

# PREPARATION FOR POLICE ACADEMY TRAINING

## How to Improve Your Overall Level of Fitness

This is a general guide to prepare you for the physical demands that will be placed upon you at the Police Academy. This is in no way a prescription or a mandatory training guide for you to follow. You should have medical clearance by a qualified physician to engage in any physical activity such as this program.

### Introduction

During your first day at the Police Academy, you will have to complete the POPAT (Police Officers Physical Abilities Test.) Then you will be required to complete the “Holmes Hill Run,” which includes a flat run, push ups, sit ups, and a one km steep hill run. Later in the week you will do the Fitness Test, which is composed of:

- a 1.5 mile run,
- a sit-reach flexibility test,
- bench press,
- grip strength,
- push ups, and
- crunches

Your scores will be compared to the rest of your class and your department will be notified of your results.

### The Message

Ensure you are prepared! You must have a high level of fitness at the start of the Police Recruit Training Program. You will not become physically fit simply through attending the classes at the Justice Institute. Just as you will be required to pass academic examinations, you will be tested to ensure you maintain or increase your physical fitness standards. It is your obligation to come to the Justice Institute physically and mentally prepared. People that are not prepared often suffer injuries early in their training that may affect their success at the academy.

## Tips for Peak Performance Training

### A. Nutrition and Lifestyle

- Get a good night sleep.
- Eat a good breakfast composed of low glycemic carbohydrates and protein sources. For example, a whole wheat bagel with peanut butter, or oatmeal and two eggs might be appropriate.
- Eat a light lunch. An example might be a sandwich, an apple, and a glass of milk.
- Ensure you hydrate yourself with a minimum of eight glasses of water throughout the day.
- Avoid excess caffeine.
- Consume five or six smaller meals per day that consist of a combination of carbohydrates and protein. Fats are usually naturally included in carbohydrates and protein.
- If you are trying to reduce your weight, always divide your plate into two. On one half of the plate is your protein (meat) and carbs (pasta, potato) while the other half is for fruits and vegetables. Any seconds will come from the fruits and vegetables. Each meal will consist of a combination of protein and carbs. By eating five or six smaller meals per day rather than two to three large ones, your metabolism is more efficient and you will burn more calories throughout the day.
- Don't underestimate the importance of breakfast. Even if you are exercising in your first class, eat something when you get up that will give you energy. A whole-wheat bagel with peanut butter or fruit and yogurt will work fine.
- Make fitness a part of your lifestyle. Try riding your bicycle to work, taking the stairs and not the elevator, or parking a distance away from your destinations and walking.

## **B. Training**

- If you put 100% effort and commitment into your training, you will improve your overall fitness level along with your fitness test results.
- Begin your workout regime gradually. Too much too soon can cause injuries.
- Exercises should be performed at a pace and weight that allow correct execution.
- Frequency of training should be a minimum of three times per week for both cardiovascular and strength training sessions. You need a minimum of 20 minutes training to gain any training effect. For strength training you should give the specific muscle you worked a minimum of 48 hours rest before working that specific muscle again. For cardio you need some rest days, however, you can do back to back cardio workouts and make excellent gains. You may do your cardio workouts before strength workouts or on alternate days.
- All workout programs should begin with an eight minute warm-up that warms the muscles, lubricates your joints, and increases your core temperature. It's recommended to use gross motor activities for warm-ups such as running, using a Stairmaster, or riding the bike.
- Give yourself a complete day off from all exercise once per week as this promotes bigger gains by letting your body recuperate.

## **C. Fitness Test Components**

When you are preparing for recruit training, remember that you need to work on your speed and strength as well as your long distance running. The rationale: in policing you will be involved in foot chases where you will have to control the subjects once they are caught.

### **1. Running**

Outlined below are two proposed training weeks based on the assumption that you have been fairly active and are accustomed to running on a regular basis. If you are not used to running, you may want to initially substitute other aerobic activities for some of the runs to avoid injury. Remember, you will be doing a lot of running at the Justice Institute, so you need to build up this fitness component. Just do it gradually.

Use your common sense but don't be lazy. Pain in your joints is bad, but aches in your muscles are a sign of training, and not nearly as serious. If you are not sure, err on the side of caution and seek medical advice.

If you currently run three days per week along with some cross training and are fit, keep it up. Improvements will be slower, but you will maintain your current level of fitness while you learn ways to improve your overall run time.

*A three run per week training plan might include:*

- 1 x long steady run
- 1 x threshold run
- 1 x lactic run

### **What is a long run?**

A long run is going to depend on what your goal is. A beginner's long run will be quite a bit less than that of an experienced runner. Both runners will run much slower than their race pace. These runs are often the most enjoyable for runners because the goal is to simply log some miles.

Distances will greatly vary depending on fitness level. As a guideline, attempt to run for at least twice the amount of time it takes you to run the 1.5 mile. Remember to plan to do some hill running as part of your workout.

### **What is a lactic workout?**

The lactic workout is a speed workout. This is the workout that has you running at your race pace rather than your race distance. This type of workout has you doing intervals at race pace with recovery between each repetition.

### **Example:**

- #1 2 sets of (4 x 400 meters) with three minutes recovery between repetitions and five minutes between sets. Total distance covered will be two miles or 3200 meters.
- #2 1 set of (8 x 300 meters) with two minutes recovery between repetitions. Total distance covered will be 2400 meters.

## What is a threshold run?

The threshold run is a run workout that targets your near-maximum run pace. Unlike the lactic workout, this workout is just below race pace. Its purpose is to have you working at a rate that allows you to do more volume than the lactic workout. This type of workout builds overall strength.

### Example:

1 set of (4 x 5 minutes) running with five minutes recovery. This works out to be only 20 minutes of running but the goal is to run near your max for each five-minute interval. Remember, you get five minutes to recover each time. Note that this training is the best way to improve your speed.

## 2. Flexibility

Flexibility is a joint's ability to move through a full range of motion. To improve your flexibility:

- (a) Stretch every day,
- (b) Stretch your muscles only after they are warm, and
- (c) Incorporate stretching into your "cool-down" phase of exercise.

Be sure to use the correct technique for each stretch. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds or longer, rest five seconds and repeat.

To improve your flexibility for the *Sit and Reach* test that is used at the Police Academy, try these exercises:

**Towel Stretch:** Sit on the floor with legs straight. Wrap a towel around your feet, holding each end of the towel with one hand. Lean forward and pull gently on the towel, extending the torso toward toes. Legs and back are straight. Hold for 30 seconds.

**Sit and Reach:** Sit on the floor with legs straight. Slowly bend forward at the waist and extend fingertips toward the toes. Legs and back are straight. Hold for 30 seconds.

## 3. Bench Press

Your upper body strength will be tested by having you lift your maximum weight for between six and eight reps. To prepare, do some *high rep* workouts (12-16 repetitions) to build muscle endurance and *low rep* workouts (8-12 repetitions) to build strength. You can also include some incline bench and dumbbell presses, which will ultimately increase your

maximum bench press. Keep in mind that if you want to improve your bench press, you must bench press.

*Note:* You should come to the Police Academy knowing what you lift as a maximum weight for six to eight repetitions. This will be of value in the Fit Test.

#### **4. Push-Ups**

Doing push-ups will test your muscle endurance. Generally, as your bench press increases so will the number of push-ups you can do. If you break down the push-up, you will notice that the motion and muscles involved are similar to the bench press. The one big difference is that the bench press is based on strength whereas push-ups are based more on muscular endurance.

When doing push-ups, pay attention to proper form. Keep your body straight, lower your body in a controlled manner, and keep your head in line with your body.

#### **5. Sit-Ups**

Doing sit-ups will test your abdominal strength. When practicing sit-ups, place a towel or other soft material under your tailbone or practice on a mat. The best method of practicing sit-ups is to do them the same way they are tested.

*Position:* Lie on your back with your feet as close to your buttocks as possible. Your feet must remain in contact with the ground at all times, but you may not have them held down. Cross your arms over your chest with each hand on the opposite shoulder.

*Action:* Raise your head and shoulders off the ground, hold for five seconds, then return to the starting position. Exhale as you sit up. Gradually increase the number of repetitions.

## **Conclusion**

This general guide should improve your fitness level and prepare you for the rigors of Police Academy training. Being fit will not only help you in physical training, it will also improve your overall ability to succeed in the classroom.

Remember, if you are at a low level of fitness, you increase your chance of injury and that may result in you being unable to successfully complete this program. All the disciplines at the Police Academy are equally important, so you must pass the fitness component of recruit training in order to graduate.