

**The Bill Blackwood  
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**

---

---

**Matter of Importance for On-Duty Workout Programs  
In Police Agencies**

---

---

**A Leadership White Paper  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Required for Graduation from the  
Leadership Command College**

---

---

**By  
Terri Thomas**

**Dallas ISD Police Department  
Dallas, TX  
September 2019**

## **ABSTRACT**

Police academies ordinarily incorporate a thorough workout regime that underscores cardiovascular perseverance and physical quality. A division's attention to physical wellness and wellbeing essentially diminishes as recruit officers' progress to working the streets. There are a lot of fitness programs that exist for officers, however, they lack efficiency and do not solve the overall purpose of requiring officers to be physically prepared for duty. Police officers who sit in cruisers all day, work extended hours, eat on the go, and maintain inconsistent sleep patterns, may struggle to stay physically fit.

An additional portion to consider as a component of a health program is an arrangement that urges and backings representatives to work out while on obligation. These projects are developing in notoriety because of the noteworthy advantages they give to the individual representatives, the division overall, and to the network that is served. All agencies should allocate time for on-duty workout programs for officers. On-duty fitness programs create a fitness culture; prevent injuries for officers in the arrest. Ultimately allows an officer to commit themselves to their duties to the best of their ability. These projects can possibly incredibly advantage the workers, employers, and the communities that are served. The final product will be a more beneficial, more grounded, and more joyful group of officers who are better arranged for the physically and rationally requesting obligations of police work.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Page
Abstract	
Introduction .....	1
Position .....	2
Counter Arguments .....	6
Recommendation .....	7
References .....	10

## INTRODUCTION

Fitness and wellness programs are typically planned to objectify mental health and physical fitness. Physical fitness is an important aspect for people to maintain a sense of health, wellness, and accountability. Progressive police administrators understand the importance of involving fitness programs in the lives of all their employees. Developments in fitness programs are seemingly important due to the facts that provide officers the ability to maintain the mental and physical wellness. During an officer's career, the level of fitness typically decreases. Kasper (2013) stated, "Long hours, shift work, and other responsibilities interfere with a quality fitness routine and cardiovascular health and muscular strength significantly decrease" (Kasper, 2013, para.23). It is important for officers to upkeep physical agility to benefit individually, as a department, and to better serve the community.

A few officers will keep up a workout schedule; however, they are likely to have little effect on an officer's total wellbeing. Some law enforcement organizations as of now keep up differing kinds of physical work out regimes. Four distinct practices currently exist. One of the main practices includes police departments that have funds accessible to contribute toward workers' wellness exercises. For instance, the expenses are related with gym memberships, yoga or combative techniques. Ordinarily, officers get a stipend that pays for a segment of the cost or the whole cost of the fitness participation. A second basic practice includes police agencies that compensate officers for their exercise time if it is not within their customary obligation hours. Officers come into work early or remain late and work out utilizing fitness equipment that is provided in the department. Another training practice utilized by a few agencies is to require yearly

physical wellness testing. The purpose is to motivate officers to work out on their own by having set up physical wellness benchmarks that must be met on a yearly premise. A few organizations energize and bolster their employees to work out on duty during their regular duty hours.

The method of utilizing regular duty hours, during spare time to work out is a more useful policy to implicate health and wellness in the department. It is considerably beneficial to encourage and support employees to work out while on duty. All the other practices of encouraging officers to work out forces them to find membership or physical activity that may not always accommodate each officer. Fitness programs within police departments is important for officers to maintain a great deal of wellness and health activity to fulfill their full potential on the job. All police agencies should allocate a program for officers to do physical fitness while on duty because there will be an improvement in work performance, officers will have less injuries, and will create a culture of health and wellness throughout the department.

## **POSITION**

The existence of fitness programs is very crucial to police accountability for their work, and demand in protecting their community the best way fit. However, on-duty workout programs are what develops agencies into creating an environment where officers feel the need to be physically apprehensible to be held liable of their actions on duty. According to Means, Lowry, and Hoffman (2011), 98% of American law enforcement agencies require a person to comply with physical fitness standards only before they become an official officer. Fitness programs on-duty is what creates a culture of health and wellness amongst police departments. It was stated how other

methods of fitness programs lack the benefit of motivation amongst the officers by making physical fitness more of a choice than a requirement. Therefore, on-duty fitness programs make it easier for authorities to monitor and control the amount of work and dedication that is put into their employees' routines, for them to maintain physical wellness.

An officer's activity is not routine; it is never the same tasks every day. It is hard to foresee what officers should do to secure themselves and the general population. Subsequently, officers should prepare and be set up to react to the flighty. This should be possible using joined physical and mental activities while officers are on duty.

It would be more beneficial for agencies to participate in allowing officers to work out on duty. The idea confirms the reality of officers who are in shape and physically prepared to protect their community and improve in work performance. The role of a police officer is often sedentary, intermixed with moments of extreme physical exertion (Lagestad, 2012). During physical squabbles officers participate in maximal exertion in pushing, winding, controlling different people, applying holds, wrestling, utilizing wrist arm locks, constraining people to the ground, punching, and lifting people. In the reality of these actions, officers are using their bodies, and physical agility to commit themselves to handling their job the best way possible. Altercations may involve dealing with suspects who are heavier, taller, or fit a more physically in shape identity. Therefore, departments that do not commit to keeping their officers in shape on duty, limit police and their abilities to arrest or physically handle suspects.

Officers regularly take part in foot pursuits that can include moving around objects, running upstairs, and hopping over lasting structures such as ditches and

fences. Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams are one of the main officer agencies that focus into on-duty workouts to ensure that their officers are physically prepared to handle suspects and situations that may occur on the job. Specifically, surveyed SWAT officers ranked the ability to quickly clear a 6 foot or less obstacle as the second most important on the job physical task (Dawes et al., 2011). This demonstrates how on-duty work out programs can improve the physical accountability for officers in their tasks. Guaranteeing that officers are securely and physically ready to fulfill their required obligations ought to be an individual officer duty as well as a worry for each agency.

There has been considerable research demonstrating critical relationship between individual levels of physical wellness and work-related injuries. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (2014), conducted a study through eighteen different police departments and found 1,295 self-reported injuries in just a one-year period. The significance amongst arrangement and damage rates found inside the examination exhibits the requirement for broad investment in wellbeing activities. Harmonizing with enhanced wellness is enhanced in general physical wellbeing. This will result in less obligation related wounds and less wiped out days. In fact, obligation leave because of damage has all the earmarks of being at a high rate among open security laborers, a vast part of whom are cops (Adams et al., 2010).

The main sources of work injuries for officers are falls, trips/slips, and mental pressure. These muscles strains are straightforwardly identified with a person's adaptability, quality and action levels. In overheard conversations, there has been a shift in thought as it has been stated that sitting is the new smoking, and contrarily

impacts wellbeing (Williams, J., & Ramsey, V. 2017, August 29). When an officer is on duty, but there is no crime or event to tend to, they usually take a ride in their cruisers or do tasks in spare their free time. However, that time would be most suitable for on-duty workouts, so they are still committing themselves to tasks that will assist them with their work and protection of their community. Police administrators should work to proceed with the promise to worker wellbeing past academy graduation and through every representative's career.

Fitness and wellness can and ought to be a vital, esteemed part of the workplace, and not restricted to foundation preparing. There have been a few examinations that inspect the significance of physical wellness among public safety workers and how wellness identifies with work execution measures including injuries, ailment, and truancy from an individual point of view. The connection between an everyday wellness regiment and damage counteractive action can't be exaggerated. "Currently employed police personnel have a high prevalence of traditional risk factors, including hypertension, hyperlipidemia, metabolic syndrome, cigarette smoking, and a sedentary lifestyle. Obesity may be more common in police officers compared with civilians, whereas diabetes is present less frequently" (Zimmerman, 2012, p.159). Law enforcement personnel are exposed to a lot of factors that contribute to negative tension in their lives. However, their conditions can be improved and assisted by adding workouts and fitness to their lives and incorporating it into their daily lifestyles. It has been proven that officers who are faced with better conditions and routines of working out in a proper and timely manner, arouse less injury risks. This demonstrates the



importance of all agencies creating a designated time for a fitness program to take place while officers are on duty.

## **COUNTER ARGUMENTS**

The idea of police agencies creating on-duty fitness programs is faced with tons of oppositions. Many worry for the ability of the department to keep things in order in making sure that officers tend to their required obligations first, before working out become a goal in their work routines. One of the worries with any on-duty exercise program is that expelling officers from the road will debilitate the watch power's capacity to react to calls for benefit. To keep a huge disturbance of administration directors should restrict the quantity of staff who may workout at one time.

While some may agree with officers doing fitness programs while on duty, some fear for the reduction of officers on the street and made completely available to quickly respond to incidents. Many believe there will be a lack of focus in officers' obligated task to protect the people (Mujtaba & Cavico, 2006). However, officers who are working out can be assured to be available within a short period of time, and there will lack a disruption of service to the community.

There should also be attentive shift advisors within the department that will ensure that there are never more officers working out, than on the streets for duty. There would be an existent time policy to be created to regulate who all is working out and the time that they have available to do so. "As calls for service increase, officers who are exercising should be ordered to return to duty. It is unlikely there would be any significant disruption to police services" (Kasper, 2013, para.27). This is an exact reference to the possibility of the service of officers to be needed at a time, and the

solution to their absence would be for them to return to their work of service to the community.

According to Kasper (2013), a second major concern for on-duty workouts, is the possibility of officers getting injured while working out, while the policy would have been initially put in place to prevent injuries. Some may view this brief point as a sense of contradiction to the purpose of the program. In commitment to prevent officers from being injured while working out, limitations could be put in place to present injuries as a result that is less likely to occur (Orr et al 2016). Cardiovascular work outs should be the preferred work out method, instead of methods more related to strength and conditioning, such as heavy weight lifting.

Maintaining up an on-duty exercise program shows an officer's pledge to wellbeing and wellness. It sends the correct message to workers. Most officers persevere through a thorough exercise regimen as a major aspect of their institute preparing program. Younger officers, straight from graduation, are regularly in top physical frame. At that point, over the long haul, this level of wellness normally diminishes. Extended periods, move work, and different obligations meddle with a quality wellness normal and cardiovascular wellbeing and solid quality fundamentally diminish. Even though it may happen, it does not need to.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

All police agencies should invest in a fitness and wellness center to monitor the physical fitness of their employees. The location for officers to workout, could be their assigned station or a fitness club. Before officers enter the field, they are required to participate in a physical fitness test to make sure they are in shape and can deal with

certain situations. The program would create an environment filled with positive energy and a sense of daily motivation. Creating the program would allow officers to fully commemorate commitment to their health and completion of their police duties. Some may believe the idea as a distraction of officers from being in the field and become a misuse of time. However, officers spend most of their time at the department if there is no specific task to tend to, so the program would create opportunities for them to become better officers while on duty.

The creating of the on-duty workout program would be created by shift advisors so that time would not be misused by officers while on duty. Implementing the policy starts with officers understanding the importance of their health while they spend their entire career worrying for others' lives. For them to do so at full potential, they must be healthy and physically in shape. Policy implementation begins with health education. On-duty exercise programs are commonly just a single piece of a bigger thorough wellbeing plan for that spotlights on add up to wellbeing. These projects can possibly significantly advantage the workers, businesses, and the networks that are served. The final product will be a more advantageous, more grounded, and more joyful group of officers who are better arranged for the physically and rationally requesting obligations of police work.

Keeping in mind the end goal to keep up an exercise on-duty program inside a police organization, overseers should first guarantee there is a relating written strategy that points of interest how the program will work. This will reduce potential complexities. Every single composed strategy must indicate a most extreme measure of time that is

allocated for physical wellness per move. This enables a man to finish a quality cardiovascular exercise and a little measure of quality and molding preparing.

Officers who need to center around quality may choose to utilize the greater part of the ideal opportunity for weights. Arrangements must clarify this kind of program is a benefit and not a right. The essential objective of open administration trumps working out. Along these lines, officers must be able to react to calls inside minutes. At the point when officers are working out, they should have their compact radios with them and must have fast and simple access to their regalia and hardware. There is an expectation that, if needed, they will be available within a few minutes' time to handle calls. Therefore, officers will be getting the exercise they need while maintaining their everyday obligations to protect.

To better ensure that the officers maintain their fitness while tending to their officer duties, then it is recommended to do the fitness program at the station. There will be a designated fitness space at the station that is delegated for the fitness center. The officers would preferably workout at the station in a fitness center that is created for those purposes. This recommendation is made with the intention of ensuring that the officers are always on first hand to respond to public duties in a timely and suitable manner.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, J., Schneider, J., Hubbard, M., McCullough-Shock, T., Cheng, D., Simms, K. ...  
Strauss, D. (2010). "Measurement of functional capacity requirements of police officers". Proc (Baylor University Med Center) 23, 7-10.
- Dawes, J.J., Elder, C., Hough, L., Melrose, D.R., & Stierli, M. (2013). Description of selected physical performance measures and anthropometric characteristics of part and full time special weapons and tactics teams. *Journal of Australian Strength and Conditioning*, 21(2), 51-57.
- International Association of Chiefs of Police and Bureau of Justice Assistance. (2014). *Reducing officer injuries final report*. Retrieved from <https://www.leonearmiss.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/IACP-Reducing-Officer-Injuries.pdf>
- Kasper, J. (2013, March). *On-duty workout programs: Pro & con*. Retrieved from [http://www.hendonpub.com/law\\_and\\_order/articles/2013/03/on\\_duty\\_workout\\_programs\\_pro\\_con](http://www.hendonpub.com/law_and_order/articles/2013/03/on_duty_workout_programs_pro_con)
- Lagestad, P. (2012, March). Physical skills and work performance in policing. *International Journal of Police Science and Management*, 14(1), 58-70.
- Means, R., Lowry, K., & Hoffman, B. (2011, April). *Physical fitness standards*. Retrieved from [http://www.hendonpub.com/resources/article\\_archive/results/details?id=1396](http://www.hendonpub.com/resources/article_archive/results/details?id=1396)
- Mujtaba, B., & Cavico, F. (2006, September). Corporate wellness programs: Implementation challenges in the modern American workplace. *International Journal of Health Policy and Management*, 1(3): 193–199.

Orr, R.M., Ford, K., & Stierli, M. (2016, October). Implementation of an ability-based training program in police force recruits. *Journal of Strength Conditioning Research*, 30(10), 2781–2787.

Williams, J., & Ramsey, V. (2017, August 29). “*The Need for Law Enforcement Wellness Interventions: A Critical Review*”. Retrieved from <http://thesportjournal.org/article/the-need-for-law-enforcement-wellness-interventions/>

Zimmerman, F.H. (2012). Cardiovascular disease and risk factors in law enforcement personnel: A comprehensive review. *Cardiology in Review*, 20(4), 159-166.