JOB RELATED FITNESS TEST

Candidate Guide

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE

Job Related Fitness Test

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1. INTRODUCTION

Policing has never been an easy job. As a Police Officer you will be required to handle a variety of situations involving physically challenging tasks. For this you need a reasonable level of strength, agility and stamina to deal effectively with situations as well as to defend yourself and others.

One element of the assessment for appointment as a Constable is the job related fitness test. Every candidate **MUST** pass this test if his or her application is to proceed further.

If you fail the job related fitness test you will be allowed to re-take the test after a period of training. If you fail the test for a second time you may have the opportunity to take the test for a third time. If you fail to achieve the required standard on your third attempt your application will fail and you will not be eligible to re-apply for six months.

If you prepare and train properly for the test, there is no reason for you to fail.

Once you are appointed you must keep up your level of fitness. Your fitness will be regularly assessed during training. You will again be required to take and pass the job related fitness test during your initial training. **Failure to pass the test at any stage may lead to your discharge**. It is essential therefore that you maintain your fitness level.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide candidates with information on the test, the test procedures and on ways to improve your test score.

2. THE TEST

Police Officers are sometimes required to perform physically demanding tasks as part of their police duties. It is essential that they possess a standard of physical fitness that will enable them to perform these tasks safely and effectively. It is for this reason that candidates wishing to join the police service must achieve minimum standards of fitness.

In order to assess a candidate's fitness, a 15 metre Multi Stage Fitness test has been developed for the Police by Loughborough University.

Specifically, the [bleep] test has been devised to measure the fitness qualities that underline the physical tasks performed by police officers. This is a test of endurance fitness. Performance on the test provides a good indicator of a candidate's capability to perform various tasks.

The minimum levels required to pass the job related fitness test are:

Endurance Fitness (multi-stage shuttle run) - 6 shuttles at level 7 (7/6)

ENDURANCE FITNESS – MULTI-STAGE SHUTTLE RUN (BLEEP TEST)

Police Officers are sometimes required to perform prolonged activities such as foot chases, stair climbing and public order duties. The ability to perform such activities is largely based upon your level of endurance fitness, which is your capacity to continue prolonged physical activity. As such, endurance fitness reflects how efficient your heart and lungs are and is required in any activity which causes you to get out of breath.

The endurance fitness test involves running to and fro along a 15 metre track and placing your leading foot on the end line in time with a series of audio beeps. If you arrive at the end line before the bleep sounds you should turn around, wait for the bleep before resuming running and adjust your speed. The test is progressive in that the timing of the beeps starts slowly but becomes faster so that it becomes more difficult to keep up with the required speed. You will run until you can no longer keep up with the set pace. To pass this element of the test you must reach a minimum of 6 shuttles at level 7.

3.TRAINING TO IMPROVE YOUR TEST SCORE

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SPEED AGILITY TIME

Frequency of Speed – Agility Training

Make sure that you train for speed – agility twice a week with two or three days separating each session. Your session can include any one of the three speed sessions. If you play sport you can probably reduce your speed-agility training to one session a week.

Participation in sporting activities which involve any form of training (and repeated sprints) will also be of benefit to the development of both your speed and agility. There are many sports that fit this criterion such as football, rugby, netball, basketball and tennis. Certain sports are particularly good for agility; these include squash, badminton and tennis.

Basic running speed has a large influence on your speed agility time so one of your main aims should be to improve your running speed. Below are five different training methods that you can use to improve your speed – agility time. Four of these concentrate solely on speed and one on agility.

Acceleration Sprints

This involves a gradual increase in running speed from a rolling start, to jogging, striding out and to maximum sprinting effort. This is followed by a rest interval, which should be a walk or slow jog to allow near or complete recovery before the next repetition. You can try this on a nearby playing field

using football or rugby markings as markers for the increases in speed. Begin your training with 6 runs approximately 50 metres in total length. Try to make sure that approximately 15 – 20 metres of this distance is covered at maximum effort. Build up the number of repetitions as your speed and general fitness improve.

Repetition Sprints

This involves sprinting a fixed distance at a constant speed (75 to 100 per cent maximum speed) a number of times followed by rest periods long enough to allow complete recovery. After warming up start your session by sprinting a fixed distance of 20 – 30 metres at 50%, 75% and 90% of your maximum speed with a walk recovery in between. Then perform 6 – 10 sprints at maximum speed. One way that you could vary this training method would be a run uphill. This is known as sprint resisted training and is a useful way to develop your leg power.

Shuttle Runs

Shuttle running is a widely used training method to improve your sprint explosiveness. Shuttle sprints simply involve sprinting to a line 10, 15, 20 metres away and sprinting back. They can be performed either indoors in a gymnasium or outdoors on a field using pitch markings. If you choose to perform shuttle sprints indoors make sure you wear training shoes that provide a good grip.

Speed Drills

One particular exercise that you can do in the comfort of your own home to supplement your sprint training could be to perform on-the-spot running, lifting your knees high and exaggerating your arm movements. This will help to improve your leg speed. Perform 8 – 10 sets running on the spot as fast as possible for 20 seconds, with a 1 minute recovery interval in between.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR ENDURANCE FITNESS

To develop and maintain endurance fitness, try to do one or a combination of the activities listed below three times a week with each continuous session lasting 20 – 40 minutes. For those individuals who have not exercised regularly in the past, it is advisable to start with gentle continuous exercise sessions lasting 15 minutes and then build up to 20 minutes or more over a couple of months.

There are many different activities that you can participate in to improve you level of endurance fitness. These can be categorised into sporting activities and rhythmical type exercises.

Sporting Activities

Playing sports regularly such as football, netball, squash and rugby can be an enjoyable way of improving and maintaining your level of endurance fitness. Any sport that causes you to get out of breath and lasts 30 minutes or more will be of benefit. Many sports fit this category. Choose one that will fit in to your lifestyle and which you enjoy. The extent and rate of improvement in endurance fitness from participating in sport will depend upon your initial level of fitness and on how hard you play.

Rhythmical Exercise

The most rapid improvements in endurance fitness are made by engaging in activities that use large muscle groups and thereby create a large aerobic demand. Such activities include jogging, cycling, swimming and rowing. There are three training methods that you can use to improve your level of endurance fitness using rhythmical exercise. These are continued, varied pace and interval training. The following refer to running however they can just as easily be substituted by any other form of rhythmical exercise.

Continuous Training

Involves exercising either continuously for a set time (20 minutes or more) and recording the distances covered, or exercising for a set distance and recording the time taken. For example, with running, the more popular of the two is to jog a set distance (usually a course that starts and finishes at home) and try to reduce the time taken to cover it.

Varied Pace Training

This particular training method involves varying the pace at which you run, interrupting the steady continuous running with occasional faster running of short sprints. In order to be particularly effective it must be well planned. A typical varied pace session could be:

Jogging (5 mins)
Fast evenly paced running (3 mins)
Brisk walking (2 mins)
Evenly paced running with 50 – 60 metre sprints every 200 metres (5 mins)
Jogging (2 mins)
Evenly paced running with occasional small acceleration sprints (3 mins)
Jogging (5 mins)
Rhythmical exercise, skipping and gentle knee raises and stretching to cool down (5 mins)

Interval Training

This involves running for a set time or distance a specified number of times with periods of rest or recovery in between. An example of an interval training session would be to choose your normal running course and run at 75% effort for three minutes followed by a jog or brisk walk (depending on your level of

fitness) for two minutes. Repeat this process for the whole course. As your endurance fitness develops the duration of running and recovery can be varied. Alternatively run a set distance within a set time e.g. 800 metres in four minutes with a timed rest recovery in between. This can be performed on a nearby track or field.

4. TRAINING TIPS

Heart rate is a good indicator for controlling the intensity at which you exercise continuously. A suggested level is between 130 – 160 beats per minute. You will find that at this intensity you will be able to sustain a conversation with a partner. Heart rate can be measured simply by taking a pulse. To do this, place two fingers on the underside of your wrist in line with the base of your thumb and count the number of beats in fifteen seconds. Multiply this figure by four to give an estimate of your heart rate per minute. Other tips include:

(i) Try to train as much as possible with friends as this will make your exercise programme a more enjoyable, safer activity.

(ii) Try to monitor your progress, distances covered, recovery time taken etc. This will provide feedback on improvements and will give you an incentive to continue training.

(iii) Set yourself targets that can be realistically achieved. This will help motivate you to train.

(iv) Do not overdo your training. Start gently and build up gradually over a period of months.

(v) Try to spread fitness sessions out rather than playing squash, weight training and swimming all in one day and then doing nothing for the rest of the week.

5. WARMING UP AND COOLING DOWN

Before any form of exercise it is important to warm up in order to prepare the body for activity and reduce the possibility of injury, by warming the deep muscle temperature.

Warm up guidelines

A warming phase should include movements that mimic or rehearse movements that are to be performed during the sessions, and encouraging proper circulation of Synovial Fluid within the joints, to increase oxygen levels throughout the body.

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The warm up should last approximately 10 minutes and consist of:

1. **Mobility session (**ATL: **A**rms, **T**orso, **L**egs) lasting approximately two minutes.

Example
At the walk or static walk demonstrate the following exercises with gentle movement, at this point limiting the movement and range of motion. Observe the group, reminding students of their own limitations and that should pain occur that they should **STOP**

Neck: Up and Down, Left and Right
Shoulders: Shrugs forwards and backwards. Rotations out the side increasing in size (backwards and forwards)
Elbows: Bicep curls, or and boxing (up, down, side to side)
Wrists: Kneading the bread (rolling inwards/outwards), or hands in the praying position
Torso: Rugby ball pass, or canoe, or tug of war
Hip: Rotation (Pause)
Legs: Closing the Gate

2. **Progressive Pulse Raiser** (Full Range Movement) lasting approximately six/seven minutes.

Example Increase the pace of the walk into a jog/brisk walk and or raise the static walk up to a jog/brisk walk on the spot (depending on personal ability). Again, demonstrate the following exercises that move a joint within its range of motion but increased intensity. Observe the group, reminding students of their own limitations and that should pain occur that they should **STOP**

A stretch should be held for 10 – 15 seconds

Neck: Up and Down, Left and Right
Shoulders: Thumbs Under Arms – small shoulder rotations. Hand on the chest, remaining arm shoulder rotation or Swimming (front, back, breast)
Elbows: Punches or Bicep curls
Torso: Canoe, or Elbow to Knee, or Rugby Ball Pass, or Tug or War
Legs: Knee Lifts 50% (hands in front) and Feet Flicks 50% (hands placed on backside)

You may wish to change direction if environment allows, by doing so avoids putting stress on one side.

3. **Aerobic to Anaerobic** lasting approximately 90 seconds.

Example
Increase the intensity of the warm up by using the main muscle groups to raise the pulse rate.

Exercises that increases the intensity such as Jogging or sprinting (static or on the move) should last no more than 10 seconds at a time, i.e. Short Sprints, Sawing Wood or similar activity.

Observe the group. Because of the amplification of exercise held within this period, students should be reminded to work to their own limitations and that should pain occur they should **STOP**

Optional extras - Knees 80% and Flicks 80%

Slow down at the end (40 seconds, i.e. two laps)

Avoid a lag time between warming up and performing the activity.

Recovery/Cooling down guidelines

Along with the physical exercise that you perform, adequate recovery time is a very important factor that contributes to overall physical performance. Cooling down after exercise will help you to recover and prevent muscle soreness by removing waste products from the system. Your cool down should consist of light exercise which gradually decreases in intensity, combined with some gentle stretches particularly for the muscles you have just worked.

Following training, the body needs time to recover and make certain adaptions. As a result of these adaptions improvements will be made. Not allowing sufficient recovery time could mean that you will not get the full benefit of the training you have undertaken. Following speed training ensure that you have at least 48 – 72 hours recovery depending upon your initial level of fitness. Expect some muscle soreness following speed training. This can be minimised by cooling down and stretching following exercise.

6. DEVELOPING YOUR TRAINING PROGRAMME

Now that you have been given information on the test and on ways to improve your score, you can plan an individual training programme to guide your training.

Make sure you include rest days in your training programme to allow for full recovery and to warm up and cool down before and after any activity.

7. SAFTEY & HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

It is advisable to gain medical approval before you commence any exercise programme. The benefits of exercise should far outweigh the risks but if you have any concerns about your health before, during or after your programme then consult your GP.

Suitable clothing and footwear must be worn when training. Avoid exercising when you have a cold or infection. Exercise should be brisk, but don't over do it. Exercise at a comfortable level for longer rather than intensely for a short duration.

8. GENERAL INFORMATION

(i) If you are feeling unwell on the day of the test, or if you have an injury, you should contact the recruitment office who will aim to reschedule your test.

(ii) Due to scheduling of the recruitment process, little notice may be given of the test dates, so you should start your training now for your fitness test.

(iii) If you would like further information or you have any queries regarding the information in this booklet, please contact the recruitment office on dbs-mdprecruitmentenquiries@mod.uk