

PRE-EMPLOYMENT PHYSICAL READINESS TEST TIPS AND GUIDANCE FOR ENROLLMENT IN THE RECRUIT TRAINING PROGRAM OF THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION (MADOC)

The Massachusetts Department of Correction's Training Academy has designed a rigorous training regime, administered daily throughout the academy that challenges new recruits to significantly improve their overall physical condition. A new recruit for the Recruit Training Program (RTP) should be in the best physical fitness at all times, as it is a requirement from the day they start their training at the Training Academy and they train through many different types of conditions that they must endure and be able to sustain. Conditioning and training takes strong commitment and dedication on the new recruits' part and is necessary because they have to be able to cope with dramatic increases in heart rates due to stress or physical exertion and later, as their way of survival in the profession they have chosen.

We are offering a Physical Readiness Test Guide designed to assist anyone who wants to improve their fitness in order to take and pass the MADOC's Physical Fitness Test and succeed in the RTP. This guide provides information about the type of training required to properly prepare for the rigors of the RTP and it offers tips that should help a person with average fitness prepare for training and avoid injury (see below).

The Physical Fitness Test measures muscular strength and endurance (sit-ups and push-ups), and aerobic power (1.5 mile run). To best prepare, applicants should adhere to the tips and guidance of exercise training to maximize their results and to avoid injuries. Listed below are some key points regarding the requirements of the position and the revised Pre-employment Physical Readiness Test Standards.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS OF THE RECRUIT TRAINING PROGRAM (RTP)

The RTP within the MADOC prepares candidates for demanding positions with safety and security responsibilities. Job duties are carried out under dangerous conditions in which officers must be able to defend themselves and others. MADOC officers must be proficient in the use of various types of firearms and be physically capable of controlling those persons in their custody even when the officer is unarmed. Further, MADOC officers may be required to perform at a consistently high level for extensive periods of time.

Successful completion of the Physical Fitness Test ensures that all new hire recruits are at a minimally acceptable level of physical fitness to meet the physical demands of mandatory training and the performance of job duties.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: When and where will I take the physical fitness tests?

A: The DOC's Division of Human Resources (DHR) will inform candidates of their scheduled Pre-Screen date and the location.

Q: What are the tests?

A: Three tests will be administered:

- Sit-ups
- Push-ups
- 1.5 mile run

Q: What do I need to bring for the tests?

A: When you arrive, you should be dressed in clothing suitable for physical fitness testing including:

- gym shorts or sweat pants and T-shirt
- athletic shoes which provide good support and sweat socks
- athletic support garments (including braces or supports routinely worn while working, e.g., back brace)
- water

Q: What if I have a medical condition that may affect completion of the physical fitness testing?

A: Only candidates who provide medical evidence from a personal physician that they are medically fit will be able to participate in the physical fitness testing.

Q: What will happen if I am unable to pass the tests?

A: Failure to pass any one test may mean that you will not be hired for enrollment in the Recruit Training Program. If you fail any one of the three physical tests, the entire physical fitness testing process will stop and you will not be allowed to continue to the next test. Under some circumstances, individuals, who fail and subsequently improve their level of physical fitness may be allowed to retest in approximately 30 days.

Q: How can I prepare for the physical fitness tests to increase my chances of passing?

A: The underlying physical components being measured by the tests are: the ability to move quickly with balance and upper and lower body strength; aerobic capacity and endurance. If you are currently out of shape and are not regularly exercising, you may want to consult with your health care provider regarding a progressive exercise program. Your training regimen should include aerobic weight bearing activities such as stepping, brisk walking, jogging and running and push-ups, as well as abdominal exercises. To reduce the risk of neuromuscular injuries, it is important to start slowly with walking and stretching activities and progress gradually to more strenuous activities.

To prepare for the test battery, practice the tests themselves on a gradual and progressive basis until you are able to complete them as required. Start with kneeling push-ups (if necessary) and progress gradually to full push-ups. Walk daily, gradually increasing the pace and distance. Progress to alternative walk/jog segments. Start taking the stairs instead of the elevator. After a few weeks, take the steps two at a time.

Reduce the risk of injuries by not doing too much too soon. Follow these guidelines:

- drink water prior to, during and after exercise to stay adequately hydrated
- maintain consistency in your physical fitness program – it is the key to success
- get adequate rest and sleep to allow your body to recover between training sessions

Trained professionals at local schools, YMCAs, health clubs and park facilities will be able to give you additional suggestions and guidance. Additionally, there are many excellent books on prudent exercise programs.

PHYSICAL READINESS TEST INSTRUCTIONS FOR CANDIDATES FOR THE RECRUIT TRAINING PROGRAM WITHIN THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Passing all 3 pre-employment fitness tests is a requirement
- Physically condition yourself to perform these tests
- Avoid heavy physical exercise 48 hours prior to testing
- Refrain from smoking and drinking caffeine on the test day
- Do not eat a large meal within two (2) hours of testing
- Tests are performed in this order:
 - Sit-ups
 - Push-ups
 - 1.5 mile run
- Each test must be successfully completed to progress to the next test

SIT-UP TEST

Sit-ups evaluate your core strength. While there are obvious physical demands both in the Academy and on the job, there is also a lot of downtime spent sitting. Your hamstrings and hip flexors will tighten up from sitting and then be challenged by long bouts of standing around. This is a timed test based on age and gender (see chart below). Rests between sit-ups, if needed, must be taken in the "Ready Position". The Academy Evaluators will evaluate your form during the test and will instruct you when to start and stop. Incorrectly executed sit-ups will not be counted.

- Begin by lying flat on floor with knees bent and heels approximately 10 inches from buttocks.
- Arms should be folded across the chest with hands touching the upper chest or shoulders. The feet may be stabilized if desired.
- Curl the body up, touching the elbows to the thighs just below the knees, keeping the hands in contact with the chest or shoulders.
- After touching elbows to thighs, lie back till the shoulder blades touch the floor.

PUSH-UP TEST

Push-ups measure the upper body strength required to surmount obstacles such as walls at both the Academy and on the job. This is a timed test based on age and gender (see chart below). Rests between push-ups, if needed, must be taken in the "Ready Position". The Academy Evaluators will evaluate your form during the test and will instruct you when to start and stop. Incorrectly executed push-ups will not be counted.

- Begin in the up or front-leaning rest position, with feet together and palms on floor directly beneath or slightly wider than shoulders.
- Back, buttocks and legs should remain straight from head to heels at all times. Palms and toes remain in contact with the floor.
- Lower the entire body as a single unit by bending the elbows until the arms form right angles, then return to the starting position by extending the elbows, raising the body as a single unit until the arms are straight.

1.5 MILE RUN

The 1.5 mile run is a measure of aerobic conditioning required to complete the physical training during the Recruit Training Program. The eight-week program contains organized military-style formation runs in addition to free run periods where recruits run a measured course at their own pace. This is a timed test based on age and gender (see chart below). Candidates are permitted to run, jog and/or walk to complete the 1.5 mile distance. A measured course will be used and the Academy Evaluators will record the times posted by candidates and recruits alike and will instruct you when to start and stop. Remember to pace yourself. If you are not fast, do not try to keep up with the faster runners. Keep your own pace and regulate your breathing.

**Massachusetts Department of Correction
Recruit Training Program - Physical Readiness Test Standards**

Male Entrance Standards

<i>AGE</i>	<i>SIT UPS (1 minute)</i>	<i>PUSH UPS (1 minute)</i>	<i>1.5-MILE RUN</i>
19.5 - 29	33 Reps	22 Reps	13:58
30 – 39	30 Reps	17 Reps	14:33
40 – 49	24 Reps	11 Reps	15:32
50 – 50+	19 Reps	9 Reps	17:30

Female Entrance Standards

<i>AGE</i>	<i>SIT UPS (1 minute)</i>	<i>PUSH UPS (1 minute)</i>	<i>1.5-MILE RUN</i>
19.5 - 29	24 Reps	10 Reps	17:11
30 – 39	20 Reps	8 Reps	18:18
40 – 49	14 Reps	6 Reps	19:43
50 – 50+	10 Reps	4 Reps	21:57