



# KSC FITNESS CENTER

Latest news and bulletin updates

September 2026

KSC's Fitness and Health Education & Wellness (HEWP) Team

## 2026 Kennedy Space Center 9/11 Stair Climb



The first stair climb held to support the mission of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation was held on **Sept. 11, 2005**, when five Colorado firefighters convened at a high-rise building in downtown Denver to climb 110 flights of stairs in memory of their FDNY brothers who were killed in the terrorist attacks of 9/11. The following year, 12 firefighters participated, representing four fire departments from the metro Denver area. Each subsequent years, attendance grew, until it was capped at 343 participants in 2008.

Since its beginning, the [Denver 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb](#) has evolved into a much-anticipated annual event, generating the interest of individuals across the country who hoped to adapt the format and host events in their cities. In 2010, the original Denver team partnered with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to create a template that would enable coordinators to successfully replicate a 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb anywhere in the United States.

Reference: [9/11 Memorial Stair Climbs - National Fallen Firefighters Foundation](#)

As shared in the Daily News and emails, KSC's Fitness Center will be hosting the 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb event in honor of the heroes who responded 25 years ago on Sept. 11, 2001. **All NASA center employees are invited to participate September 11<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup>!** To complete the symbolic 110-flight climb (2,071 steps), fitness center cardio equipment, including treadmills, stair climbers and more, can be used. If the fitness center is not an option, participants can count steps, performing whatever activity you choose to thank those fallen firefighters. This is not a competition or race!

**Please fill out this form to register** & join our **MS Teams Channel, [Kennedy Space Center 9-11 Stair Climb](#)**, to participate in memory of our fallen heroes, cheer each other on and coordinate options for groups to participate in-person as we climb stairs in honor of our brave heroes who climbed on 9/11.

**We plan to share photos in our next newsletter!!!**

**Our goal is to get 343 participants!**



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Colin Andryc & Kris Schweitzer, Wellness Specialists

## 2026 KSC Fitness Center's 2-minute Drill Football & Fitness Challenge

**Open to ALL NASA center employees! This challenge will take place throughout football season, Wednesday, September 9, 2026 – Monday, January 4, 2027**

Are you ready for some football...and fitness?! The KSC Fitness Center is kicking off a season-long **2-minute Drill Football & Fitness Challenge** inspired by weekly NFL matchups.

Each week, NFL teams will be randomly paired with specific exercises.

**NFL team's final score = # of reps of exercise in 2 minutes.**

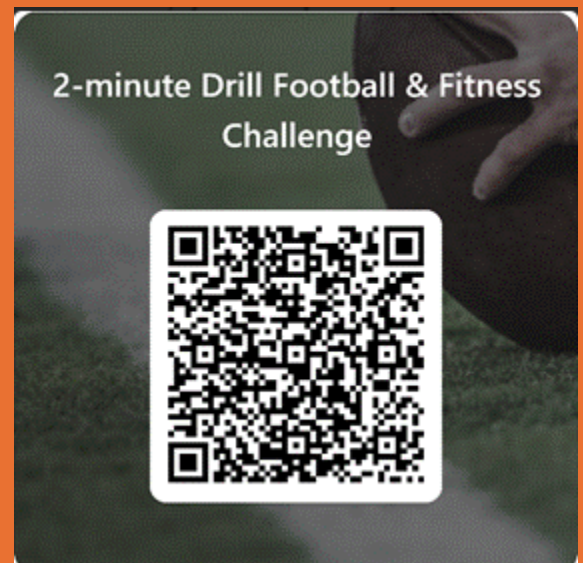
High scoring teams mean high energy workouts! Participants can compete solo or in teams of two, accumulating points across all **18 weeks** of the NFL regular season. Exercises will include upper body, lower body, core, and cardio... giving you a balanced workout that evolves with every game.

**The games start today, September 9<sup>th</sup>, so time is running out to register! Register by completing the form**  
(**QR Code:** [2-minute Drill Football & Fitness Challenge](#))

Check out the recording from our Q&A for further explanation: [Recap: 2026 KSC 2-minute Drill Football and Fitness Challenge Wednesday, September 9 | Meeting | Microsoft Teams](#)

Instructions, workouts, scores, etc. will be provided on MS Teams:  
[2-minute Drill Football and Fitness Challenge](#)

Thank you for participating! Complete a survey using the link below if you have any requests for class times, challenges, etc. If we get participation, we want to accommodate!





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Brittany Freeman, Wellness Coordinator

## Combating Childhood Obesity

Unfortunately, childhood obesity in the United States has been on the rise. According to the Center of Disease & Control (CDC), about one in five youth, 2-19 years old, are obese. Not just overweight, but obese. This is unsettling, considering the side effects associated with obesity. Developing obesity in adulthood results in numerous, often serious side effects (including early mortality), so it is very concerning to develop these issues while younger, likely to increase in severity with aging (Pandita, et al., 2016).

Considering one size does not fit all, it is important to understand how obesity is determined. The statistics mentioned are based on body mass index (BMI), calculated by dividing weight (kg) by height (m) squared. Obesity is determined when a person's BMI is at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher for their age and gender (Prevention, 2026). There are some cases in which BMI is not an accurate predictor for obesity. In a study comparing BMI to the more accurate dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA), concluded BMI is a good predictor of total fat mass (overall fat) in ages 9 to 18 years but a weak predictor of their percent body fat (proportion of the total weight comprised of fat). And, for children under 9 years old, BMI and DXA are weak to moderate in predicting total fat mass and percent body fat (Vanderwall, Clark, Eickhoff, & Carrel, 2017). That said, it is probably wise to seek further analysis if a child is considered overweight or obese based on BMI without obvious signs or symptoms.

It is important to recognize the increase in childhood obesity occurred quickly, catching many parents by surprise, especially when comparing their childhood (when obesity was less prevalent) to their children's. So, many parents are trying to navigate this new territory, figuring out how to adapt to all the new contributors to obesity. Team effort is key, because families create environments that can encourage or discourage healthy lifestyles, and a team empowers individuals with influence, motivation and accountability.

Focusing on strategy and positive lifestyle changes 'as a team' can also help avoid any blame family members may feel. Many parents already place blame on themselves, often increasing negativity instead of positivity in the household. To avoid increasing blame and negativity, simple strategies and environmental changes, to be incorporated as a family, are recommended while realizing many of these changes take time



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and time instills 'lasting' changes, so families should not be discouraged when these changes do not occur quickly. Small progress is still progress!

To begin with simple strategies, The 5-2-1-0 Framework may be a good start, whether dealing with childhood obesity already or trying to prevent it (Health, 2012). The Framework includes the following:

- 5 Servings of Fruits and Vegetables, per day
- 2 Hours or Less of Screen Time (including phones, TV and computers), per day
- 1 Hour of Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity, per day
- 0 Sugary Drinks, encouraging water and milk instead

The following can support the Framework recommendations to instill needed family environment changes and maintain them:

1. Model Healthy Habits – as the family leaders, children benefit by seeing parents living healthy lifestyles. This is not a demonstration of extreme dieting and exercise but consistent activities of daily living that can be maintained for life.
2. Keeping Health Snacks Available – fruits, vegetables, raw nuts and minimally processed protein sources (dairy without added sugar, boiled eggs, etc.) instead of highly processed snacks
3. Good Sleep Routines – consistent and sufficient sleep maintains healthy metabolic health, hormone regulation, improved behavior and more
4. Eat Together – eating home-cooked meals at the dinner table instead of while watching TV can make a huge difference!

Hopefully this information provides tactics to encourage families struggling with childhood obesity or wanting to prevent it. Even if a family's environment encourages a healthy lifestyle, their community (school, work, restaurants, etc.) may not. It is becoming increasingly rare to find a community that encourages a healthy lifestyles, but developing healthy habits at home can create healthy lifestyles to diminish the effects of these unhealthy influences.

## References:

Education, C. S., Childhood, O. o., Health, C. D., Prevention, C. f., Pediatrics, A. A., & Development, 2. C. (2025, September ). *Childhood Obesity*. Retrieved from 211 Connecticut: <https://uwc.211ct.org/childhood-obesity/>



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Pandita, A., Sharma, D., Pandita, D., Pawar, S., Tariq, M., & Kaul, A. (2016). Childhood obesity: prevention is better than cure. *National Library of Medicine*.

Prevention, U. C. (2026, May 6). *Childhood Obesity Facts*. Retrieved from U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood-obesity-facts/childhood-obesity-facts.html>

## Elevate Your Fitness with Group Exercise!

Looking to add energy and variety to your workouts? Our **Group Exercise Classes** are designed to help you build strength, improve flexibility, and boost endurance – all in a supportive, community-driven environment.

### Why Join a Class?

- ✓ **Stay Motivated** – Energizing workouts led by expert instructors
- ✓ **Build Community** – Exercise alongside fellow KSC employees
- ✓ **All Levels Welcome** – Modifications provided for every fitness level

### Class Lineup

- **Buffed & Balanced:** A strength-based class using body weight and optional weights for a total-body experience.
- **Stretch:** Improve flexibility, balance, and mobility through guided poses and movements.
- **Circuit Training:** A fast-paced, high-energy workout combining **strength, endurance, and cardio**.



*Picture Description: A diverse group of four fit individuals sits on a gym floor, engaging in a post-workout high-five and sharing smiles. The industrial-style gym setting features large windows and a relaxed atmosphere*



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## New to Group Fitness?

No worries! Every class is beginner-friendly, and our instructors will guide you every step of the way. **Bring a coworker or friend** to make your workouts even more fun!

### Find Your Class!

Visit the [Group Exercise Schedule](#) to explore class times, instructor details, and descriptions. This resource is updated regularly so you never miss a workout opportunity.

**Monday-Friday midday classes are available in-person and on MS Teams:**

[Click Here](#) to participate in Buffed & Balanced and Stretch class through MS Teams.

[Click Here](#) for previously recorded classes.

[Click Here](#) to request the outlook calendar series.

Let's move together, get stronger, and make fitness fun! See you in class!

## Virtual Balance Zone/Deskercise Class!

We have started a Virtual Balance Zone/Deskercise Class, replacing an in-person Balance Zone class at Logistics. This class is scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 - 11:15 am ET on [MS Teams](#). This 15-minute virtual class is designed to do in your office, a Balance Zone location, home, a hotel room and other similar locations. We aim to provide a convenient break for exercise, stretch & mobility with options for all fitness levels 😊

\*Complete a survey using the link below to request class needs/desires. We work hard to make fitness accessible to those willing to put forth the work consistently!\*

Colin Andryc, Wellness Specialist

## Fitness Rewind!

For today's article we go back in time to the late 80's. My grandmother loved learning and expanding her knowledge. When she passed, I made sure to grab any health literature I could find from her library and stumbled upon a textbook titled: "ABC's of the Human Body." The book is a fascinating look back on the medical field in the mid to late 1980's. The physical fitness and exercise sections are eye-opening, not only



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## Keeping Fit Through Exercise

### **What are the benefits of regular exercise?**

Exercises that make you breathe hard, such as jogging, bike riding, and swimming, build up your "wind" and help to prevent heart attacks. The point is not to exercise to the point of exhaustion, but to raise your heartbeat significantly. At minimum, such "aerobic" exercises should be done for at least 20 minutes, three times a week. If you are seriously out of shape, over 35, or have any physical infirmity such as shortness of breath, get a doctor's OK before undertaking an exercise program.

Oddly, the long-range effect of exercise on the heart is to slow it down and make it deliver more blood and oxygen to the body with each stroke. A professional athlete may have a heartbeat of 40 strokes a minute, an average person a heartbeat of be-

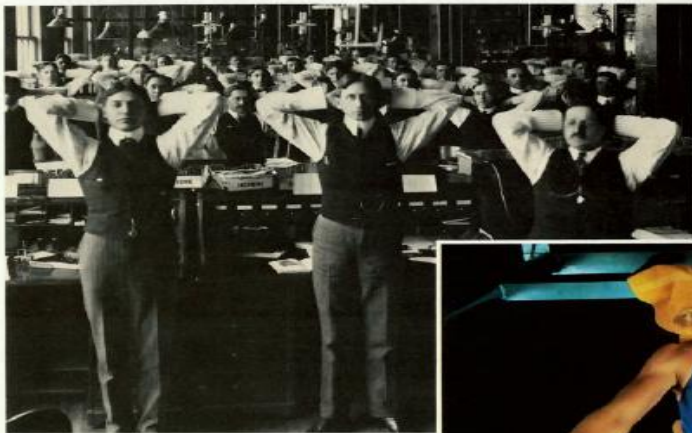
tween 60 and 100 per minute. Exercise also causes the body to produce new capillaries. Exercise makes your muscles grow larger. This is beneficial because a large muscle is more efficient, energy-producing, and flexible than a small one.

Some scientists say that exercise stimulates the release by the brain of pain-killing substances called endorphins. This effect may be the physical basis of the euphoria experienced by many long-distance runners. Other specialists say that when more blood surges through the arteries during exercise, it discourages the buildup of plaque, which can cause heart attacks. It is also possible that such aerobic pursuits as jogging cause bone marrow to release larger than usual numbers of white blood cells, the body's disease fighters. All in all, evidence is mounting daily that exercise makes the body more efficient.

### **Should you be able to bend over and touch your toes?**

To some experts, the ability to touch your toes with your fingertips while keeping your knees straight is proof that you are physically fit. But to others, that ability doesn't prove a single thing—except that you can touch your toes!

Those in favor of toe touching as a test of fitness say your performance can expose such weaknesses as a flabby stomach or a stiff spine. Opponents say toe touching causes strain on your Achilles tendon, your hamstring tendon and its muscles, and your vertebrae. Since your muscles are less flexible as you age, there are dangers in toe touching for older people. And it is true that toe touching may cause your knees to lock in a hyperextended position. You should not do anything where your upper and lower



In the year 1902, office workers at the National Cash Register Company went through their paces without removing or mussing up their collars, ties, or vests.

Today, it's recognized that exercise is most effective when you work up a good sweat.

### **Exercising: Then and Now**

Modern fitness programs got their start in Prussia in the 1800s; group exercises were used to revive national pride after the Napoleonic wars. The feminists took up the idea, to prove that women are not frail. "Calisthenics," coined in 1831, by the headmistress of an American girls' school is from the Greek *kalos*, or "beautiful," and *sthenos*, or "strong."



Back then, exercise was mostly uniform calisthenics done in groups, with little understanding of physiology. Today, training is built around exercise science, heartrate zones, progressive overload, VO<sub>2</sub> max, recovery cycles, biomechanics, and individualized programming.

in the earnest attempt to get the reader to participate in exercise but in how certain aspects of exercise and movement have changed. Additionally, you may notice the bluntness and lack of sugar-coating information in these articles, for better or worse! All the information these decade old articles **should only be consumed for entertainment purposes** and not used as information to practice now in the year 2026, almost 40 years later!

**Scientific training principles vs. simple group movement**



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leg bones grind together. To touch or not to touch your toes is less important than an exercise program that keeps you loose and limber.

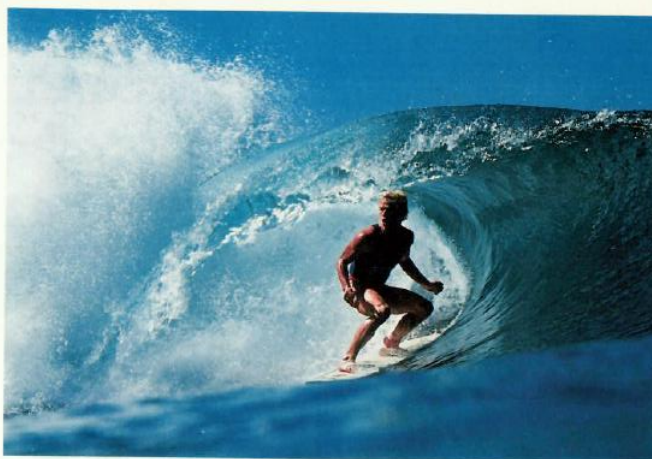
## Should you always warm up before exercise?

The advantage of a warm-up is that it raises the temperature of your muscles by several degrees, enabling them to make more efficient use of energy. If your muscles are abruptly required to go all out, stretching and squeezing to the limit, the ligaments may tighten up around the joints, and the muscles may begin to contract painfully. In extreme cases, muscles can tear. Standard warm-up exercises include rotating the upper half of the body, stretching the hamstring muscle, rising on tiptoe, and stretching the Achilles tendon. Studies at one major sports medicine center reveal that some 60 percent of sports injuries are traceable to faulty training methods and to improper warm-up techniques, not to the stresses of sports themselves.

## What is your strongest muscle?

To see a squatting weight lifter stand straight up and thrust 500 pounds (226.8 kilograms) over his head is really a spectacular sight. A very different but equally remarkable feat is a race to the 86th-floor observatory of the Empire State Building in New York. Some are able to make it up the 86 flights of stairs (1,575 steps) in less than 12 minutes.

Neither of these facts would be possible without the gluteus maximus, the strongest, largest muscle in your body and the one that accounts for most of the hard flesh in your "seat." It's not just in prodigious exploits that the gluteus maximus becomes important. It comes into play when you straighten up from a stooped posture, climb steep hills, or rise to your feet from a sitting position. When the gluteus maximus contracts, it pulls your thigh into a straight line with your trunk.



Surfers maneuver their boards by shifting their weight. Rising from the flat board to a flexed crouch, then riding the wave, takes a highly developed sense of balance.

## Why do weight lifters often have pot bellies?

Stomachs so prominent that their owners can hardly read their weight on the bathroom scale are characteristic of many top weight lifters and strongmen. In the case of the weight lifter, however, this natural tendency to develop a pot belly is exaggerated because his body needs the additional stability, provided by such girth, to execute tremendously heavy lifts.

It would be a mistake to think that these "strong men" are obese and out of shape. In 1957, Paul Anderson lifted 6,270 pounds (2,844 kilograms) with his back. Without the cage of dense muscles and fatty tissue sheathing his midsection, his vital organs might have burst under the pressures of this lift. For the same reasons, Japan's big-bellied sumo wrestlers also build bulk. Some weigh over 400 pounds (181.4 kilograms), yet are able to move like lightning.

## What does your center of gravity have to do with posture?

The trick in tightrope walking is to keep the center of gravity over the rope. A high-wire performer thrills the crowd by lurching, staggering, and otherwise pretending he is about

to fall. But careful observation reveals that as he leans and wobbles off to one side of the wire, he is counterbalancing this move by stretching out a leg on his other side. Despite his eye-catching, seemingly accidental movements, he is careful to keep his center of gravity directly above the wire.

An acrobat is not an exception but a vivid example of postural rules that apply to everyone. Your center of gravity, just like the acrobat's, is the imaginary but significant point where your weight is equally distributed. The secret of good balance and of good posture is to sense where your center is at all times, and to keep it in line with whatever is supporting your body at the moment. This applies whether you are simply walking down the street or engaging in some unusually demanding physical activity.

If you are learning to figure skate, for instance, you will find that you can bend over so that your trunk is parallel to the ice as you glide along—but only if you balance yourself by extending one leg behind you, keeping your center of gravity above the skate on the ice. Similarly, if you think of an Olympic diver turning triple somersaults in midair, remember he does it by keeping a keen sense of where his center of balance is. This lets him enter the water cleanly, with his body properly oriented.

## Purpose driven fitness goals vs. national-pride or posture goals

Early programs focused on discipline, posture, and national unity (like Prussian group drills). Modern fitness is concerned with health outcomes, longevity, strength, mental wellbeing, aesthetics, athletic performance, and disease prevention.

## Warm-up science vs. old assumptions

This book describes warmups as simple stretching and light movement. Today, warmups are evidence-based, using dynamic mobility, activation drills, and movement prep tailored to the workout. We understand injury mechanisms much better today, incorporating warm-up methods to prevent injury. Additionally, warm-ups today are designed for neuromuscular priming to



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prevent injuries, not just “loosening up.”

## Understanding of core function vs. old views on “pot bellies”

This book explains big midsections in weightlifters as “extra stability.” Modern training distinguishes core bracing, intra-abdominal pressure, and functional hypertrophy. Athletes today build stability through technique and targeted core training, not just mass around the midsection.

Looking back on these articles, we get a glimpse of what was occurring in the writers and readers’ minds at the time. The world was a different place at that time, including the world of exercise. Exercise experts were aware of the benefits of moving the body through physical exertion and activity, but it seemed to be the basis of their knowledge in exercise science. As explained in the examples above, like any part of life, we grow, we learn and we adapt. We learn from past experiences, apply new information and we become better at it. Once again, this article’s purpose is for entertainment. Please stop by your doctor with any medical abnormalities and stop by the front desk of the Fitness Center to inquire about safe and efficient exercises, workouts and ideas.

## References

Reader’s Digest Association. *ABC’s of the Human Body: A Family Answers Book*. Reader’s Digest, 1987, pp. 186–187.

## We Appreciate Your Feedback!

[Fitness Survey](#) - [Health Education & Wellness Program \(HEWP\) Survey](#)



### The KSC Fitness Center Team

### Kennedy Space Center Health Education & Wellness Program (HEWP)

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