

Physical Competence Assessment Training Programme

The role of a police officer in Northern Ireland is both physically and mentally demanding. It requires a level of physical competence, which allows duties to be carried out effectively and safely, without undue stress or risk of injury. Mainstream police activities that place a high demand on physical fitness are generally infrequent, but when required they are often critical to success. The failure of a police officer to perform a given duty because of lack of physical competence could have serious, even fatal consequences for the officer, his or her colleagues and the public. With this in mind, it is recommended that anyone wishing to apply for the Police Service of Northern Ireland should commence a training regime as soon as possible in order to prepare for the needs of operational police work.

Please find below a weekly training programme, which focuses on improving aerobic endurance in conjunction with anaerobic fitness and strength, all of which are essential in passing the Physical Competence Assessment (PCA). This programme should be undertaken in conjunction with advice from your doctor and/or fitness instructor.

Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE):

The intensity for the training sessions is based around the "Rate of Perceived Exertion" (RPE). This scale ranges from 0 (which is equivalent to very light activity) and progresses steadily to 10 (equivalent to your maximum intensity).

Warm Up:

In order to increase the body and muscle temperature, all exercise sessions should begin with a low intensity aerobic exercise such as walking, jogging, cycling, stepping, cross training or rowing. To mobilize and stretch the major muscles and joints that will be utilised in the main exercise session, stretching exercises should follow.

Cross Training:

Choose from the following list:
treadmill/bike/rower/x-trainer/stepper

Weekly Training Programme:

Monday	Cross Training
Tuesday	Run & Weight Training
Wednesday	Rest
Thursday	Cross Training
Friday	Rest
Saturday	Run & Weight Training
Sunday	Rest

Cross Training Programme:

Beginner Perform 3 minutes (RPE 7-8) on three of the above machines in quick succession. Record the distance reached on each individual machine. Repeat the sequence immediately and aim to beat the first attempt.

Intermediate Perform 3 minutes (RPE 8-9) on three of the above machines in quick succession. Record the distance reached on each individual machine. Repeat the sequence a further two times in quick succession while aiming to beat the first attempt.

Advanced Perform 4 minutes (RPE 8-9) on three of the above machines in quick succession. Record the distance reached on each individual machine. Repeat the sequence a further two times in quick succession while aiming to beat the first attempt.

Run Training:

20 minutes interval work alternating between periods of light work (RPE 6) and hard work (RPE 9-10).

Running Programme:

Beginner	1:3 Ratio	1 min hard then 3 min light repeat 5 times = 20 min
Intermediate	1:2 Ratio	1 min hard then 2 min light repeat 7 times = 21min
Advanced	1:1 Ratio	1 min hard then 1 min light repeat 10 times = 20min

Cool Down:

All exercise sessions should finish with a cool down period. A safe and effective cool down period is best accomplished by reducing the intensity of the exercise during the last 5 minutes allowing the heart rate to gradually return to the normal resting value. A cool down should include low intensity aerobic activity followed by another period of stretching.