



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

**UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR**  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

**DEC 18 2025**

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS  
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Additional Guidance on Military Fitness Standards

On September 30, 2025, the Secretary of War ordered changes to Military Fitness Standards to further his mission of restoring the warrior ethos. One of those changes is the use of the waist to height ratio (WHtR) to evaluate body composition. This memorandum serves to provide additional guidance on implementing the WHtR beginning January 1, 2026.

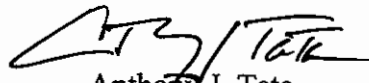
Height and weight tables will no longer be utilized to evaluate body composition. Body Composition evaluation will align with medically validated, streamlined approaches, using WHtR to promote consistency and fairness across the Joint Force.

Body composition is a vital component for the warrior ethos and foundational to lethality and readiness. The upper limit for allowable WHtR for Military Service body composition policies shall be less than 0.55. With consideration to the warrior ethos, lethality, readiness, and cardiovascular health, each Military Department will evaluate Service members body composition twice per year. The process to evaluate body composition is set forth below:

- Divide waist circumference by height.
  - Waist circumference should be measured with measuring tape parallel to the floor at the midpoint between the last palpable rib and the top of the iliac crest, which is typically at or just above the belly button.
  - Height should be measured from the bottom of the soles of the feet to the apex of the skull.
  - Measurements will be recorded in inches and rounded down to the nearest ½ inch.
- Military Departments will set a goal for all Service members for a WHtR of less than 0.55.
- Members who have WHtR of 0.55 or above will be further evaluated by a body fat calculation. Body fat standards are outlined below:
  - Standards will not be more stringent than 18 percent for men and 26 percent for women.

- Standards will not be more liberal than 26 percent for men and 36 percent for women.
- Members who have WHtR of 0.55 or above and exceed body fat standards, will be placed in the Military Service's established remedial program. Members will be referred to medical authorities for evaluation upon entry in remedial programs.
- Failure to meet established standards may result in the withholding of favorable personnel actions, including promotions.
- Continued failure or those not demonstrating adequate progress will be subject to administrative measures to include processing for administrative separation.
- High performers on fitness tests may be granted allowances, but only within defined limits as prescribed by each Military Service. High performance does not excuse non-compliance with body composition standards.

The changes set forth above will be reflected in the pending update to Department of Defense Instruction 1308.03, "DoD Physical Fitness/Body Composition Program," March 10, 2022, as amended. This instruction will be updated no later than June 30, 2026.



Anthony J. Tata