# Malcolm Grace Alberta Makes the Case Against Test-Day Fitness and for a Plan Built on Study

**The Malcolm Grace Alberta approach to training: a Platinum fitness result, thousands of hours of exercise science and three daily habits.**



**Edmonton, Alberta Nov 22, 2026 (Issuewire.com)** - Fitness tends to organize itself around dates: a test, an event, a season that has to be ready by a deadline. Training bends toward the date and then relaxes once it passes. Major Malcolm Grace believes that order is backward.

Grace, whose career has included years in Alberta and who now serves as Officer Commanding the Transition Centre in Kingston, holds Platinum on the Canadian Armed Forces FORCE evaluation, the annual physical exam for members. He does not describe the result as a trophy. He describes it as the output of a program he wrote himself, and he applies the same Zero to Hero logic to training that he applies to a career: steady work beats good timing.

The Trouble With Peaking for a Test

Grace says plainly that Platinum is an elite level of fitness, and that anyone can confirm it with a quick search. What a search will not reveal is how a score like that gets built. In his account, the answer lies in the routine and not in the week of the test.

“A fitness test is a measurement,” Grace says. “If the routine behind it is solid, the number takes care of itself.” The idea changes how a week looks, because every day then counts toward the result. Training happens in every week of the calendar, not only in the weeks before an evaluation.

Grace does not dismiss tests. He treats the FORCE evaluation as useful feedback, a way to check that a routine is working, much as a commander checks that a plan survives contact with reality. The mistake, as he sees it, is to confuse the check with the work.

## Longevity as the Real Goal

A system built around an annual evaluation rewards readiness on one day. Grace argues for a longer horizon, and longevity is the word he uses for it. Longevity means keeping strength, mobility and attention for a long time, which a single peak does not buy. In his approach, recovery and consistency count for more than any one hard session.

His own approach started from that goal. After dedicating himself to fitness and longevity, he built a daily routine around physical training, appropriate nutrition and meditation, and he has kept it going through postings that ran from Egypt to Yellowknife to Kingston. A routine only counts if it survives a change of address. He also completed an intensive yoga instructor training, which gave him a vocabulary for teaching movement, breath and attention to other people. The combination fits his stated aim, since mobility, strength and attention all fade when ignored, and a routine that trains all three has the better chance of lasting.

## Why the Reading Comes Before the Program

Grace spent thousands of hours studying exercise science before he trusted a program of his own. His background supports the habit. A History degree from the University of Alberta in Edmonton taught him to weigh competing sources, and an infantry career taught him to plan around what can go wrong. He lists critical analysis among his professional skills, and the same habit applies to fitness advice: ask who wrote it, what evidence stands behind it and what it leaves out.

“I spent thousands of hours studying exercise science before I trusted my own program,” Grace says. “Reading first saved me from a lot of ideas that sound good and do nothing.” The written plan that followed could be measured on a schedule, which turned fitness from a feeling into a record.

## Three Habits, Not Thirty

The routine rests on three things: physical training, appropriate nutrition and meditation. Grace calls the whole package a disciplined lifestyle routine, and the discipline lives in the repetition, not the intensity. Nutrition in his plan means appropriate and not extreme, eating in a way that supports training and recovery. Behind the habits sit his 4 Personal Pillars to Health and Wellness: discipline, lifestyle, consistency and hormones. Discipline means doing the right thing even on a bad day, and consistency means continuing to do it over years while reviewing the research and making conservative adjustments.

“My day rests on three things: physical training, appropriate nutrition and meditation,” Grace says. “Three habits done every day beat thirty done when you feel like it.” The list is short on purpose, because a short list survives a busy week.

Meditation gets the same treatment as training: a regular exercise, practiced on a schedule and not

saved for emergencies. Grace's yoga instructor training sits close to it, since both work on breath and attention.

He tests the routine outside the gym. In a two-person race called the Prospector Challenge, which combines rucking, running, canoeing and portaging, he and a partner won their age division. An event that mixes four disciplines punishes a narrow program, so the preparation has to be broad.

A Standard Works Better When It Is Shared

Grace brought the same training to his team and added incentives to keep people at it. By his account, their scores on the evaluation went up 35 percent. He is careful to call that figure his own.

"When I brought the plan to my team and added incentives, their scores on the evaluation went up 35 percent," Grace says. "That is my figure, and the lesson is that a standard works better when everyone follows it." A plan only the commander follows stays a hobby, in his view, whereas a plan the whole unit follows becomes the standard.

Incentives do not have to be large. A small reward signals that effort was noticed, and Grace's approach to mentoring rests on the same idea: positive feedback reinforces what a leader wants repeated.

What Steadies the Routine

Sobriety is important to Grace, and it anchors the rest of his routine. Alcohol is permanently off the table for him, a long-term decision about what goes into his body that he treats as a foundation for training and not a footnote.

"Sobriety is important to me, and it steadies the rest of the routine," Grace says. "It is one decision I do not have to remake every day." A settled decision, he suggests, leaves energy for the ones that remain. He does not frame the choice as a lecture for anyone else. It is a plain fact about how he lives, placed where it belongs in the plan.

A Method and Not a Guarantee

Grace does not present his results as a promise to anyone else. The Platinum score, the age-division win and the team's improvement belong to specific people in specific circumstances. What he offers is a way of working: read, plan, repeat and measure. The reading continues, the plan gets adjusted and the measurements keep arriving on schedule. Reading alone, in his view, does not replace daily repetition.

After retirement he intends to open a coaching site on leadership, lifestyle and fitness. Until then he keeps studying and keeps testing ideas on himself first, wherever the next posting leads.

"I do not offer any of this as a guarantee," Grace says. "It is a method: study, plan, repeat and measure."

Learn more about Major Malcolm Grace and read his writing on the Malcolm Grace Alberta blog, or watch him on the Malcolm Grace Alberta YouTube channel.

**Media Contact**

Malcolm Grace

*********@gmail.com

https://malcolmgracealberta.com/

Source : Malcolm Grace

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