

The 22-Pushup Challenge: We Dare You!



By *Krystal Alexander* — August 17, 2016

The 22-Pushup Challenge is a recent campaign started by the organization 22Kill. It aims to raise awareness of the mental health issues facing veterans, that lead to an average of 22 suicides per day.



Credit: Shutterstock

In 2014 our news-feeds were inundated with videos of everyone, and I do mean everyone, from celebrities to our next-door neighbors, having buckets of ice-cold water thrown on them. The phenomenon became known as the Ice Bucket Challenge. It was the perfect combination of science, social media, and public health awareness. The challenge provided countless laughs, but more importantly raised awareness and financial support for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) research. In [July](#) ^[1] of this year, it was revealed that the funds raised contributed toward the discovery of a gene variant for ALS, opening the door for the development of targeted therapeutic options.

The 22 pushup challenge aims to accomplish something similar, but its focus is on veterans' mental health issues. The challenge's goal is to achieve 22 million pushups worldwide, all caught on video. The idea was first put forward by a non-profit organization called [22 Kill](#) ^[2]. As you can tell by now, 22 appears to be a running theme here, so let me explain. According to a 2012 Department of Veterans Affairs Suicide Data report, an average of 22 veteran suicide deaths occur daily. The figure 22 has been under scrutiny as [reports](#) ^[3] since then have questioned whether the number correctly represents the underlying issues. However, numbers aside, the veteran suicide rate has not been adequately addressed from a public health standpoint.

The organization also highlights two mental health issues specifically, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury, as these often lead the way to suicide for many veterans unable to get the help they so desperately need. The hope is that the challenge can bring awareness to and spark discussions on these issues that face our veterans every day.

The movement has picked up some steam with celebrities like Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and Chris Pratt joining the list of those who have documented their physical prowess on camera thanks to the challenge. Then there were others, like [Anna Faris](#) [4], whose 22 pushups done alongside her husband Chris Pratt likely mirror how my challenge may go - lots of pauses, heavy breathing, and maybe even a water break.

A pushup is likely the most convenient all-in-one cardiovascular exercise there is. Unlike the ice bucket challenge, all you need is the floor beneath your feet and there will be no cleanup necessary (unless you are one of those people who sweat very easily and/or a lot). There really is no excuse for not taking up this challenge that benefits your physical health and raises public health awareness on such an important issue. With that said, we dare you to take [this challenge](#) [5] with us!

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Links

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/jul/27/how-the-ice-bucket-challenge-led-to-an-als-research-breakthrough>

[2] <https://www.22kill.com/team-22kill/>

[3] <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/02/04/the-missing-context-behind-a-widely-cited-statistic-that-there-are-22-veteran-suicides-a-day/>

[4] <https://twitter.com/prattprattpratt/status/764274497809547264>

[5] <https://www.22kill.com/22-honor-pushups/>