

Preparing for the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission Physical Ability Test

Whereas many training routines can be used to improve performance in the Physical Ability Test (PAT), participants should keep in mind that physical training is specific. That is, one improves in activities practiced.

If one wishes to optimize push-up performance, push-ups should be included in the training program. Many other exercises can also be included to strengthen the chest, shoulders, and arms, but push-ups should be included in the routine. Ideally, muscles and the cardiovascular system should be gradually and progressively trained over several weeks or months to achieve desired fitness gains. Physical adaptations occur gradually in response to regular, consistent overloads, i.e. doing more than your body is accustomed to doing. It is important to bear in mind that every individual adapts at a different rate- a stimulus resulting in an appropriate, moderate overload to one person may be too much or too little for another person. A participant who has been inactive for a significant period of time should plan to take six to twelve weeks to train for the PAT.

The training routine should include exercises to train upper body strength and muscular endurance, abdominal muscular endurance, leg power, cardio-respiratory endurance and anaerobic power. Strength and cardio-respiratory endurance activities should be performed about every other day, or three days per week, to allow adequate recovery and positive adaptations to occur. Anaerobic (high intensity) training should be done once per week, and can be performed instead of a cardio-respiratory training session. For flexibility enhancement, good back health, and injury prevention, stretching exercises should be performed before and especially after training sessions, as well as on days off.

Law enforcement officers have unique job functions, some of which can be physically demanding and dangerous. An officer's capability to perform those functions can affect personal and public safety. Training for the required skills is often more vigorous and demanding than the day-to-day job functions that the officer faces. Physical fitness underlies an officer's ability to perform many of the frequent and critical job tasks as well as the demanded training of skills. The minimum fitness standards identified below are the requisite levels for an officer to effectively learn the frequent and critical job motor skills. Higher levels of fitness are associated with better performance of physical job tasks required by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC) Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA).

The PAT is comprised of four tests:

- 300-Meter Run
- Maximum Push-Ups (no time limit)
- Sit-Ups (One Minute)
- 1.5-Mile Run / Walk

Tests may be administered in the above order. While not required, the test battery process should be sequenced as follows:

1. Warm-up (5-10 minutes) may be self-directed or led by test personnel.
 - General warm-up - 2-3 minutes of easy jogging, jumping jacks, etc.
 - Stretching - 5-7 minutes, include stretches for shoulders, back, upper and lower legs.
2. PAT
 - 300-Meter Run (15 minutes rest)
 - Sit-Ups (1 Minute) (5 minutes rest)
 - Maximum Push-Ups (10 minutes rest)
3. 1.5-Mile Run / Walk
 - Cool-down (5 minutes)
 - Walking - keep walking to avoid blood pooling in legs.
 - Easy stretching.

SCORING THE PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST BATTERY

The Physical Ability Test score for each test item is recorded and added on the individual participant's sheet. The passing score is 160, with the range of scores for each test between 30 and 50.

Example: The below measures are merely for illustration and are only approximate values.

- Sit-Ups 34 = 40 Points.
- Push-Ups 38 = 50 Points (Note that 34 and above receives the same maximum points)
- 1.5-Mile Run 14:31 = 30 Points.
- 300 Meter Dash 60 sec. = 45 Points.
- Total Test battery score is 200 points.

The participant who scores below the 30-point level has failed the test but will be allowed to continue on the other test items with the option of re-test on any of the following: sit-ups and push-ups. The participant who scores above the 50-point level on a given test item will not be awarded more than that 50 points to apply towards the other test items.