

# Job-related fitness test for police recruitment



# 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. You will need strength and stamina to deal effectively with these situations as well as to defend yourself and others. You also need to be fit to handle police equipment safely and to work shifts.

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To ensure you are fit enough, you will undertake a fitness test. There are two elements to the test and you must pass both before you can be appointed. But don't worry, the test is not impossible. We are looking purely for the minimum standard to demonstrate you will be able to work effectively as a police officer. You will be given help to improve your fitness and if you prepare yourself properly, there is no reason for you to fail.

Even if you don't pass the test at your first attempt you will be allowed to re-take it. However, if you fail the test after three attempts your application will be halted and you will not be eligible to re-apply for six months.

Once you are appointed you will need to maintain your fitness and you will be regularly assessed during probation.



## > The test



The two test elements are dynamic strength and endurance fitness.

### You must achieve:

Dynamic strength (upper-body strength)	Dyno machine – push 34 kg, pull 35 kg
Endurance fitness (multi-stage shuttle run)	4 shuttles at level 5 (5/4)

Performance on both of these provides a good indicator of a candidate's capability to perform various police tasks. The test elements are run consecutively and minimum standards must be achieved on each.

## Dynamic strength >

Your dynamic strength will be assessed by the use of a machine called the Dyno machine. The test involves performing five seated chest pushes and five seated back pulls on the machine. The average force of the sum of the five pushes and the average force of the sum of the five pulls will be recorded.

### Pushing

- > You will sit upright on the Dyno machine with your back firmly against the padding. Your feet must be flat on the floor with your knees at approximately 90 degrees. A firm grip is taken on the push bar with your hands level with the middle of your sternum. (The test administrator will make sure you are in the correct position.)
- > You will be asked to perform three warm-ups.
- > You will then be asked to perform five pushes at maximum effort with three seconds of recovery between each. The average force produced during each effort will be displayed on the monitor and the average value of the five efforts will be displayed at the end of the set. You will need an average of 34 kg to pass.

### Pulling

- > This time you will sit at the opposite end of the machine with your chest pushed against the padding. Your feet must be flat on the floor with your knees at approximately 90 degrees. A firm grip is taken on both pull handles with your hands level with the middle of your sternum. (The test administrator will ensure you are in the correct position.)
- > You will be asked to perform three warm-ups.
- > Then you will be asked to perform five pulls at maximum effort with three seconds of recovery between each. The average force produced during each effort will be displayed on the monitor and the average value of the five efforts will be displayed at the end of the set. You will need an average of 35 kg to pass.

The best way to improve your upper body strength is to perform resistance exercises using body weight, free weights or resistance machines. You can use weights and resistance machines at gyms or you can practise with press-ups. To improve your strength with press-ups, your hands should be shoulder width apart and your arms vertical; your head should be fixed with eyes looking at the floor. Keep a straight body position throughout the action, making sure you go all the way down to touch your chest bone on the floor and then fully extend your arms on recovery. Try to breathe in as you push yourself up and breathe out as you lower yourself.



## Endurance fitness >

In this element you will be asked to run to and fro along a 15 metre track in time with a series of bleeps. If you arrive at the end line before the bleep sounds you need to wait for the bleep before resuming running and adjust your speed. The timing between bleeps is slow at first but the bleep becomes faster as the test progresses and 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. You will need to reach a minimum of four shuttles at level 5 to pass.

To improve your stamina you should take part in sporting activities which last 30 minutes or more and get you out of breath, such as football, netball and squash. You can also make rapid improvements by engaging in activities which create a large aerobic demand, such as jogging, cycling, swimming and rowing. Try jogging for 20 minutes or more and as you improve, try to increase the distance covered in that time. Alternatively, jog a set distance from home and back again and try to reduce the time taken to cover the distance. You should exercise three times a week for 20 minutes but if you are not used to exercise you should start with gentle sessions lasting no more than 15 minutes.

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## > Warming up and cooling down

Before any form of exercise it is important to warm the body up to prepare it for the exercise that will follow. This will decrease the risk of injury. The activities performed during warm-up should be relatively slow and rhythmical, such as light jogging or cycling.

Along with the physical exercise that you perform, adequate recovery time is important. Cooling down after exercise will help you to recover and prevent muscle soreness. Your cool-down should consist of a light exercise which gradually decreases in intensity, combined with some gentle stretches, particularly for the muscles that have just been worked.



## > Training tips

- > Due to the scheduling of the recruitment process, little notice may be given of the test dates, so you should start training now for your fitness test.
- > Try to train as much as possible with friends as this will make your exercise programme a more enjoyable and safer activity.
- > Try to monitor your progress by recording times taken, distances covered and recovery times. This will give you feedback on improvements and will give you an incentive to continue training.
- > Set yourself targets that can be realistically achieved. This will help to motivate you.
- > Do not overdo your training. Start gently and build up gradually over a period of weeks or months.
- > Try to spread fitness sessions out rather than playing squash, weight training and swimming all in one day and then doing nothing else for the rest of the week.



## > Developing your training programme

Here is an example of a training programme which incorporates training for both tests. Training need only take two to three hours a week.

DAY	WARM-UP	ACTIVITY	COOLING DOWN
Monday		Endurance 20–40 minutes	
Tuesday		Push-up/Reverse pull-up 10–15 minutes	
Wednesday		Endurance 20–40 minutes	
Thursday		Push-up/Reverse pull-up 10–15 minutes	
Friday		Endurance 20–40 minutes	
Saturday		Push-up/Reverse pull-up 10–15 minutes	
Sunday		Rest	

Familiarisation courses which allow you to practise the Job-Related Fitness Test are held regularly throughout England and Wales. These give you the opportunity to become familiar with the test, try out the equipment and ask any questions you may have about the test. Force Physical Training Instructors will also be available to give advice on a personal training programme to prepare you for taking the test. If you would like further information about what help is available you should contact your nearest force. Further details of the test and training are available on our website at [www.policecouldyou.co.uk](http://www.policecouldyou.co.uk)



‘ I had experienced teamwork before but until I came to the fitness test I had not experienced encouragement and support, especially from people I had not met previously. We all wanted each other to succeed, including the examiners. I passed the test and have no fear of doing fitness tests in the future. ’

Our thanks to everyone who helped with the production of this brochure.

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