

## Navy SEALs BUD/S Preparation Guide

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Foreword by: Brandon Webb

My favorite, and most hated question I get asked about BUD/S is, “Can you give me any tips or secrets to making it through SEAL training?” My usual response is two words. Don’t Quit.

Nobody likes a quitter, after all.

I honestly believe that when you show up to BUD/S you either have it or you don’t. Admittedly there is a degree of luck involved when it comes to injuries that produce a medical roll or drop but you either have it in your heart and your head to succeed at all costs or you don’t. Some of my classmates struggled with this, and some, like myself never had an issue with being on the fringe of quitting. This doesn’t mean training was easy for me, it was one of the hardest things I’ve ever done. I just knew that quitting was not an option with me.

This book is aimed at all types of students. The ones on the fringe will find it useful, and it may be just the information they need to push them one way or the other. The students who realize they would never quit it’s a book that will increase their odds at graduation because they’ll be better prepared, and will have some training tools to decrease the risk of over training that leads to preventable medical injuries.

There’s no secret to making it through training but being informed will make you better prepared for what’s to come that’s the purpose of this book. The two former Navy SEAL authors both have experience as instructors. You’re in good hands.

I'd also caution you to keep an open mind to the man to the left and right of you in training. If it's one thing that BUD/S taught me, it's that you cannot measure what's in a man's heart by how many push ups he can do, or how fast his run times are. Because heart, and strength of mind is what it takes to push through your perceived physical limits, and you can't measure this on some obscure questionnaire or a PT test. You can only measure it in the arena.

For those who read this book, go onto training know that there's honor in just showing up. I've known some who decided that being a SEAL was not for them, and they've gone on to be successful elsewhere. You should respect these men, they had the balls to show up when many did not, and that counts for something. For those of you who make it through the course, remember this, and this quote from TR, and be better men for it.

*It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat. -Theodore Roosevelt*

Welcome to the arena of life gents. Do well.

Brandon Webb, Navy SEAL (Class 215)

So you wanna be a Frogman...



Photo. 1 - Navy SEALs Urban Combat courtesy of the Official Website of the USN

Becoming a Navy SEAL is something that many young American men have aspirations of achieving. From the time they were young children running around with water guns or setting booby-traps around the house, they have wanted to become one of America's elite. As a teenager, they may have watched a special operations movie that lit the fire within their souls to become an operator. Then there are others, answering the call of duty after an event such as the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. If you are one of them, there are a few things you'd better know up front. Whether your reasoning is for patriotism, challenging yourself personally, or just because you want to be a part of one of the world's most elite special operations units, the same advice applies-you had better come prepared. Prepared mentally, physically and

emotionally, or you will fall by the wayside like the other 70+ % who don't successfully complete the program. These percentages probably seem a bit daunting, and they are. This program is not for those lacking inner strength and mental fortitude. Becoming a SEAL is in fact only attainable if you possess a "never quit" attitude that trumps all circumstances. With the right attitude and proper physical preparation, your odds of making it through this rigorous program will most certainly be increased. Then too, you may be standing tall with the Navy SEAL Trident pin upon your chest.

**BUD/S:** What I am going to tell you here is not a matter of national security nor is it even a secret in the simple sense. The information within this book is available by means of thorough research on the Internet, thanks to many years of media attention and recruiting ploys by high-ranking military brass. What I am going to tell you differs from your Internet research in the regard that it is straight from the mouth of one who has been through the system; a rootin, tootin, shootin Frogman.



*Photo. 2 BUD/S Students IBS Run courtesy of the Official Website of the USN*

As a school or training program, whichever you choose to call it, BUD/S is truly in a class of its own. **B**asic **U**nderwater **D**emolition/**S**EAL Training takes place primarily on the sandy shores of the Pacific Ocean in southern California at the **N**aval **S**pecial **W**arfare **C**enter. The average annual daily high temperature is 70 degrees. Tourists from around the world flock to the shores of this paradise to enjoy the sun and sand. If this sounds like a nice place to be, it is, unless you happen to be a BUD/S candidate. For you, that balmy temperature will be tempered by many trips into the Pacific Ocean to get wet and sandy. Although the ocean temperature averages around 65 degrees, I can promise you it will feel much colder after repeated visits.

In my opinion, one of the primary things that sets BUD/S apart as a training program is the instructor staff. BUD/S instructors are frogmen; they come straight from the SEAL community.

They are VERY current on what's going on at the Team level and with our various combat and training overseas. They all go through an instructor-training program both at the regular navy level, and at the Naval Special Warfare Center. They are picked for this duty based on proficiency in their jobs, ability to teach at the Team level, temperament of personality, and perhaps most significantly, based on their remaining operational life. The final criteria I mentioned, "remaining operational life" translates to the amount of time left in a career where a frogman will be deployed overseas to do the work SEALs do. For the vast majority of instructors that time is still quite a bit. To put it another way; there is a VERY high chance that a graduating BUD/S student will end up in a platoon with one or more of the instructors that put him through training. We train our own. Because of this fact we, as instructors, demand an extremely high output level from the students. We may very well end up in combat with you, and we want to know that the men we are sending downrange are of a quality with which we would want to work. You are being taught and graded by your eventual peers, not some outside entity with no stake in the game, or an over-the-hill relic with no more operational life. Your peers will always be your harshest and best judges.

The program: It is a prescribed 24 weeks of training, divided into three unique phases of instruction. First phase focuses on the physical side of training, combined with shock and awe methods of instruction. Physical conditioning and strength training are the goals for the SEAL candidates while instructors weed out the weak and uncommitted. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, Dive Phase, consists of combat diving skills. Students learn the basics of being a combat diver, and are introduced to two types of diving systems. The final phase of BUD/S, third phase, also known as land warfare phase, introduces the SEAL trainees to weapons and demolitions while also

teaching the basics of navigation and small unit tactics. Although each phase has a unique goal and focus, the trainee is being exposed again and again to common challenges to ingrain in the SEAL candidate some very important attributes that will stay with him throughout his career as a Navy SEAL; team work, acquisition of new skills, attention to detail, and self-awareness.

Teamwork; upon arrival at NSWC, you will already have a class number. In an ideal world, that class is the one you start with and the one you graduate with. That is not always the case however as many trainees suffer various setbacks such as injuries as well as being held back due to performance issues. Within the class, you will be broken down into small teams called boat crews, and further into pairs known as swim buddies. Your boat crew is where you will first be exposed to how important it is for you to be able to function at your highest level, while working alongside six other men. If all is right in the world, those six other men are also functioning at their highest levels and as a team, you are virtually untouchable. In reality, seldom is the machine in that pristine working order. There will definitely be times throughout the entire training program when you will have to take up the slack of one or more teammates or they will be taking up your slack. Either way, the truths of the value of teamwork most often come from these less than perfect moments where you are being tested to your limit and have to help one another succeed. There is a saying at BUD/S you will hear often that exemplifies the teamwork message of a Navy SEAL: “You are only as strong as your weakest link.”



*Photo. 3 BUD/S Log PT courtesy of the Official Website of the USN*

You will learn new skills: individual skills that you have to hone to perfection so that they become second nature, and, these are skills everyone has to know and be able to apply in order for the swim pairs, boat crews, and the class as a group to function properly. You will have to serve as a mentor and teacher within the class at times to help those who are slower on information uptake. In turn, you will receive assistance from your teammates as you too will struggle and need help at times. Knot tying, small boat maintenance, boat handling; both in and out of the water, uniform standards, swimming techniques, completion of the obstacle course, study of the ocean; surf reports, tide tables, patrol formations, weapons handling, gear maintenance, are areas you will need to master all while being tested physically. You will be tested endlessly in ways you have never imagined. This will all take place in the first few weeks

of training, nothing complicated yet, just basics, to see if instruction under stress is something you can deal with undaunted. The workouts exist to test you, to stress your system while requiring you to do newly learned things together as a team. If you come into the system in less than the best shape of your life you will more than likely fall by the wayside, and watch your class move on without you.

Attention to detail: In all phases of training, both in BUD/S and indeed during the rest of your hopeful career as a Frogman, one of the most stressed training ideals is “attention to detail.” The reason is simple; details are what make up complicated systems. The more complicated a system, the more details required to make it work, and any detail not fully engaged or completed will lead to the failure of the entire system. Attention to detail also has an inherent safety mechanism built into it. With regards to the dangerous work we do, safety is what keeps us operational and not undermining our own efforts. Most importantly, it is this attention to detail that will help keep you and your teammates alive. In the life of a Navy SEAL, there is no room for error. Losing sight or focus could get you or the man standing next to you, killed. Attention to detail is paramount; do not ever forget it.

Self-awareness: This is something you will get from BUD/S in a way that is virtually unattainable anywhere else in life. Because of the unique structure of the training, you will be given more opportunities for self-reflection and outside criticism than most people will get their entire lives. People who have been in life or death situations themselves or with loved ones, and other combat vets are the only people you will ever meet who will have had the same exposure to themselves that you will get on a regular basis throughout your training.



*Photo. 4 BUD/S Surf Torture courtesy of the Official Website of the USN*

First Phase: Physical conditioning. Has a nice, gentle ring to it doesn't it? This is absolutely not the case. First phase is a shocking, gut-wrenching experience. It is a unique trial, where as a trainee, you often wonder if the first phase instructors are trying to cause you more physical harm than anything else. First phase is a test of your physical endurance, mental tenacity, and true teamwork skills. First phase consists of early morning physical training; uniform, gear, and room inspections; as well as timed events such as 2-mile ocean swims, 4-mile beach runs, and completing the obstacle course. During this phase, you will also become very familiar with all of the different exercises you can do with a telephone pole. The phrases "Sugar Cookie," "Surf Torture," and being "Beat" will be all too familiar. You will become experts of moving the

inflatable boats during surf passage evolutions as well as rock portage outside the Hotel Del Coronado. Did I forget to mention that you will also carry those boats on your heads for miles, bury and unbury them in the sand, and do extended arm carries for hours? You will be living a SEAL saying, "Pain is weakness leaving the body." One week of this phase of training is the infamous "Hell Week." Hell Week will push you to your ultimate limits. Excruciating physical pain, bitter cold, and relentless fatigue will cause more than 2/3 of your class to quit by ringing the bell and placing their helmets in a line on the grinder. Those few left who dig deep and push through the cold and the pain will reach the time when they hear those wonderful words on the last day; "Hell Week is secured." From this point forward you will be treated a little differently by not only the other trainees at BUD/S, but by the instructors as well. You are also identified differently as you trade your white undershirts for brown ones - a sign to all that you have endured true hell, and have proven you have something unique inside of you and have earned the right to continue on in training. You will have a strong sense of pride and accomplishment, and have now created lifelong bonds with the brothers of your class. The men who remain after Hell Week are the core of what a true BUD/S class is. You, and your brothers will continue the fight as a team.



*Photo. 5 Gear Exchange 2nd Phase courtesy of the Official Website of the USN*

Second Phase: Diving. Seems simple right? Put on a dive rig; go underwater...you're diving! Not even close, aside from the underwater part, what you'll do as a Frogman is so vastly different from what most of the worldviews as diving. Combat diving takes place at night; no lights, zero visibility, no surfacing to figure out where you are, no talking. Just hours and hours of hearing your heartbeat and listening to your breath, with only a swim buddy and an attack board with a watch and a compass for company. Before you get to experience all of the cold, wet, and tired fun that combat diving has to offer, you first must learn the basics. "What must I learn you ask?" Self-control, diving techniques and procedures, dive medicine, dive physics, navigation (with nothing more than a watch and compass) as well as the ins and outs of open-circuit (SCUBA) and closed circuit (Draeger Rebreather) dive systems will all be part of the dive

training. All of these techniques and procedures will be put to the test in an evolution called “Pool Comp.” Pool Comp will push you to your diving limits, and there are many members of your class who will not move on past this point. Pool Comp is an approximately 20 minute diving evolution in the pool in which the SEAL instructors put you through a series of tests all while you are crawling around in a circle on the bottom of the pool. This test is set up to assess your familiarity with the diving system, attention to detail with diving procedures, as well as observing if you can keep cool, calm, and maintain a level head as the instructors push you to your breaking points underwater. It all begins with a “surf hits,” instructors circling around you like sharks. Each “hit” spins you round and round while you lose various pieces of equipment. In fact, your mask is the first piece of equipment to go. Following the surf hits begins a series of hits in which the instructors will shut off your air, tie your inhalation and exhalation hoses in various knots (simple to complex), as well as untie various straps you have on your body. You must first get your air turned back on. Sometimes you can do this while your diving rig is on your back, and then there are other times in which you must remove the diving rig from your back and place it in front of you on the bottom of the pool to be able to work on the knot better. Remember that this is all happening while you are on the bottom of the pool, slowly drowning. It is important in pool comp to remember the steps and procedures you were taught; attention to detail will serve you well. Completing any of the steps out of order or improperly will result in your immediate failure. The final step of pool comp is a very large “hit” by an instructor in which he ties a knot in your air supply that is impossible to get untied. Nicknamed the “Wammy Knot,” it marks the conclusion of pool comp. Do not get too excited when you recognize this point in the test. You still must remain calm and follow your steps and procedures. Give the wammy knot a good attempt, signal your instructor to do a control ascent, kiss the bottom of the

pool and “blow and go.” If all goes well, you will reach the surface, scream “I feel fine,” and the instructor will pull your exhausted, barely able to swim, butt over to the edge of the pool where he will let you know that you passed. Pool comp, dive physics, and various other diving tests, skills, and knowledge will get you started in the right direction, but application of that knowledge is where the real learning begins. Learning that, with proper planning, you can target a specific sailboat, in a marina with thousands of sailboats, from under the surface of the ocean in the middle of the night without ever being seen. You also must learn how to read and decipher intelligence reports, and apply the knowledge gained in first phase about the ocean; surf reports, tide tables, and plug them all into your planning for a successful combat dive. You will learn all this while continuing your physical training. , Continuing might be misleading; all the physical stuff will to get progressively more demanding. Longer conditioning runs, longer conditioning swims, longer timed runs and swims with shorter time limits will be the norm. Continued weekly obstacle course tests will occur with better finish times expected.



*Photo. 6 3rd Phase M-4 automatic weapon night shoot 3rd Phase courtesy of the Official Website of the USN*

Third Phase: Beginning within the compound in Coronado, third phase quickly moves the students out to a remote island in the Pacific: San Clemente Island. Away from all distractions, trainees engross themselves in land warfare, including basic weapons handling and safety, marksmanship with pistol and rifle, explosives demolition, land navigation, patrolling, rappelling and small-unit tactics. This is where you start to learn the skills that get the jobs done overseas. You will learn map and compass classes for basic navigation, and shooting fundamentals to make training with a firearm functional and forward-moving. This will instill in the shooter a forward-thinking or aggressive mindset. Explosive theories and application of explosives to render a target objective disabled or destroyed are taught. Movement over all types of terrain and the theories of landscape sightline and troop movement that keep you out of harms way in

combat are taught also during third phase. Class time is overlapped with field application in an ever-increasing level of difficulty in order to test the knowledge and ensure that lessons learned are learned for the long term. The instructors continue to increase physical fitness standards and reduce times on tested evolutions including timed swims, runs, and the obstacle course, only this time with full kit and H-Gear.

In the unlikely event you make it to this point in training you are undoubtedly a survivor and doing well in the most severe military training in the world. Upon completion of BUD/S, you are not going to a SEAL Team however. As arduous as the training at BUD/S sounds, and believe me when I tell you, I would need another 200 pages to fully cover it (and even then I would fall short, words don't do the program justice), you have only scratched the surface of what you will eventually need to know in order to be a functioning member of a SEAL Platoon. After finishing BUD/S, you will go on to parachute training, static line and freefall training. You will then continue into SQT; SEAL Qualification Training. Continuing your education as a SEAL operator may lead you to other specialized courses such as Sniper School, Comms School, and Breacher School to name a few. Your focus as a SEAL will to be always in a state of training, honing your skills, and learning new ways to take make yourself a better operator.

SQT: This training block is, in its simplest form, a continuation of the basics that you learned in BUD/S. It is a continuation in that you will be required to recall and apply all you learned in BUD/S; at or above the level you have already achieved, and add to it more theory and application of those same skill sets. More theory is mastered, meaning more advanced level weapons training, land navigation and over the horizon small boat navigation, advanced field

medicine, cold weather training, more specific use of explosives, maritime operations and advanced small unit tactics. Fitness regimens will continue as well, getting harder, more demanding, and more operationally focused. Even at this point in training, you can and will be removed from the program for unsatisfactory performance. What is unsatisfactory performance? Unsatisfactory performance can exist with regards to knowledge, attitude, teamwork, application of knowledge, and in many cases, safety. The common denominator in most cases of unsatisfactory performance is lack of attention to detail.

With this small snapshot of the training that you aspire to engage in, you may now be asking a fundamental but infinitely important question. Where do I begin? A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.

There are 3 main facets to preparing yourself for the worlds toughest military training program.

1. Mental toughness and a strong willful attitude
2. Proven nutrition
3. Physical fitness

### **Mental toughness and a strong willful attitude**



*Photo. 7 BUD/S Rock Portage Exercise courtesy of the Official Website of the USN*

The mentality that you bring with you the day you show up for training is the single most important aspect of being prepared. It is one of the very few things during training that you actually have control over, so you would do well to come to training with your strongest mindset. The manner in which you carry yourself, how you react to situations that you encounter, and the attitude that you exude toward others around you, can make or break both you and the members of your boat crew.

You are in control of what you think. Let me repeat that, YOU are in control of what you think. You are also the only one in charge of how you react to a certain set of stimulus. Staying positive is crucial in this business, and you have the power within yourself to always be that way. One major aspect of what separates the men that make it through training from those who don't is

always bringing the glass half full mentality in everything you do. In other words, if you're presented with a shit sandwich, take a nice big bite, smile, and ask for seconds. Along with that positive mindset is the fact that it can indeed always be worse than it is right this minute.

Always. Remember that when you are cold, tired, and hurt, so is the man next to you. Your mind can be your ultimate strength as well as your greatest weakness. Keep positive and take the training day-by-day, hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute. It will end. You can get through it, and the reward for becoming a SEAL is completely worth it. If you want truly to be a rock-star, you have to crave stardom more than anything.

The arduous tasks that you will be given in BUD/S, SQT training, and at a SEAL team, should you make it there, are riddled with conditions that will test every ounce of your being. There are conditions that will make you physically miserable, mentally fatigued and utterly discouraged, coupled with a level a sleep deprivation that you will have certainly never endured before, that will lead you to a place of near insanity. Many of you might be thinking, "What about Hell week?" Take heart, because Hell Week is just like the rest of training; it's just an introduction. In this case, it is an introduction to the idea of being physically and mentally capable of completing a mission when you are completely sleep deprived. Trust me, you will face many worse weeks in your career, should you make it through training. When tackling these conditions, all piled on you at once, your mental toughness has to be at level that makes dealing with them possible.

How do you make yourself mentally tough? This question is actually an example of the classic phrase "It's all in your head." This may sound cliché' or oversimplified, but it is the stark truth. The means to making yourself mentally tough is 100% all inside your head. Your confidence and

ability to deal with tough situations, is entirely up to you. Situations will most assuredly arise where your confidence waivers, you feel like defeat is about to get the best of you, and that you cannot go on any further. This negative mindset needs to be turned over. Use these situations to make yourself stronger, build your confidence, and convince yourself that not only can you survive, but also that you can succeed and defeat your adversary. Make no mistake, broken confidence and feeling sorry for yourself are your true enemies, and will lead to your demise in training. Take comfort in your strengths, your abilities, and those of your brothers around you. Your internal strength and a tough, never-quit mindset will carry you through anything.

The key to success for not only creating, but also maintaining, a tough mental attitude lies in how you interpret the world around you. There are two main points to consider when challenged both physically and mentally for extended periods of time. These two points are essentially polar opposites in terms of the spectrums in which you view them. Consider the following scenario:

Its 2 A.M., you've just finished a 6 hour boat ride and swim through the surf in 50 degree water. You have a 3-mile patrol to your target and you then must gather intelligence for the next 36 hours. You then return to the beach, swim back through the surf, and meet your boat ride to return to base with your intelligence in order to make a plan of attack for the planned target while the intelligence is fresh.

1. First, you must realize that no matter what, at some point the excruciating experience will be over. There is no evolution that will go on forever, and at some point the agony will cease. You must remember that you will always get to the end of whatever it is you are going through, one

way or another. This mindset was key for me. I always remembered that “this too shall pass,” and even wrote that on the underside bill of my olive drab cover attached to my uniform. If that means, for you, just making it to the next meal or the next period of light or dark so be it. If you ensure that you are always mindful of the act, that there is an end in sight, you will be able to get past that next hill, over that next obstacle, and conquer that next challenge.

2. Secondly, never lose sight of the big picture. You must look at the situation you are in as a minute piece of the whole puzzle. It is, in essence, spit in the wind, by comparison to the long-term goal you have of becoming a Frogman. Ask yourself, why am I here? Why did I initially sign up for this? Only you can answer these questions, but the fact is that you are there for a reason, and you consciously chose to volunteer for the program. Nobody makes a decision like that haphazardly or on a whim, so remember that you went through a lot just to get to BUD/S, and it damn sure wasn't by accident. Giving it your best and still not making it is one thing, but quitting BUD/S is something that you will have to live with for a lifetime. Every time you look in the mirror, you will be staring at a quitter. Think about that for a moment.

You are in control of your self-confidence. Every challenge that you make it through should be one more tool in your self-confidence bag. This is a continuous process, and your level of self-confidence should be your best friend. Always remember that you have the ability to control your reaction to the situation you are in. I cannot stress this enough, in that there are so few things in life that you can control. This is not just true in BUD/s or your SEAL career, but in life in general. It is imperative that you seize control of the very few things you can control, and your reaction to your environment and current situation is at the top of that list. Remember, you can

do whatever you put your mind to, and if you quit, that is a conscious decision that YOU make.  
No one makes that call but you.

## Nutrition



*Photo. 8 BUD/S Galley at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado courtesy of the Official Website of the USN*

“Feeding the machine.” “Fueling the combat chassis,” whatever corny cliché you want to coin in respect to eating, the fact is that it is an incredibly important component to maintaining your ability to deal with the stress of BUD/s. The technology and information available regarding performance-based nutrition is almost overwhelming these days. The fact is however, that you

have to understand just how important it is to eat clean, at the right time, and balanced correctly, for the stresses that you will be putting your body through while in BUD/s. Maintaining a proper level of nutrition is necessary to keep your body in optimal health, and to give you the physical ability to recover as quickly and efficiently as possible. The rigors of training will undoubtedly break you down and wear you out. It is imperative that you refuel your body with the proper vitamins, nutrients, and balanced nutrition to be able to help you recover.

The analogy of putting 87-octane fuel in racecar is a pretty fitting one where it relates to nutrition. At this stage in your life, you are similar to a professional athlete crossed with a professional soldier. It is your job to be in optimum physical condition, which means not only being as fit as possible; but being as healthy as possible. To accomplish this harmony of physical fitness and nutrition, you must make it a priority to always, ALWAYS listen to your body. Every individual is just that, an individual. There is no cookie cutter approach that is effective for proper fitness and nutrition. There are basic principles and guidelines that should be adhered to and utilized as a starting point to discern what works best for you. As you progress through these guidelines, keep track of how you feel, where your energy level is at, the amount of sleep you require to feel rested, and just your general well-being and overall health. No one knows your body as well as you do, and it will be an internal part of your career as a SEAL to be in tune with your body.

Food: It's easy to throw around the phrase "eat healthy," but what does this really mean? Eating healthy is such a relative term, and means something different to every person. As a society, our culture has had quite conflicting information about low fat or low carb diets, Atkins diet, zone,

paleo, blood type or whatever else exists in realm of diets today. All of the aforementioned dietary programs, plus many others not mentioned, have merit, but none of them should be viewed a sole solution in the search for YOUR ideal dietary needs. Again, I am going to provide you with some basic principles to adhere to, not a play-by-play rulebook to follow. It is also important to note, everyone reacts to certain foods a little differently, so what may work really well for one individual may be mediocre to someone else, and vice versa. This is also where listening to your body and paying attention to how you react to certain foods is crucial. You should makes notes of not only how they make you feel initially, but also how your performance is affected daily, weekly, and monthly.

Let's start with the basic building block of lean muscle: Protein. Every athlete needs a good, quality source of lean protein. In my opinion, that source should be animal-based as the bioavailability of protein is highest from an animal source. The building blocks of the protein from an animal source, the amino acids, are more complete and more readily broken down and absorbed by the body. Possible sources include lean cuts of red meat, chicken, fish, eggs and milk. It has been proven through numerous studies that an elite athlete who trains for multiple hours per day, more than 5 days a week, needs sufficient protein intake to avoid a negative nitrogen balance-a condition where the body metabolizes its own muscle mass for energy.

What is sufficient protein intake? The final number is much debated in both the sports and medical fields, and this is likely due to what I said earlier: we are individuals. A very good starting point for optimal protein intake for an elite athlete would be 1gram per pound of lean body mass eaten daily. To find this number, take your total weight; subtract body fat weight and

bone mass weight. Body fat percentages will vary by individual, but the bone mass weight will be fairly consistent at around 30% of total weight. Example:

Weight: 185lbs body fat: 10%. The bone mass weight would be around 55 pounds for this individual. The fat weight would be 18.5 pounds. So  $185 - 55 - 18.5 = 111.5$ lbs. Given this data, a great starting point range for daily protein intake for this individual would be 110-165 grams daily. This formula is not an absolute, it is only to find a starting range.

**CARBOHYDRATES:** They are absolutely necessary as a primary fuel source for any athlete. I used the low-octane fuel in a racecar analogy earlier. It bears repeating in all aspects of proper diet. The higher the quality of the food going in, the higher the potential output from the food source as work from the body. It is NOT possible to carb load. Despite many arguments to the contrary from endurance athletes, it is biologically impossible. Carbohydrates are broken down into a usable form of energy by the body called glucose, and stored in the muscles and liver as glycogen. Given that the liver mass is finite, as is total muscle mass, once those storage areas are full it is not possible to “load” more carbs for a long event. That being said, it is possible to allow your stores of carbs to be sufficiently depleted so that consuming carbohydrates will indeed resemble loading. By eating a sufficient quantity of quality carbs daily, you are less likely to reach a low level where body cannibalism is necessary to sustain performance.

Again, the question arises of how much is sufficient? And again it varies by individual. At a minimum, for an elite athlete, 25% more carbohydrates per day in gram weight than your protein intake is optimal. Ideal sources for carbohydrates are from plants, fruits and vegetables. The reason fruits and vegetables are ideal is twofold; higher quality than any processed carb sources,

and natural fiber also comes from plant sources. Higher quality: means having a higher bioavailability of the nutrients necessary for performance. Ultimately your body gets more of what it needs from a smaller volume of food, and needs to waste less of its own energy in order to get those nutrients from plant sources. Fiber is also key in a healthy diet. Fiber serves two main functions in the body; it helps the lower end of your digestive tract stay clean and healthy, and it slows the breakdown of carbohydrate-rich foods into their simple sugar form of glucose. This reduces the pace of bloodstream uptake and ultimately, insulin spikes. Insulin is a storage hormone; it tells the body to store unused calories as fat, the reason this is bad should be transparent.

Processed carbohydrates, the type found packaged in cardboard and plastic, have a number of problems within them in regards to quality. First, is the term “processing.” This “process” basically takes a natural food source and chemically breaks it down to make something else out of it. Read the label of some of your favorites. “Enriched” wheat flour is created by taking the wheat kernel and bathing it in chemicals to break it down completely. Much of its intrinsic nutritional value is lost, which necessitates an enrichment process to give back nutrition lost through processing. That enrichment is with vitamins and minerals that are also chemically removed from other sources or manmade by scientists in a lab to mimic what occurs in nature. Flour is only one example in a long list. Processing also typically removes the natural fiber from plant-based foods, leading to either enriching again or leaving out entirely important dietary fiber. Remember: the best sources for all dietary needs are as close as possible to their natural states.

FAT: Make no mistake; quality fat intake is as vital to the overall health and performance of the elite athlete as either protein or carbohydrates. Fat plays an important role in proper nutrient breakdown and absorption, acts as an extremely high value energy source and helps the body access its own fat stores for long-term energy. Fat also causes the body to release a hormone that tells the brain you're full. When looking for dietary fat sources, look for poly and mono unsaturated fat sources. These are primarily derived from plant-based foods, as opposed to animal based foods. Avocados, olives, and nuts (peanuts, almonds, and macadamia nuts) are high-quality dietary fat sources. Coconut oil, though high in saturated fat, is also a good source of dietary fat due to its plant, not animal, base. Consuming high quality fats such as these is also a very effective measure to ensure that your joints stay well lubricated. Many people have the misconception that consuming fats make one fat, however the primary culprits of excess weight are actually sugar and processed carbohydrates. I would like to point out that this does not mean you should eat 4 pounds of avocados, and wash those down with a can of macadamia nuts. However, with the amount of stress you will be putting on your body from the physical aspect; you can, and should, take in a couple handfuls of nuts or seeds, half of an avocado, or 2 to 3 tablespoons of quality oil with each meal.

WATER: Drink it-clean, clear water. The human body is roughly 60% water. It is necessary for all parts of the digestive process; all body activity on a cellular level, and without it, life would cease to exist. Also, if you plan to be a red-blooded stud of a frogman, then you best be extremely comfortable in it...more on that in a bit. Suffice it to say that water is the dietary ingredient without which all other ingredients cease to matter. A healthy human can live for weeks without food. That same human will die in 3 to 5 days without water. Obviously, from a

survival standpoint, water is a necessity, but it also is important to understand how staying well hydrated will benefit your performance. The rigors of physical training that you are undergoing during BUD/S will undoubtedly tax your body. When you get just slightly dehydrated, your body's ability to perform will decrease, plain and simple. You will feel a distinct "tiredness" in your muscles. That is abnormal. Of course when we exercise at a high level, our muscles get tired, but dehydration is a feeling of burning fatigue that needs to be addressed. This is a point at which no amount of "pushing through" will help, only water will. A good rule of thumb when gauging your hydration level is to watch your urine. It should be clear, or very close to it. If it looks like antifreeze or Coca-Cola, you, my friend, are doing something very wrong and need to refocus your efforts on staying hydrated.

I cannot stress enough the importance of quality in all regards to diet; shit in-shit out. In this case, quite literally. The higher the quality of food you consume, the more nutrient bioavailability there will be, the less waste you will produce. In this regard, the opposite is absolute. You can live off of beef jerky and canned goods, but that doesn't mean that you should. The body works overtime trying to get usable nutrients from low quality foods, which means more volume is necessary to get adequate results. It also means the body has to work harder finding usable calories. That extra work from the digestive system takes a toll on your entire physiology. I realize that eating clean and natural is not always realistic, but do yourself a favor and eat as clean as possible as often as possible to get the results from your training that you deserve.

## **Physical Fitness**



*Photo. 9 BUD/S Students Interval Swim Training San Diego Bay courtesy of the Official Website of the USN*

I suspect that most readers are this far into this article for the next topic: physical fitness. Don't kid yourselves, the mental attitude portion is likely way more important to the vast majority of potential Frogmen. The reason for this is that most men who have a dream of being a Frogman are already physical studs. I say "most" because it's not always the case. A physical specimen is likely a very gifted athlete. He has probably spent a great deal of time having someone tell them how great he is ass-kissed to play well for a team. This ass kissing of a quality athlete actually hinders his mental development by making him susceptible to self-doubt at the first sign of difficulty. This may sound counterintuitive, but look at it another way. If everything you've ever done athletically has been easy for you, and you suddenly find yourself overworked, tired,

stressed and tested; do you have the mental fortitude to get better from the test? Or has a life of ease allowed your mind to become weak and fold at the first sign of adversity? I use this analogy because I've been there and done that. In my BUD/S class there were a large number of more physically gifted athletes than myself who quit when the pressure put them out of their comfort zone and there was nobody there to praise and nurture them along. On the other hand, many less-stellar athletes (from a pure genetic standpoint), and those who worked hard their whole lives to be considered among the best, had a strong work ethic and drive to persevere, especially when things got tough. A desire and need to succeed in the face of adversity is more essential than being a perfect physical specimen.

With this attitude in mind, let's discuss the training side of the preparation to be a Frogman. Again, this will be a guideline and outline, not a specific workout regime. There are countless ways to get yourself physically prepared to go to BUD/S. No one book or article could possibly spell them all out. Most importantly, the strategies behind the methods are what stand out as the keys to a great training system versus an average or even a detrimental program.

The first idea I want to discuss is functional training:

The idea of functional training should be fairly transparent, but seems to get lost in most gym scenarios due to typical "gym rat" mentality. This is the mentality that leads to building a pretty body, or drives the need to lift the most weight in a specific lift, but is useless in terms of a survival or life perspective. Take for instance the bench press, there is virtually no situation in life where that body position would be useful for survival or is functionally relevant. The push-up by contrast works the same major muscle groups (pectorals, deltoids, and triceps) but also

engages the core muscle groups (all of the abdominal structure, low back, hips, and gluteus structure), as well as all the small support muscles, tendons and ligaments in the arms and shoulders. Long periods in the proper pushup position also tend to engage your mind with your body in a way that is virtually impossible to duplicate by any other method. Perhaps the biggest issue with the typical gym mentality is that it tends to create a physically imbalanced body in regards to strength of muscle groups. It creates a large chest, weak back, large biceps, small triceps, large quads, and weak hamstrings. These imbalances create poor posture, and ultimately will lead to injury from lack of balance. Don't believe me? Using just the push-up as a litmus test, do no bench press exercises for 1 month, just do pushups. Try 10 to 20 at a time, anytime during the day, every day, for a month. I guarantee your personal best bench press will be set after that month.

Functional training should include natural body movements using the body's own mass as resistance. Pull-ups and push-ups (all grip widths and styles), squats, lunges, sit-ups, flutter kicks, static plank holds, and jumping rope can be combined with any number of other callisthenic style exercises to make an infinite number of high-quality workouts that will balance your physique, and get you to a new level of athleticism. Add to this a variable weight, load-bearing vest that allows for a full range of motion, and you have successfully moved into a FUNCTIONAL frame of mind with your training.

The takeaway from functional training is to think of the way a warrior would be required to move his own body on the field of combat and in training. Use movements that mimic those of

the battlefield for your training regimen, and you're on your way to getting the most out of your training time.

Next let's talk about running. The fact is, if you happen to make it to BUD/s, you will run. You will run to eat. You will run to each training evolution. You will run for time, and you will run just for the sake of running. You will run on all types of surfaces, from asphalt to ankle-deep, soft sand. Most weeks you will run 30 miles or more just to eat. Getting the picture? Running causes many trainees a lot of problems at BUD/S. Don't be behind the power curve by entering BUD/S as a poor runner. Make it a part of your life, like breathing and eating. I think it's interesting that most kids run to do everything, then, at some point, that sense of excited exuberance for life seems to dull, and they stop running. That childish frame of mind would be very useful when adopting a running regimen as a base of everything you do. The biggest issue I see with guys, as it relates to running, is the physical toll that it running takes on your body. You simply cannot proceed from not running at all, to running at the levels you do while you are at BUD/s. Your joints will be devastated if you attempt this. It is also important to note that while you are training to go to BUD/s, you need to gradually stair step your way up to higher levels and distances of running. You can't begin by running 30 miles a week, as this will most likely cause joint issues and stress fractures, which are debilitating. When I graduated from training, I had several stress fractures in my legs, and the only measure that repaired them was to give them rest. Again, listen to your body and give it time to adjust and recover when it needs it. You won't be able to do so once you show up for BUD/S, so it's imperative to do so when you can.

As with workouts, there are innumerable approaches to running. Research to find an educated starting point which includes proper posture, breathing techniques, stride length, distance training versus sprint or speed work, and incorporate all of them into your daily activities. The broader the base of running you can build prior to taking the plunge, the better your body will adapt to the increased stress of training to be an elite warrior.

Speaking of the plunge...Swimming, or more importantly, comfort and confidence in the water. Water is the great equalizer. There are special operations units all over the world with extremely rigorous training. The special operations units in the U.S. military are, without a doubt the best at what they do, the biggest difference between any of those groups and the SEAL Teams is WATER. Our ability to operate in, on, and under the water is what makes us different, unique and truly exceptional, real-world commandos. The world is over 70% water, and over half the world's population lives within 40 miles of a coastline. The second number is ever on the rise, so our ability to use water as a platform for all we do is inherently important to our operational success.

Exceptional swimming ability is, without a doubt, a very sought after characteristic in a BUD/S candidate. More important than swimming ability however, is an individual's comfort level in, on and around the water. When I talk about comfort, I'm not talking about ability to perform. I'm talking about the mental state during performance. The water should feel like safety, like home. It should cause you to relax and embrace your existence. While swimming ability is tested and indeed cultivated during training, it is the non-swimming, non-conventional water work that seems to weed out the most individuals. Because of the enormous amount of information

available on the Internet, most people reading this who have interest in becoming a Frogman have undoubtedly seen footage of drown-proofing. Drown-proofing would be in the category of “non-conventional” water work. Obviously your ability to swim isn’t necessarily the factor in an evolution like that, it’s your comfort level with the situation that plays the vital role. Your ability to consciously realize that control of the situation is not possible but control over your reaction to the situation is the key to drown-proofing success. This mental approach to the world is applicable in all you do, which is why it bears repeating. While control of the situation is impossible, control over your mental state and reaction to the situation is the only absolute. That specific understanding about yourself, and the world you live in, is invaluable.

How do you cultivate a comfort in, on and around the water? Exposure; It is repeated exposure, repetition, and variation. Make work around the water a part of your regular routine. A friend of mine, also a Frogman, and I used to go out in the ocean, find an area with big rocks, and have competitions to see who could walk the farthest on the bottom on a single breath hold carrying a large rock. We tested each other by setting rules and limits to the game like. For instance, we would swim 50 yards fast, then, without rest, dive down, pick up the rock and go, or take 10 deep breaths, then go. Imagination is your only limit. The varied stresses that we self-imposed increased our comfort level, while at the same time, increased our abilities. Those two elements always go hand in hand; increased ability improves comfort level, and increased confidence will lead to higher performance. They feed each other synergistically. The better you get at something the more likely you are to improve, because of the confidence gained in that same improvement.

An important point to remember while training in water is this: don't move too fast to build that comfort. If you freak yourself out in the water early on, that will likely haunt you long term, when outside stress is introduced. More than a few quality candidates have had their dreams of becoming a member of the elite dashed by allowing their minds to come unhinged during a water evolution.

The final idea you must incorporate into your training program is volume. You need to become intimately familiar with the term and what it means to you in terms of training. Most people approach working out as a segment of their day, a separate part of the day to be prepped for, executed, and left behind until the next planned workout. For you to have a chance to succeed, you should embrace the workout as a lifestyle. The sheer volume of work accomplished during an average day at BUD/S is more than most people do during an entire week of workouts.

Morning PT is two hours of bodyweight calisthenics, a two mile run to go eat breakfast, a two hour class on orienteering (which includes 100 to 400 push-ups for various rule infractions), and a timed obstacle course. This is followed by a three mile conditioning run, a two mile run to eat lunch, a one hour class on Inflatable Boat Systems (IBS) maintenance (including more push-ups), a timed one mile ocean swim, IBS maintenance time. You end your day with a two-mile run to eat dinner, cleanup, and prep for the next day. The average day for a BUD/S student includes 6 to 9 separate and complete daily workouts. That is volume.

Building volume needs to be approached from an individual workout standpoint, and from a daily workload standpoint. The emphasis should be on the quality of the workload, while ever increasing the total quantity, both per work out and daily, all while taking into account the need

for recovery in both specific body areas and total system. Gains are made through recovery from work, not the work itself. This is one of the main reasons why proper nutrition is so important. Rest, sleep and active recovery, combined with proper nutrition, are all part of the equation. They are all equal stockholders in the investment you're making in your future.

Individual workout volume varies. There are many public parks in America that are set up with run courses with stops for push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, and balance structures which, offer a very handy system of individual workout volume enhancement. For instance you may have a nice, one-hour callisthenic workout planned; do your workout completely but with a 200 meter run between each exercise. Do the workout three times in one week. The first time, run easy between exercises. The second time, run hard between exercises. The third time, alternate between hard and easy 200 meter runs. The following week, do the same workout, but run the total distance before the workout, then after the workout. Then run half before and half after. As you can see from this simple example, the variations are limitless with a tiny bit of imagination.

Daily workload volume is important as well. Given the above example of a single workout, how do you ensure a daily volume that will enhance your chances of success at BUD/S? Call that workout the start of your day. Your midday workout may be a swim of 2000 yards. Vary the intensity of your swim, much like the PT. or run workout. Different distance intervals, different rest intervals, underwater breath holds between work sets, push-ups at one end of the pool and flutter-kicks at the other end for each length completed are all examples of varying your routine and building volume. A swim, regardless of distance or intensity, acts as a kind of active recovery from any impact based or high intensity workouts you may be doing outside the water.

The water reduces stress on the body by taking off some of the gravitational effects of the earth by its inherent buoyancy. Also, as mentioned earlier, any opportunity to improve your comfort and skill in the water should be utilized to the fullest. You may finish your day with an active stretching routine to aid in recovery. Another day, complete a much longer run, and add a harder callisthenic workout that includes your weighted vest with a short run, long swim, short run (run/swim/run) as your finish. The point here is that working out is an integral part of your life on a daily basis, not something you do for one to two hours every day.

Quality versus quantity: For the sake of discussion let's say you can do 10 perfect push-ups before any breakdown in form is noticed. Which is more beneficial? Forcing 10 more push-ups with less than perfect form or doing ten perfectly and then holding the perfect plank position in the top, the middle, or the bottom of the push-up for 30 seconds at the end of each set of ten? The correct answer is BOTH. Both are equally beneficial. The reason is simple, but maybe less than transparent. If the reason ten is your point of form breakdown is because your chest, shoulders and arms are weak, then forcing ten more repetitions at less than perfect form, will help to strengthen those muscle groups so they are able to perform more repetitions before breakdown. Holding the perfect plank in either the up, middle, or bottom position will accomplish the same strength results by forcing those muscle groups to fire isometrically for an extended period of time following failure of perfect form while in motion. If the reason for ten being your point of failure is a weak core, meaning your perfect plank position is the first point of break in form, then forcing more repetitions at less than perfect form while consciously focusing all your efforts on the best possible form, will strengthen the weak muscle groups as well as add to the strong muscle groups. Holding the plank position, while perfectly still after breakdown during motion,

will re-emphasize that perfect form to the brain. This re-enforces neuro-pathways. It will add strength to those weak muscle groups while giving the same isometric work to the other muscle groups, as discussed. This analytical approach to a movement as simple as the push-up can, and should, be applied to every aspect and component of your training. Anal is the root word in analytical. The intelligent athlete is ever-improving and always striving for any and all possible avenues of betterment.

Recovery is when all gains in athletic improvement are made. This statement should resonate with your inner animal. You want to be in an extremely elite club of alpha personalities, doing the coolest work, in the most extreme places imaginable. Ensure you put in the required workload, but set yourself up for success by giving your body the opportunity to recover and gain from all your hard work. Proper recovery is of the utmost importance when you consider the cost of the dreaded phrase, “over training.” The idea of over training exists in all aspects of sports performance, and basically boils down to doing too much work, and not allowing enough recovery. It can manifest in a number of ways: reduced physical performance, overuse injuries like tendonitis, emotional breakdowns, and irritability. The thing to remember is that these issues will be long term, not just the typical wear down of a particular hard workout, or day of hard workouts.

There are two things I’ve already said but I’ll repeat here: listen to your body, and you know yourself better than anyone. Both of those statements become very important when talking about proper recovery, and the resulting overtraining that will happen should you fail to do so. When you are the one solely responsible for your preparation for SEAL training, you must be the

advocate on your own behalf to keep from overtraining. There are several methods that will aid in proper recovery and help you avoid overtraining. Warm-ups/cool-downs, stretching (active and passive), hot therapy, cold therapy, contrast baths, massage, stress reduction, sleep, and proper nutrition are some of the key elements to utilize.

Warming up as a precursor to any physical activity is good for the entire body. The act of warming the major muscles prior to applying heavy loads, serves to activate the brain and nervous system, helps create mobility in the joints and helps create elasticity in the muscles about to be worked. All of these lead to avoiding injuries to a cold system. Cooling down after a workout eases the body out of the maximum workload, and starts the body's elimination of lactic acid, which is what leads to soreness. One way I like to cool down, is to simply walk, and stay in motion after a workout, until I feel my heart rate recover and my body feels like I could work out again.

Stretching should be done in conjunction with the warm-up, particularly for the muscle groups targeted for the work out. Aggressive stretching, whether passive or active, used in conjunction with the cool-down, will further aid in the body's ability to flush lactic acid buildup out of the muscles. Passive stretching refers to the act of moving a body part into a stretched position, using a static object, and holding for a set period of time. Relax and repeat numerous times. Active stretching is when there is no outside force assisting with the stretch; you use only the muscles involved in the joint to cause a stretching action. For example, picking up and holding one leg at an angle in front of your body is a way to actively stretch. Active stretching is well suited to the warm-up period, as it causes both muscle groups around a joint to fire.

Hot therapy is another means to recovery. Relaxing in the steam room, sauna, or Jacuzzi are all examples of hot therapy. These areas of most modern gyms will work wonders for the recovery process. They will further assist with the lactic acid flushing of the muscles, as well as do wonders for relaxing muscle, joint and connective tissue that will ultimately lead to better sleep. Incidentally, those same areas of the gym are perfect for warming the body up before proceeding to an intense workout.

You've likely seen the footage of top athletes settling into an ice bath post-game or work out. This is an example of cold therapy. Among the positive aspects of cold therapy are injury prevention, accelerated recovery, reduction in post-workout inflammation, less muscle soreness, and interestingly, sleep induction. Like all things you can over do it, so use caution. The recommended water temperature is around 55 degrees, and the limited duration time is 10 minutes for full body submersion. There is a wealth of quality information about this topic on the Internet. If you happen to live near a large body of water, ocean, lake or river, and it happens to be near that temperature, use cold therapy daily, at the end of your workouts, to help with recovery. In case this little gem has slipped your notice, it will also help prepare you for the long hours you will spend in the cold water at BUD/S. The mental preparation that you will gain from some self-induced suffering will go along way towards your eventual success.

If hot therapy and cold therapy are both good for an elite athlete, the use of both together should be even better. This combination is known as a contrast bath. Typical application of the contrast bath would be two tubs in close proximity to each other: the cold one at around 55 degrees, and

the hot one at around 100 degrees. There are various opinions about timing, but experts generally agree in a 1:2 ratio, with respect to cold, then hot. For instance, two minutes cold exposure, followed by four minutes of hot would be an ideal time set for the baths. Adjust your time accordingly, do your homework, and listen to your body. Obviously, the availability of this might be limited or not cost effective, but a couple of rubber horse troughs and some water gets you well on your way. Success favors the prepared.

A good sports massage every week or two is worth untold value to the hard-training athlete. Besides the obvious athletic benefits, massage will aid in reducing mental stress as well, and since the mental side of life dictates all that is physical, anything that increases mental well being is beneficial.

Stress reduction is atopic which leads back to mental conditioning and having the right mindset. Most, if not all, mental stress that people have in their lives is of their own creation. As I said earlier, you have no control over the outside world. You can only control your response to the world, as it is offered to you. If you have stress in your life that isn't physical from working your ass off in an effort to get ready to go to BUD/S, it is because you are allowing the world to manipulate your responses and your behavior. Death happens. We are all going to die someday. Bills happen. They are part of living within a society. Relationships come and go. If you could look back on your life right now from 60 years into the future, it might shock you how true these sentiments are. My point is that nothing should be able to manipulate you, except you. Get a grip on your own mind, and you can accomplish anything.

Proper sleep is needed for the body and mind to rejuvenate and continue to perform at elevated levels. Sleep is necessary for learning to become permanent, and for the body to utilize the physical stress you put on it in order to build stronger muscles, stronger connective tissue, and a denser stronger bone structure. Sleep is the time when your body can go about its biological functions without your conscious mind interfering and conscious movement interfering. Since sleep is affected by stress, it stands to reason that you need to reduce stress in order to sleep better. The better you sleep, the more likely you are to be in control of your mentality, and having less stress. Your mind is an incredibly powerful tool. Seize control of it, and all else will fall into place.

Though mentioned before, it bears reminding you again: proper nutrition is absolutely essential. Natural, unprocessed, whole foods and clean, clear water are the best possible ingredients for good nutrition. There are many sports supplements and training aids in existence, but none of them can compete with nature for a balanced nutritional intake. Do yourself a favor and invest in your future by finding better sources for your nutrition. Research and find sports supplement items that will be a positive addition to your hard work, and avoid the processed garbage that will do more harm than good in your pursuit of elite warrior status.

A final few thoughts on total preparation, lest you think I would purposely mislead you on your quest. As much as the physical is important to your success in this program, Frogmen are not a bunch of knuckle dragging Neanderthals...well maybe some of us are, but even those possess a sharp mind and usually a vast wealth of knowledge. Early on I mentioned the classwork associated with BUD/S. I mentioned it only as classwork; allow me to expand on that some at

this point. Much of the classwork associated with BUD/S, and indeed the remainder of all the training you may be exposed to in the SEAL Teams, will require a very strong base in reading comprehension and mathematics. All the training, every single aspect of it, requires strong reading comprehension skills in order to identify and apply the nuances of military language and everyday non-military language. Also, foreign language translation, training, and basic communication skills. Gathering and reading intelligence reports, understanding tidal structures and how different coastal shape affect them, reading a technical manual on a piece of equipment that you've never used or operated before, learning complex medical terminology and how it applies to diving or explosive over pressurization, are all examples of how strong reading comprehension skills are vitally important to your SEAL career.

Better than 70% of all the training that requires a strong background in reading comprehension also requires a very good grasp of basic and advanced mathematics. Intelligence reports, tide tables, maps and charts, technical manuals for equipment, dive physics and dive medicine, explosive net weight calculations and safe standoff distances for your teammates, wind drift calculations for parachute operations; all these and more, require solid math skills. You may have noticed an overlap in many of the items mentioned from reading comprehension to mathematics. That wasn't an accident. The larger majority of all the training and work you do as a SEAL will require competence in both of these areas. These skills need to be sharp, and easy to call upon. While physical training is paramount in your preparation to become a member of the elite, do not neglect the intellectual side of your preparation. If you are weak in math or vocabulary, get the right materials to work on those aspects of your personal development in between workouts. When you don't have to stay up late during training cramming on bookwork

to pass a written exam, your body will thank you for the extra preparation because it will get more of the sleep it needs to be prepared for the next day.



*Photo. 10 Leap Frogs Navy Parachute Demonstration Team courtesy of the Official Website of the USN*

Becoming a Frogman is something that, if it were easy, there would be a whole hell of a lot more them. It's not easy. It will challenge you well past what you thought you were capable of. You will be pushed beyond all of your limits; physically and mentally. However, with the greatest challenges come the greatest rewards. Competing the BUD/S program will reward you with a level of self-confidence and pride in your accomplishment that is rivaled by very few. You will be a rockstar, the tip of the spear. You will be a United States Navy SEAL. Remember, if you

want to accomplish your goal and become an elite commando, YOU have to prepare yourself and be ready when you cross the quarterdeck at the Naval Special Warfare Center to report for SEAL training. Do so today, so you'll be prepared for tomorrow. Good luck!!!