



HEARTLAND FIRE ACADEMY PHYSICAL TRAINING PROGRAM

The Heartland Fire Academy had developed a Physical Training Program specific to preparing the recruit for a career in the Fire Service. The primary objective of the program is to increase the recruits cardiovascular and muscular, strength and endurance, allowing the recruit to better perform the tasks involved in fire and rescue operations while decreasing the likelihood of injury or illness.

Recruits should expect the program to be both challenging and rewarding. Emphasis is placed not only on continual progression of the recruit's physical conditioning, but on developing an understanding of the benefits of fitness throughout a career in the Fire Service. Topics such as nutrition, fitness program development, and injury reduction are discussed throughout the academy.

The recruit should expect to participate in a wide variety of physical training evolutions. Running, stair climbing, weight training, circuit training, and CrossFit style workouts are all incorporated into the Physical Training Program.

It is strongly recommended that the recruit place emphasis on fitness preparation to help with their success in the Fire Academy. The physical demands of the Fire Academy begin the first week as recruits are introduced to fire ground skills where tasks will be performed in full structural turnout equipment. Without a good fitness base, the recruit can rapidly become physically overstressed leading to fatigue, unsafe operations, and possibly injury or illness.

Access to information on physical fitness preparation can be as easy as searching the Internet. A search under "Firefighter Fitness" will produce many results and can be a good start to understanding the demand and preparation needed for success in the Fire Academy. The type of program a recruit should participate in prior to the Fire Academy varies from one recruit to another. At a very minimum a recruit should be participating in both cardiovascular and muscular strength activities. As always, clearance by a

medical professional is recommended prior to the beginning of any fitness program. The following web page is a good resource for someone with a baseline understanding of fitness program participation <http://www.military.com/military-fitness>. For those with less understanding of fitness programs, professionals at local fitness centers, gyms, and CrossFit Centers can be a great resource but usually come with a fee for membership or coaching. The expectation is not that one be an elite athlete prior to the Fire Academy, rather have good physical conditioning to allow them to perform and practice the required tasks in a safe manner.

Determining an appropriate level of fitness for success in the Fire Academy can be difficult. Many agencies have set their fitness standard through the use of the CPAT (Candidate Physical Ability Test) or other similar firefighting physical ability exams, all of which exceed the traditional timed running events and quantified calisthenics. It would be impractical for a candidate to base their level of fitness preparation solely on their results of a CPAT or a physical ability test. The level of fitness a candidate must possess in order to successfully participate in, and avoid injury from, physical training varies from academy to academy.

The Heartland Fire Academy Physical Training Program is conducted every morning for approx. 45-50 minutes, with few exceptions. Training includes, but is not limited to, running, stair climbing, push-ups, pull-ups, circuit, and resistance training. As the Academy progresses functional exercises related to the tasks of firefighting and rescue operations are introduced.

At a minimum, on the first day of the academy a recruit should be able to perform to the following standards:

- 3 mile run in less than 30 minutes
- 3 pull-ups
- 25 push-ups in one minute
- 30 sit-ups in one minute