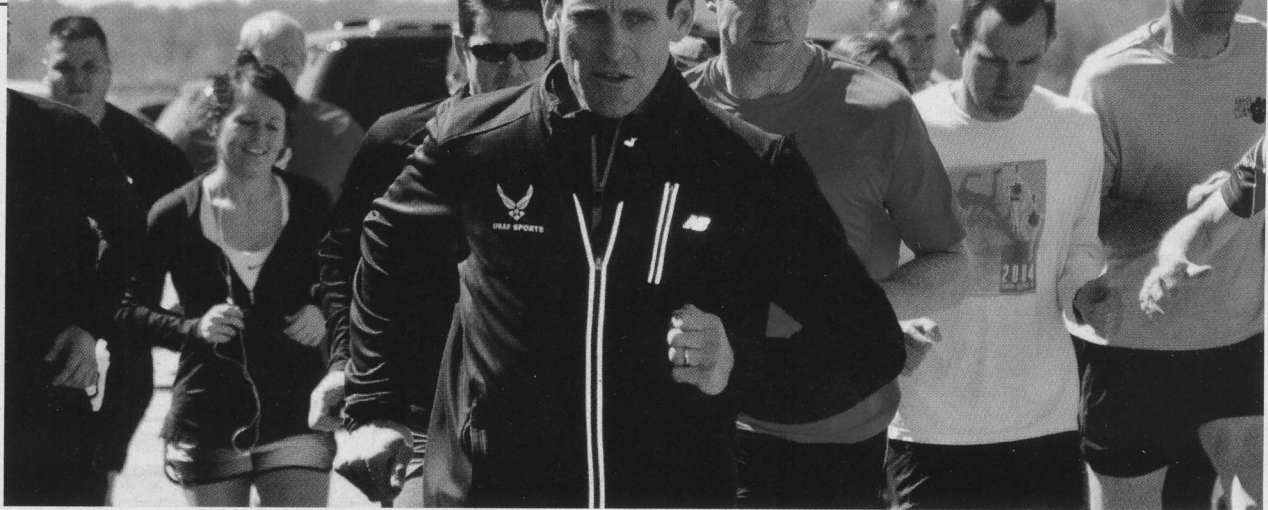


SALVO (N.)

A simultaneous discharge of two or more guns in military action or as a salute



Dr. Mark Cucuzzella says people are designed to move. The two-time winner of the Air Force Marathon has held dozens of running clinics to help service members pass the running portion of their annual physical fitness tests. (Photo courtesy of USAF)

ON THE RUN

Air Force Reservist Helps Others Pass Physical Fitness Tests

BY ANN PERU KNABE

Dr. Mark Cucuzzella estimates he's run more than 100,000 miles since he started competitive running at age 13. "And I'm no worse for the wear," he claims. Indeed, the lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserve won the Air Force Marathon in 2006 and 2011 and now serves as the race's chief medical consultant.

Lt Col Cucuzzella says he believes almost all people are designed to move, but they often fall into poor habits over the years that inhibit running success. He, himself, was once told by a physician to quit running. Instead, he altered his gait and started minimalist running, often characterized by barefoot running.

As a civilian, Lt Col Cucuzzella works as a professor at West Virginia University School of Medicine. His military experience includes active duty, Reserve, and Guard service as a family physician and flight surgeon. He is committed to helping military members pass their physical fitness tests and has held more than 40 running clinics across the country at different bases, ranging from two-hour workshops to two-day clinics to train trainers to help people learn to run properly.

He is also developing an online training program called *EfficientRunning.net* to help Reservists learn how to attack the running portion of their physical fitness tests and become life-long runners. Now in its infancy, the final online portion will include modules with instructions on proper form, endurance, shoe selection, coordination, and strength.

"As people get older, it becomes more difficult to run if they have developed bad habits though the years," he explains. "In the Reserve, we see this more often with older officers and enlisted members, because a lot of times people simply don't incorporate exercise into their daily lives. But we can reverse this by understanding how our bodies work—metabolically and physically—and understand how the human body as an engine is fueled. When we know this, we can become our own intuitive coach and apply this to our physical activity."

What's the doctor's philosophy on running? "Have fun and play. Running is part of this—and when you incorporate physical activity into your daily routine, it becomes much easier to pass that annual fit test." ▀