

# **PHYSICAL AGILITY TEST**



# **PREPARATION GUIDE**

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## I. Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to introduce applicants testing for the Springfield Missouri Police Department to the Physical Agility Test. Participation in this test is a requirement as a part of the screening process for the position of police officer. This test will simulate necessary job functions you must be able to perform as a police officer.

In order to develop this test, a large portion of incumbent police officers were surveyed within the department to determine essential physical job tasks that are required to be performed while on duty. This test has been constructed to simulate pursuing and subduing a suspect, while engaging typical obstacles an officer may encounter while doing so. During the test, these obstacles must be completed together and will require the applicant to both run and sprint. A pass/fail standard will be utilized. **Lateral Hire/Academy applicants will be required to complete this test in the following time: 5:54. Regular Academy applicants will be required to complete this test in the following time: 7:05.**

By reviewing this guide, the applicant will be better prepared for the test, which may be physically challenging. The Springfield Police Department hopes this guide helps and wishes you success on the day of testing.

## II. Test Description

These series of obstacles and tasks have been designed to create an assessment of the physical abilities necessary to perform essential police related job tasks. The Test consists of the following:

- Station #1/100 meter sprint
- Running to the various obstacles (in total ½ mile)
- Station #2/Pushing a vehicle 15 feet
- Station #3/Vertical jump
- Station #4/Climbing over a 6 foot wall
- Station #5/Climbing over a 3 foot wall
- Station #6/Climbing through a window
- Station #7/Dragging a dummy (total of 50 feet)
- Station #8/Subject Resistance Station (pulling together two bars, simulating forcibly handcuffing)
- Station #9/Climbing up and down stairs (one story)
- Station #10/Trigger pull (6 times on a training gun)

All components of the test are timed continuously. The following is a detailed description of each obstacle/component within the physical agility test:

The test consists of ½ mile marked off. At the end of this document is a diagram (not to scale) of the components of the test to better understand how the course is laid out. Throughout the course you will be required to run. The start point is at the sprint station and the end point is at the trigger pull station. The time will begin at Station #1 (sprint) and time will stop at the completion of Station #10 (trigger pull). There will be monitors throughout the course and at the different stations. There may also be cones and/or signs directing you on the course. The test will also be explained to you prior to the start point. Once the time has started, the applicant will be required to successfully engage each obstacle or task associated with the test- Station 1, then 2, then 3, then 4, then 5, then 6, then 7, then 8, etc.

## **Detailed Description of the Stations**

### **Station #1 / 100 meter sprint**

Once at Station #1 (the start point), the applicant will be required to sprint 100 meters to a vehicle located on the course, clearly marked/communicated to the applicant. The applicant will then begin Station #2 (see Station 2).

### **Station #2 / Vehicle push**

The applicant will be required to push a vehicle from a stopped position (while the vehicle gear is in neutral), 15 feet forward using upper body, trunk, and leg muscles. The start and stop positions will be clearly marked by traffic cones. The surface is required to be mostly level as viewed by the natural eye. This is to simulate situations when officers are required to push vehicles during job related tasks while on duty. The applicant is then required to run to the Station #3 on the course.

### **Station #3 / Vertical jump**

The applicant will be required to stop in front of a 14 inch high wooden box. The area where the applicant will stop and begin this task will be clearly marked and personnel at the station will also be giving verbal direction. The applicant will be required to jump with both feet on the ground, onto the wooden box. The applicant will be required to land with both feet on the wooden box, while being balanced and stable. The applicant may swing their arms for momentum prior to the jump as well as using their arms to balance themselves as they land on the box. The applicant may be given up to 3 attempts to successfully complete this task. This task simulates situations when officers are required to jump or leap. After completing this task, the applicant is then required to run to Station #4.

### **Station #4 / 6 foot wall climb**

The applicant will be required to climb over the 6 foot wall without using any bracing located on the sides of the wall. You must also make sure that your entire body goes over the wall. In other words, you are **not** allowed to place your hands on the wall and vault over it in a manner that puts your upper body over the wall, but the lower part of your body goes around the outside of the wall, near the braces/supports. You are also not allowed to dive or jump over the fence. You may use any portion of the facing- wall or top of the wall to climb over. This

station simulates situations when police officers must climb over fences or walls in pursuit of suspects. After dismounting, continue running to Station #5.

### **Station #5 / 3 foot wall climb**

The applicant will be required to climb over the 3 foot wall without using any bracing located on the sides of the wall. You must also make sure that your entire body goes over the wall. In other words, you are **not** allowed to place your hands on the wall and vault over it in a manner that puts your upper body over the wall, but the lower part of your body goes around the outside of the wall, near the braces/supports. You are also not allowed to dive or jump over the fence. You may use any portion of the facing- wall or top of the wall to climb over. After dismounting, continue running to Station #6. This station simulates situations when police officers must climb over low fences or obstacles in pursuit of suspects.

### **Station #6 / Window climb**

The applicant will be required to climb through a 3x3 foot window. The applicant may use any of the facing walls around the window or the frame around the window cut itself to assist them in getting through the window. The applicant may **not** use any of the supports or braces located on the station itself (holding the wall up) to get through the window. The applicant must have balance and control going through the window. The applicant is **not** allowed to dive through or fall onto the other side of the wall, when going through the window. This station simulates a situation when a police officer is required to climb through a window to get into a building. Once through the window, the applicant will be required to run to Station #7.

### **Station #7 / dragging a dummy**

The applicant will be required to drag a dummy weighing approximately 180 pounds, 50 feet total. **You may drag the dummy in any manner you see fit, except dragging it by the feet, legs or the head.** A common method is to approach it from behind, slide your arms underneath the armpit of the dummy, and lift upward, as you drag using your legs (attempting to keep your back as straight as possible). The entire dummy must be drug past each cone before you have completed this station. This is to simulate situations when a police officer is required to drag a person to a location of safety during critical incidents, for example. The dummy simulates a conscious (injured/disabled) or unconscious

subject the officer may encounter in those situations. The applicant will then be required to run to Station #8.

### **Station #8 / Subject resistance simulation**

The applicant will stop when they arrive at the fitness machine. The applicant will see a metal platform in front of the machine. The applicant will step onto the platform and grasp the machine by its handgrips. The applicant will be required to pull the bars in an inward motion until they stop completely in the middle and the bars or handles touch or will no longer move any closer together. The handles on each side must move together simultaneously. **The applicant may have up to 3 attempts to do this task correctly.** This station simulates subject resistance during handcuffing situations an officer may encounter in arrest situations. After this station, the applicant is required to run to station #9.

### **Station #9 / Stair climb**

The applicant will be required to ascend and descend the staircase, being sure to place at least one foot on each step, going up and coming down. Failure to touch each step will require the applicant to start this station over again until it is completed properly. **Exercise caution** when going up and down the steps as to not trip or fall. This station simulates many situations when an officer is required to chase subjects up and down stairs. After this station, the applicant is required to run to Station #10.

### **Station #10 / Trigger pull**

The applicant will be handed a training handgun (unloaded/nonfunctioning) and the applicant will be required to pull the trigger of the handgun simultaneously 6 times, in less than 7.1 seconds, to pass this task. **The applicant may be given up to 3 attempts to pass this station/task.** The applicant is encouraged to use their dominate hand to do this task. A stopwatch timer will be kept by personnel monitoring the station. The applicant will be told by the monitor when to begin the task, so the monitor can keep track of the time. After this task is completed, the continuous time being kept for the applicant will stop and be considered the final completion time of the Physical Agility Test.

**Lateral Hire/Academy applicants will be required to complete this test in the following time: 5:54. Regular Academy applicants will be required to complete this test in the following time: 7:05.**

### **III. Administration of the Physical Agility Test**

When you arrive at the testing site, you will be checked in by personnel and possibly asked to wait in a staging area. Prior to the administration of the test, you will be given a video or “walk through” to familiarize you with the course, each station, and the rules for the course. This is the time to ask questions about the test. You may then be placed in a temporary holding area to be given the test or taken directly to the test area. Do not leave any of the holding areas or testing area without first obtaining permission from personnel involved in the testing.

### **IV. Test Rules**

1. Arrive early for the test, prior to your designated time.

You will be expected to arrive for the test at your specified time. Failure to arrive on time will result in your disqualification from the testing process. Remember to bring your photo identification for check-in purposes.

2. Wear proper clothing attire.

You will be taking a physical agility test, so make sure you don't wear clothing that is restrictive for movement. It may be helpful to check related weather reports for temperature conditions expected for the day of testing. Suggested attire may include: gym shoes, t-shirts, shorts, sweat shirts, sweat pants, etc. No equipment will be provided by the Springfield Missouri Police Department (this would include: gloves, knee or elbow pads, or other related equipment).

3. Follow all instructions given by personnel prior to, during, and in conclusion of testing on that day.

Personnel will be available to answer questions prior to the administration of the test. Once you begin the test, your overall time will be tracked, and you will be monitored to ensure you proceed through the test in the correct manner and complete all stations to standard. Failure to do so will eliminate you from moving further in the current hiring process. If you should do something incorrectly at a

station and the standard allows for you to do it again, personnel at that station will instruct you on what you will need to do correctly to keep you from being disqualified. The personnel will only act to enforce rules at the stations and will not offer any advice on best techniques for completing the course. Personnel will direct you on the course or act to clarify rules of the course. If you should fail to meet the minimum required overall time for the course (and are still on the course and attempting to complete the stations) you will also be notified immediately. If this occurs you will not be allowed to finish the course and will not be considered to move forward in the hiring process.

4. Once you begin the test, remain on the course until completion.

Once you begin the test, you must remain on the course until it is completed. You may rest at any time, but the time continues to be count against you. You cannot walk off of the course at any time during the test, even to rest. If you choose to withdraw from the test/course, you may do so at any time and must be communicated to personnel administering the test.

## **V. Preparation and Training**

**Please note that the techniques and suggestions in this document are not intended as medical advice. It is suggested you consult your physician or a health professional before starting any physical program. Any techniques and suggestions provided in this document that are used by the person reading it, is considered at their own risk and discretion. The City of Springfield makes no warranty of any kind in regard to the content of this document, including but not limited to, any kind of fitness for any kind of purpose. The City of Springfield is not liable or responsible to any person or persons for any consequential damage caused or alleged by any information contained in this document.**

This section will offer suggestions for preparation for a physical agility test. The primary topics will include physical fitness components, health factors, training principles, fitness schedules, and weight control.

### Physical Fitness

Fitness allows individuals to perform up to their ideal potential. There are four components:

- Cardio respiratory Endurance- body's ability to deliver oxygen and nutrients to the muscles over significant periods of time. Example: running long distances and sprinting short distances.
- Muscular Strength/Endurance- Muscular Endurance- body's muscular ability to exert sustained force/contraction over a period of time. Example: pushups.  
Muscular Strength (maximal) - body's ability to exert maximal force over brief periods of time. Example: maximum bench press
- Flexibility- the ability of components of the body, joints, and muscles to move through different ranges of motion, often moving through difficult ranges of motion. Example: low sitting squat position and moving into/out of this position.
- Body Composition- Maintaining low body fat. This is done through a combination of both, exercise and nutrition. What would be considered healthy body fat will be determined by the age of the adult in most situations.

### Health Factors to Consider

You should consult a physician before preparing or taking a physical agility test. Some health conditions to consider:

- High blood pressure
- Heart trouble/family history of heart problems
- Dizzy spells

- Extreme breathlessness
- Arthritis or bone problems
- Back pain
- Smoking
- Obesity

### Effective Training

There are really 3 factors that affect an exercise program: frequency, intensity, and time.

Frequency- how often you perform exercise. Suggested at least 3 times a week.

Intensity- This is how hard you are working out. This will often be measure best by heart rate. Beginners should train at 50 percent of their heart rate. An experienced person should workout at 80 percent or more of their heart rate.

This is calculated below:

$(220 - \text{age}) * \text{percentage} = \text{answer}$

Time- This is the amount of time spent working out. It is suggested to work out for 20-30-60 minutes at a time, based upon if you are a beginner or experienced.

### Example Fitness Program

Most fitness programs consist of 3 parts: the warm-up, physical condition period, and the cool down. These are described in some detail below.

-Warm-up (typically 5-15 minutes) the warm-up is where you will do one to several exercises in short duration to get the muscles, joints, ligaments, and tendons warmed up, prior to stretching them. Then loosen up these areas by stretching different areas of the body. This is important as it is a gradual way of getting the body ready for more strenuous exercise and to prevent injury. This will also help to improve flexibility, which should be a component to any workout program.

-Physical conditioning period (20-45 minutes) this phase consists of cardiovascular training, muscular strength training, and muscular endurance training.

Cardiovascular training consists of any exercise in which the heart rate is elevated over periods of time while doing some type of exercise. Such examples include: running, sprinting, swimming, bicycling, or circuit training.

Muscular strength and endurance training consists of exercises performed under some type of resistance. This resistance may include bodyweight, free weights, machine weights, resistance bands, ect. Endurance training typically consists of higher repetitions with less weight (12-20, or more). While absolute muscular strength training typically consists of fewer repetitions with higher weight (1-6 repetitions).

-Cool down (5-15 minutes) the cool down typically consists of lowering the heart rate and stretching the muscles out. This is the most important part out of the session and will help with recovery. Stretching is more vital after the workout session than before.

-Keep a log of your progress and to help with progression.

-Establish a training schedule. Find a time that works best for you. This may be early in the morning, the middle of the day, the afternoon, or the evening. Whatever works best- "STICK TO IT."

## Example exercises

### Warm-up

The warm-up was described above. These are just examples of some you could use. It is important to make sure you stretch out all major muscle groups you will be conditioning. Stretches should be held for 20-30 seconds each.

#### 1. Jogging in place (warm up the muscles)

Jog in place for at least 1 minute. Each foot must be lifted 4-6 inches off of the floor as you swing your upper body's arms naturally.

#### 2. Jumping Jacks / Side Straddle Hops (warm up the muscles)

Standing with your feet together and your arms at your sides, jump and spread your feet apart about shoulder's width apart, while simultaneously swinging your arms over your head. Repeat this exercise 15-30 times.

3. Seated Toe Touch / Seated Hamstring Stretch (lower back and legs)

Sit down with your legs fully extended in front of you. Hold your hands out and slide them down your legs until you feel a stretch in your lower back and legs. This should be a comfortable stretch and not hurt. Hold at comfort levels that are reasonable. Repeat this stretch.

4. Groin Stretch (Groin and thigh muscles)

While seated, pull the toes in with both feet so that your knees bend and are pointed outward. Press the knees down with your elbows. Hold this position at a comfortable level. Repeat this stretch.

5. Standing Hamstring Stretch (lower back and legs)

While standing, bend over at the waist, while feet are together. Arms should drop toward the floor in an attempt to point toward your toes, touch your toes, or touch the floor. This will depend on your current flexibility and what is comfortable. This stretch should be comfortable and not painful. Come back up slowly and repeat this stretch.

6. Hand and Arm Rotation (Shoulder and arms)

While standing, extend arms straight out to your sides. Rotate your arms in a small circular motion. After several seconds, begin to make that circular motion bigger, increasing the range of motion. Then repeat this exercise rotating your arms backward (small rotations into large rotations).

7. Tricep Stretch (arms)

Place one arm across the front of your chest and grasp it around the elbow and attempt to pull it across the chest even further (to a comfortable level). Repeat exercise with opposite arm.

8. Side Twister (trunk or torso)

Standing with your feet shoulder width apart, extend your arms out to your sides (at shoulder level). Turn your palms down and begin to twist from side to side,

while your feet stay planted on the floor. Do this exercise to a comfortable level. Repeat exercise several times.

#### 9. Calf Stretch (calf muscles)

Step forward with one foot as you keep the rear foot planted. Your front leg should be bent at the knee slightly, while the rear foot remains planted on the floor. The calf muscles will stretch and this should be done at a comfortable level. Repeat this exercise.

### Physical Conditioning Period

Examples of this are listed above. Listed below are several body weight exercises that are beneficial for improving overall strength. It is always recommended to do some of these exercises several times a week during your workout sessions. Over time you will want to look to add more repetitions and sets of each exercise (typically every 2-3 weeks).

#### 1. Pushups (arms and trunk)

While one your hands and knees, spread your hands apart to about shoulder width, or just beyond, while you straighten your legs, get up on your toes, and keep your back generally straight. Feet may be together or up to 12 inches apart. Head is up or straight, not leaning down (on other words, head is in line with the body). In a controlled manner, lower yourself until your shoulder is in line with your elbow, then push back up, locking each elbow out.

#### 2. Chin-ups (shoulder, arm, back muscles)

While grasping a bar underhanded and hanging down, pull yourself up until your chin goes above the bar. Then repeat. This is often a difficult exercise for some. You may find using a chair, with one leg on it, in front of you (not behind you), will work for assistance for this exercise.

#### 3. Pull-ups (shoulder, arm, back muscles)

While grasping a bar over handed and hanging down, pull yourself up until your chin goes above the bar. Then repeat. This is often a difficult exercise for some. You may find using a chair, with one leg on it, in front of you (not behind you), will work for assistance for this exercise.

4. Sit-ups (abdominal, hip flexors, lower back)

Lie down on your back (padded surfaces are much more comfortable), with your shoulders on the floor. Your knees should be bent at a 45 degree angle, with your feet placed on the floor. Place your fingers behind your head (do not interlace them), but make sure the fingers touch each other. Know curl up and touch your elbows to your knees or go past your knees, whatever is more comfortable. Do not “rock with the hips.” (Keep hips on the floor during the exercise) Remember to breathe and if you need to rest, do it in the up position. Do not pull on the back of the head or neck, as this may cause an injury.

5. Squats (leg, hip, lower back)

Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart. Place your hand on your hips or out in front of you. Bend at the knees so that your thighs are parallel to the ground. The back should remain straight and in the down position would resemble a sitting position. It is important to keep your heel on the floor and push up through the heels of your feet. Then return to the up position and continue the exercise.

6. Dips (arm, shoulder, chest)

Grasp the sides of a seat, bench, or chair and allow your legs and feet to move forward, as you support your upper body with your arms. Bend your elbows and lower yourself (possibly 90 degrees or until it gets uncomfortable) and then push back up. Continue exercise.

7. Lunge (gluteus and leg muscles)

Stand straight with our hand on your hips or out in front of you. Keep one leg straight as your step forward with the other one. As you step forward in front of you, ensure your knee tracks directly over the foot (not in front or behind each other). Then step back and switch legs, continuing the exercise.

Cool down

This was described above. Allow your heart rate to come down during the cool down. This should take about 1-2 minutes. Then begin the stretches you conducted during the warm up portion. Hold each stretch just a little longer than you did in the warm up. This will help with recovery of the muscles and increase flexibility.

## **Nutrition**

Any component of a workout program also includes nutrition. It is vitally important for individuals to monitor body fat/body composition and their daily caloric intake (based recommended daily allowances and overall individual goals). In other words, your goal may be to maintain your current weight, lose body fat, gain weight in some circumstances, or just make sure your energy levels are where they should be based on your current/future activity levels. Below are free websites with information about nutrition:

[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

[www.sparkpeople.com](http://www.sparkpeople.com)

## **What to expect from a new physical training program**

Exercise has its benefits, but results are hard to gage day to day, or often week to week. Individual should look at results in a long term fashion (month to month). Keep track of what you are doing will help see improvements. The first few weeks of any program are usually the hardest. The body is getting used to the resistance or stimulus, but will overcome and adapt over time. Most individuals do not realize the most difficult aspect of workout programs is the mental aspect. The mind will typically shut down, become negative, and tells us we don't really feel like doing this/that exercise. When you change the way you look at it or find the positive aspects in the workout, this will help.

## **VI. Conclusion**

This guide should help aid in preparing for the agility test. By using the information contained in this document, the individual will be better prepared for and more confident prior to any testing. The Springfield Police Department hopes you are successful and looks forward to seeing you on test day.