

California Regional Fire Academy Pre-Academy Physical Preparation



This is a note regarding the importance of preparing yourself physically for a fire academy. It is simply NOT an option to come to an academy in poor physical condition. If you do so, at a minimum you risk weeks of struggle and soreness. However, it's possible that you risk much more, including poor performance with physically demanding evolutions, and a heightened risk of injury. Neither of these outcomes is desirable.

Ideally, you are presently participating in a well-rounded personal conditioning program that provides you satisfaction and success. However, the following *minimum* recommendations should provide you some guidance prior to entering an academy:

AEROBIC CONDITIONING

- Recruit academies typically involve running as the primary mode of aerobic conditioning. Therefore, I recommend three days per week of aerobic conditioning, with at least two of the three days emphasizing running. Additionally, I suggest that not all of your running be performed on a treadmill. Conditioning your body to the relative firmness of asphalt and concrete is an important outcome of pre-academy preparation.
- One of your running days per week should be focused on duration and not intensity. If you can slowly build up to a long run of 30 minutes once per week, that would be ideal. However, you should NOT increase the duration of your weekly long run by more than 10-15% per week.
- One other running day per week should be focused on intensity, not duration. You can accomplish this with hard/easy intervals, a tempo run, entering a 5k road race, hill repeats or ideally a variety each week. If you don't understand how to interpret this, I recommend contacting me for additional information.

MUSCULAR CONDITIONING

- Two days per week of major muscle group strengthening exercise. At a minimum, I recommend the following: barbell bench press, lat pulldowns to the front, dumbbell shoulder press, and squats or deadlifts. These compound exercises should be three sets each, with the first set using a relatively light weight and 12-15 repetitions, second set heavier with 8-10 repetitions, and the last set heavy enough that you near muscle failure at 5-7 repetitions. Please utilize all safety principles with lifting and WATCH YOUR FORM. If you do not have access to strength training equipment, overemphasize the next recommendation.
- Three days per week of callisthenic-type muscular endurance exercise. At a minimum, I recommend abdominal curl-ups, push-ups, and prone back extension exercise. If you have access to a pull-up bar, this exercise should be added to your routine. Perform two sets of each exercise to fatigue with a third set to near failure. Try to increase the number of repetitions by 10% per week.

MUSCULAR FLEXIBILITY

- Perform an appropriate major muscle group stretching routine five days per week, ideally following activity, or after 5 minutes of cardiovascular-type warm-up. You can perform this daily if you like. Your specific stretching exercises should be tailored to your needs.

NUTRITION

- Begin to look critically at your diet. A performance-orientated diet is composed of about 55-60% carbohydrate (primarily complex), 25% fat, and 15-20% protein. You won't get this from a predominately fast food focus. It takes work to eat properly...do not short-cut this important aspect of your preparation.
- Do I need to tell you to keep hydrated? Keep a bottle of water with you as your companion at all times.

SLEEP

- You recover best from the daily loads you place on yourself when you sleep. Chronically poor sleep habits will, over time, lead to poor performance, both physically and mentally. There may be nights that a good sleep is not possible. However, you should start building the habit now of getting to bed early when you have control over your schedule.

It should be satisfying to know that there are important steps you can take **NOW** to influence the successful outcome of your fire academy.

Physical Agility Test

At your scheduled Testing Phase, you will also complete a basic Physical Agility Test. This test is designed to measure your physical condition upon entering the academy and to give each candidate the opportunity to evaluate their own physical preparedness.

Please arrive to the Testing Phase in casual attire, dressed in long sweat pants and closed-toed athletic shoes, suitable to participate in the Physical Agility Test. You will have access to a locker room to before and after the Physical Agility test.

Physical Agility Test Events:

1. Tower Climb
 - Shoulder a 50-foot bundle of 2 ½ inch hose. Climb 5 flights of the Fire Fit Tower using each step. Place the bundle of hose on the landing.
2. Hose Hoist
 - Pull a rope attached to a roll of 50-foot length of 1 ¾ inch hose in a hand over hand fashion to raise the roll from the ground to the top of the railing on the 5th floor of the Fire Fit Tower. Lower the roll to the ground in a hand over hand fashion.
3. Tower Descend
 - Should the 50-foot bundle of 2 ½ inch hose and descend five flights of the Fire Fit Tower. Each step must be used and at least one hand rail must be grasped.

4. Ladder Lift
 - Lift a 24-foot aluminum extension ladder from the ground and place onto a fire apparatus. Clap hands to ensure proper mount, then return the ladder to the start position.
5. Ladder Extension
 - Extend the fly section of a fixed, 24-foot aluminum extension ladder by grasping the halyard and using a hand over hand technique, raise the fly section until it hits the stop. Using a hand over hand technique, lower the fly section to the starting position.
6. Ventilation
 - Grasp the Combat Challenge mallet 12 inches above the mallet head and mount the sled. Strike the shot repeatedly until the shot travels a distance of 2 ½ feet.
7. Search Maze – Hose Pull
 - Grasp the end of the uncharged 1 ¾ inch hose line at the beginning of the search maze. Assume a crawling posture and pull the hose line through the U-shaped maze to the exit.
8. Rescue Drag
 - Grab the harness of a 165 lbs. mannequin and drag the mannequin 20 feet to a drum. Round the drum and return the mannequin's feet beyond the start line.
9. Hose Roll Carry
 - Lift and carry two (2) rolls of 50-foot length 2 ½ inch hose to the finish line.

General Rules:

- Candidates must complete a Release, Assumption of Risk and Hold Harmless Agreement Form prior to beginning the test
- Candidates must wear long pants and closed-toed athletic shoes
- Candidates will be issued a safety helmet and gloves which must be worn throughout the test
- Candidates are not permitted to run at anytime during the test
- Academy staff reserves the right to terminate the test of any candidate who is performing in an unsafe manner