stations; each station includes a specific exercise such as flutter kicks,

USS *Port Royal* also offers its Sailors "Chow This," a 16-week dietary program to supplement the ship's overall physical-fitness program. "Chow This" educates crew members about nutrition and weight-loss techniques.

eight-count bodybuilders, wind-sprints, or calf-raises."

Crew members get 90 seconds at each station, followed by a 90-second interval to shift stations. The circuit stations are numbered clockwise, but the crew shifts by running counter-clockwise, adding an aerobic component between each circuit. Fitness representatives, normally junior officers and command fitness assistants, conduct a quick demonstration. Then, at the sound of a long whistle, the exercise begins.

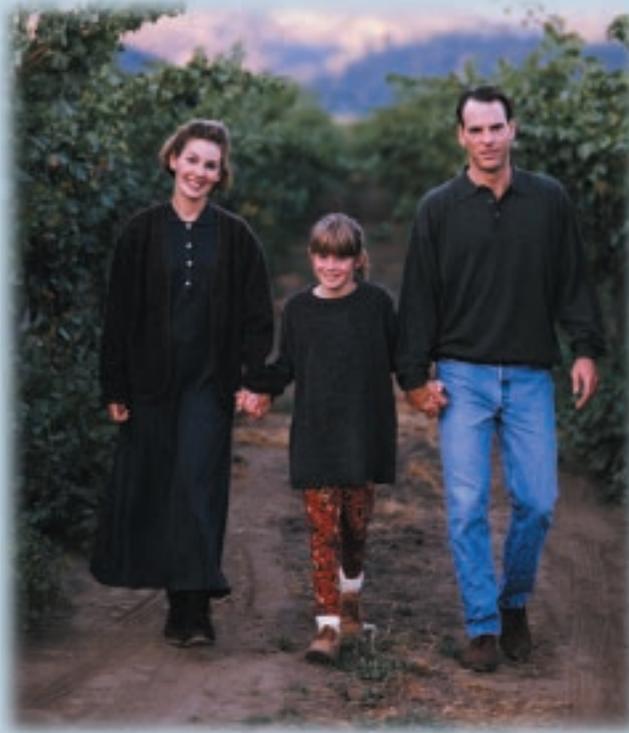
Four short whistles inform the station runners to wrap things up, and at the sound of three short whistles, participants know it's time to shift.

PO2 Michelle Oliverio, who got an outstanding-low on her last PRT, strongly believes in fitness. She keeps herself in shape by also exercising on her own several times a week. "Though my own routine varies from our command physical-training exercises, I feel it's a well-rounded regimen," she says. "Because Chief Hilton and Ltjg. Nesbitt cycle through various routines, I've learned several new exercises from participating."



Capt. Lee J. Geanuleas, *Port Royal's* commanding officer, affirms his commitment to improving his crew's fitness by rewarding those who show improvement. "With the exception of the crew members who got an outstanding-high on the April PRT, I'd like to see you all improve at least one or more categories in the upcoming PRT," he challenged *Port Royal* Sailors before last October's physical-fitness assessment (PFA) and physical-readiness test (PRT). "There will be rewards for the five most-improved crew members," he proposed. Once the results of those PFAs and PRTs were tallied, results showed 31.5 percent of crew members improved their performance by at least one fitness level. Also, 72-hour, 48-hour, or 24-hour special-liberty chits were awarded to Sailors who earned outstanding-high, outstanding-medium, or outstanding-low, respectively, on their PRTs.

While rewarding its Sailors who successfully complete the PFA and the PRT, the ship also helps those who fail, or those who want to improve. The command Fitness Enhancement Program is one way *Port Royal* promotes lifestyle changes to improve individual health and fitness. Program participation is mandatory for those who fail Navy physical-fitness standards. The program requires all medically-cleared participants to attend an hour of strenuous calisthenics once a month. During these sessions, Sailors are tested regularly to monitor their progress. Participating crew members also receive counseling from one of *Port Royal's* two certified physical-fitness trainers, Ltjg. Nesbitt or PO1 Christopher M. Frances. Each counseling session includes a one-on-one discussion about recom-



Physical fitness should not be limited to passing PRTs. Exercising regularly and including family members makes for more rewarding off-duty time. Being in good physical shape also contributes to a good mental state.

ended lifestyle practices to increase fitness. The cruiser has another program, "Chow This," to improve the crew's physical fitness. The 16-week program is spearheaded by HMCS(SW) Diego F. Gonzalez, and it offers anyone the opportunity to learn proper nutrition and weight-loss techniques. The program also includes an exercise regimen aimed at those Sailors who do not meet Navy physical standards. This regimen includes one-hour weekly meetings and bi-weekly exercise sessions in the ship's gym. During meetings, participants share common problems, lessons learned, goals, and they encourage one another to continue striving for physically improving themselves through patience and perseverance. For example, when 17 *Port Royal* Sailors recently volunteered for the program, their height, weight and body-fat percentages were measured. When they completed the 16-week program, seven of them had lost more than 20 pounds, three had lost between 10 and 12 pounds, and the remaining seven had lost between 3 and 8 pounds. The average percentage of body fat each participant lost was six percent. Eleven participants successfully met established Navy physical-fitness standards and passed the fitness portion of the PRT the following cycle. Those crew members who finished "Chow This" also continue to make healthier lifestyle changes to improve their overall physical and mental state.

Port Royal's overall physical-fitness outlook and associated programs have proven very successful and have helped the ship's Sailors to improve their physical appearance, stamina, and endurance while losing some weight along the way. 🌊