



Personal Fitness

Merit Badge Study Guide

• Organize thoughts to prepare • Take notes • Keep track of progress

Merit badge counselors may not require the use of this or any other workbook. Scouts must still demonstrate that have learned the material and can perform each required skill. If a requirement directs you to discuss, show, "tell, explain, demonstrate, identify, or anything similar, the requirement must be completed as written. No one may add to or remove anything from the official requirements listed in Scoutbook or on scouting.org/skills/merit-badges.

The requirements were revised in 2026 • This guide was updated in January 2026.

Scout's Name: _____ Unit: _____

Counselor's Name: _____ Phone No.: _____ Email: _____

Read the merit badge pamphlet available at scouting.org/merit-badges/personal-fitness/

View the helpful video resources for each requirement at scouting.org/merit-badges/personal-fitness/

1. Defining Personal Fitness. Explain to your counselor what personal fitness means to you, including:

- (a) Describe a person who is physically fit.

Notes

- (b) Describe a person who is mentally, emotionally and socially fit.

Notes

- (c) Describe a person who is spiritually fit.

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- (d) Explain why it is important to be fit in all of these ways.

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- (e) Discuss how each aspect of personal fitness relates to the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Notes

2. Monitoring Your Health. Do the following:

- (a) Discuss with your counselor the importance of having a physical examination each year. Discuss why overall health, immunizations, medications, allergies, and medical history are covered during an examination. Tell your counselor when you last underwent a physical examination.

Notes

- (b) Explain why it is important to have a routine dental examination. Explain what preventive or corrective treatments your dentist can provide, and why daily oral care is an important part of staying well. Tell your counselor when you last underwent a dental examination.

Notes

3. Your Fitness Knowledge and Habits. Do the following with your counselor:

- (a) Explain the physical exercise you regularly do, whether your routine includes all four components of physical fitness (cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition), and how your current practices increase or decrease your likelihood of developing cardiovascular disease or other conditions in adulthood.

Notes

- (b) Discuss what harmful substances you consciously avoid, and how these actions affect your risk factors now and in the future.

Notes

- (c) Explain what common diseases can be prevented or mitigated by vaccinations, and whether you are immunized according to the advice of your healthcare provider and the direction of your parent or guardian.

Notes

- (d) Discuss how good nutrition is related to the other components of personal fitness, and if you follow a nutritious, balanced diet.

Notes

- (e) Discuss what a healthy weight is for you, and what you do to maintain a healthy weight.

Notes

- (f) Explain why getting adequate sleep is important, and whether you get enough hours of sleep each night.

Notes

- (g) Discuss whether you spend quality time with your family and friends in social and recreational activities, and how you contribute to creating and maintaining a good home life.

Notes

4. Measures of Physical Fitness. Determine with your counselor the assessments of physical fitness and nutrition you will do before, during, and after completing the 12-week program in requirement 7.

- (a) Include a measure of cardiorespiratory (aerobic) fitness: Record the time required to complete a mile walk or run as fast as you can. If you are unable to walk or run as a result of a disability that is permanent or is expected to last for longer than two years, work with your counselor to define a test with a similar degree of aerobic challenge.
- (b) Include two measures of muscular strength and endurance: Record either the number of sit-ups done in 60 seconds OR how long a plank was held; AND, record the number of either push-ups OR pull-ups done in 60 seconds. If you are unable to complete one of these exercises safely and correctly, work with your counselor to replace it with a different exercise that measures strength and endurance.
- (c) Include at least one measure of flexibility, such as a back-saver sit-and-reach test or a back scratch test.

5. Pre-Assessment of Physical Fitness. Before beginning the 12-week program in requirement 7, do the following:

- (5a) Complete each of the assessments you defined in requirement 4, and record your results.
- (5b) Identify your weakest and strongest area of physical fitness, and choose an area to target for improvement.

	Result	Weak or strong area	Need to improve?
Cardiorespiratory (aerobic) Fitness Test			
Run/walk 1 mile as fast as you can			
Strength Tests			
Sit-Ups: <i>Number of sit-ups done correctly in 60 sec.</i>			
<i>or</i>			
Plank: <i>How long a plank was held.</i>			
<i>and</i>			
Pull-Ups: <i>Number of pull-ups completed correctly in 60 sec.</i>			
<i>or</i>			
Push-Ups: <i>Number of push-ups completed correctly in 60 sec.</i>			
Flexibility Test			
Specify:			

(f) A plan for achieving your two improvement goals related to diet and nutrition.

<i>Notes</i>

7. Complete the Program. Do the following:

- (a) Complete and keep a log, over 12 consecutive weeks, of the physical fitness and nutrition program you have outlined. (If your program is interrupted by illness or unavoidable conflicts for less than two weeks, you may resume where you left off, adding the missed days or weeks at the end).
- (b) During week 4 and week 8 of your program, repeat the assessments you did in requirement 5(a) before you began. Repeat the same tests for a final assessment within two weeks after completing the 12-week program. Show improvement over your pre-assessment results.
- (c) For three days during week 8, and again during week 12, keep a log of what you eat and drink. Show improvement toward the diet and nutrition goals you set in requirement 5(d).
- [Download the Program Plan \(fillable\):](#)

FITNESS MEASUREMENTS

Test Results	Initial Results	12 Week Goals	Week 4	Week 8	Week 12	Change
Date						
1 mi. Run/walk (time)						
Sit-ups in 60 sec -or-						
Plank						
Pull-ups in 60 sec -or-						
Push-ups in 60 sec						
Flexibility Reach						

- (d) Discuss your results, improvements, insights, and experiences with your counselor after completing the program and assessments.

<i>Notes</i>

8. Future Career or Lifestyle. Do ONE of the following:

- (a) Identify three careers related to personal fitness.

1.
2.
3.

Pick one and research the training, education, certification requirements, experience, and expenses associated with entering the field. Research the prospects for employment, starting salary, advancement opportunities, and career goals associated with this career. Discuss what you learned with your counselor and whether you might be interested in this career

Career:

Training	
Education	
Certification Requirements	
Experience	
Expenses associated with entering field	
Prospects for employment	
Starting salary	
Advancement opportunities	
Career goals associated with this career	

Discuss what you learned with your counselor and whether you might be interested in this career.

Notes:

(b) Explore how an area of personal fitness could contribute to a hobby or healthy lifestyle. Research education, costs, and organizations related to this activity. Discuss your findings and goals with your counselor.

Education	
Costs	
Organizations	

Discuss your findings and goals with your counselor

Notes: