

National Firefighter Selection Guidance Notes

1. INTRODUCTION

The Fire & Rescue Service can offer you a satisfying, exciting and varied career, and the aim of this booklet is to give you a better insight into what the work involves.

The role of the Fire Service has changed considerably in the last five years, and the role within the community has had to change to reflect the new demands made on the Service.

The 'New Look' firefighter is not an individual who is focused on the traditionally perceived role of attending emergency incidents and the physical requirements to achieve that. The firefighter is now required to be even more adaptable than previously. Yes, the new-look firefighter still fulfils the traditional role of dealing with fires in all types of premises and a variety of Special Service Calls, which include incidents such as entrapment of persons at road traffic collisions, chemical emergencies, flooding and other natural disasters. But, the new-look firefighter is also able to switch from this reactive role to a more preventative role, which involves the education of our communities about the hazards presented by fire.

While you might start as a firefighter, there are plenty of opportunities for career development if you want it, and how quickly you progress will depend upon you.

The Work of the Fire Service

Key Objectives

The objectives of a modern Fire & Rescue Service are, to build a safer society by working in partnership with others, and to reduce death, injury, damage to property and the environment from fire and other emergencies.

Dealing with emergencies

Technology obviously plays a major role in helping firefighters to tackle emergencies as efficiently and effectively as possible. For example, computers in control rooms store street plans, details of high-risk buildings and the latest information on hazardous materials. This ensures that as soon as an emergency call is received – whether a fire, chemical spillage or road traffic collision – controllers can immediately assess what appliances are required to attend. On attending a fire, the firefighters have to make a very quick assessment of the situation – as materials used in homes and factories change, so does the way the fire is tackled. A house fire may require two appliances whereas a commercial or factory fire may involve several more appliances as well as requiring thousands of litres of water and foam, plus the use of specialist equipment.

There is also the hazard of toxic fumes and heavy smoke, which can be generated from modern materials – for example foam-filled furniture. This makes tackling a fire much more difficult and firefighters always go fully protected with equipment such as breathing apparatus as well as personal radio sets to keep them in contact with colleagues at the scene, or back at HQ. Firefighters will also have a range of other equipment at their disposal depending on the incident to which they have been called; cutting and lifting gear to deal with traffic collisions; protective suits for use at chemical spills and thermal imaging cameras to help locate victims in smoke filled rooms.

Fire Safety – a key area of work.

Specialist training for officers involved in fire safety is provided at the National Fire Service College in Gloucestershire and with individual Services. Based on the study of Fire Engineering, there is also the opportunity to study other relevant academic qualifications, such as the membership of the Institution of Fire Engineers. Training in fire safety is critical to much of the day-to-day work of a firefighter. Factories, offices, shops, hotels, boarding houses and railway premises are all required to comply with certain fire precaution measures, which include providing adequate means of escape. It is the job of the Fire & Rescue Service to ensure that these requirements are being followed and effectively maintained. We also provide specialist fire protection advice to local authorities responsible for licensing buildings such as theatres, cinemas, clubs and sports grounds. Hospitals, schools, nursing homes and many other institutions also need professional advice regarding fire safety.

Another important area of work is promoting fire safety through education and publicity to the general public. Close links between individual stations and their communities are vital in this, and building these gives firefighters the opportunity to take part in all sorts of events and activities that you might not have imagined could count as “work”!

When applying to become a firefighter there are various duty systems available: -

Shift	A career firefighter usually working shifts.
Day-Crewed	A career firefighter usually working day shifts and providing night-time cover on an on-call basis. You will need to live near a day-crewed station.
Retained	Planned around your current job or other commitments. You would be on call. You would need to live or work close (3-5 minutes) to the fire station, serving the local community. (See Section x of this booklet for further information).

2.

BECOMING A FIREFIGHTER

The new National Firefighter Selection Tests will be used to select all new operational firefighters. This will include Shift, Day-Crewed and Retained personnel. There will be no difference in recruitment processes, procedures or standards.

Firefighters come from all walks of life; some are school leavers, some have degrees and others are trained in other professions.

As a firefighter there is much involvement with the public and other agencies such as the Police, Ambulance Service and Local Authorities.

The Fire Service has identified Personal Qualities and Attributes that are required for the “New-Look” firefighter.

Personal Qualities and Attributes

A Commitment to Diversity & Integrity

To be someone who understands and respects diversity and adopts a fair and ethical approach to everyone.

Change

To be someone who is open to change and actively seeks to support it.

Confidence and Resilience

To be confident and resilient – even in highly challenging situations.

Working with Others

To be someone who can work easily with others – both within the Fire & Rescue Service and in the community.

Communicate

To communicate effectively – both verbally and in writing.

Personal Development

Be someone who is committed to personal development – for yourself and others.

Practical Abilities

Be practical and able to solve problems in a logical, safe and systematic way.

Awareness

You should have a good level of awareness to be able to respond to a rapidly changing environment. Safety is always of paramount importance.

Excellence

Candidates should be capable of achieving and maintaining standards of excellence.

Stage One

The Self Selection Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed for individuals to complete prior to filling in the application form.

- It will help you to decide whether you have the potential to be a successful firefighter.
- It will give you an idea of what it means to be a firefighter.
- It will describe what firefighters are expected to do.
- It will give you a chance to see whether the reality matches what you thought would be involved in being a firefighter.
- It will give you an idea of whether being a firefighter is right for you.

Application Form

The information you provide to us on your application form is the only information we will use in deciding whether or not you are to proceed to the next stage of the recruitment process. Previous applications and/or prior knowledge of you are not taken into account, even if you already work for the Fire & Rescue Service.

Therefore, it is important that you take your time and complete the application form as fully and as accurately as possible. In doing so, you should not under-estimate the time you will need to prepare and complete the form. Some applicants fail because their form is not returned by the closing date.

Curriculum Vitae (CVs) are not accepted. If a CV is received from you, it will not be considered during the selection process. You are required to complete the Fire & Rescue Service Application Form.

As part of an application package, the candidate will receive a great deal of information. You must read all the information thoroughly. This information tells you what we are looking for and should help you sell yourself. Many applicants fail the application stage because they have not read the information or followed the instructions.

The form **must** be **completed by you**. All the questions asked should be answered. Each form will be scored and sifted and successful candidates will be invited to attend Stage Two testing.

The application form plays a vital role in the short-listing process, so it is important that the form is completed as fully and as accurately as possible. You should complete the application form enclosed with the information pack and return it to the address on the form.

Stage Two

Written Tests

These tests consist of a series of multiple choice questions designed to assess your abilities and aptitude for becoming a firefighter.

The tests are likely to be carried out locally and will take approximately three hours. They are split in to two categories:

1. National Firefighter Ability Tests

This consists of three timed tests to be completed in a set time, they include:

- Working with numbers
- Understanding information
- Situational Awareness & Problem Solving

2. National Firefighter Questionnaire

This has been designed to provide information on personal style and behaviour. The information given will be considered alongside other parts of the selection process to decide if you are suited to becoming a firefighter.

Test guidance notes and practice booklets will be sent to individuals separately.

Stage Three

Physical Role Related Tests

As part of the selection process, you will be required to undertake physical tests, which aim to assess your level of fitness, strength and manual dexterity as well as your level of confidence in simulated exercises. These tests are designed to reflect operational practice and may change from time to time.

Candidates will be asked to complete a Medical Screening Form prior to undertaking any of these tests, this is to ensure that individuals are fit enough to undertake them.

There are currently six tests that make up the National Firefighter Physical Tests. These are:

- Enclosed Space
- Ladder Climb
- Casualty Evacuation
- Ladder Lift
- Equipment Assembly
- Equipment Carry

Ladder Climb

This is a test of confidence whilst working at height. Candidates must demonstrate the correct 'leg lock' at ground level before commencing the test. Wearing full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including a harness, candidates must ascend a fully extended 13.5 metre ladder to approximately second storey height and demonstrate a 'leg lock'.

The candidate will then be required to lean back with arms outstretched and describe a symbol shown on the floor. The candidate will then descend.

You will have to perform this within a specified time.

Casualty Evacuation

This is a test of lower and upper body strength. Candidates in full PPE will be required to drag a 55kg casualty walking backwards (guided by an assessor) around a 30-metre course. You will have to perform this within a specified time.

Ladder Lift / Lower Simulation

Again, this is a test of upper and lower body strength. Candidates in full PPE will be required to raise a bar 75 cm off the ground to a height of 182cm and back down to the 75 cm support. The weight of the bar at the lifting point will start at 5kg. The maximum load to be added is 15kg. This test is to be completed within a specified time.

Enclosed Space

This is a test of confidence, agility and possible claustrophobia whilst working in an enclosed space. Candidates in full PPE and wearing a Breathing Apparatus facemask will be required to negotiate a measured crawl-way within a set time. Half the route will be with clear vision and the other half with obscured vision. You will be required to perform specific tasks during the test.

Full instructions will be given prior to the commencement of the test.

Equipment Assembly

This is a test of manual dexterity. Candidates will be required to assemble and disassemble an item of equipment and follow the colour-coded diagrams provided. This test is to be completed within a specified time.

Equipment Carry

This is a test of aerobic fitness, muscular strength and stamina. Candidates will be required to:

- Drag a hose reel from an appliance for 25 metres, then jog back 25 metres.
- Pick up and carry 2-coiled hoses for 100 metres.
- Carry 1-coiled hose at chest height for 25 metres, and then jog back 75 metres.
- Pick up and carry a 2.4 metre suction hose and basket strainer for 100 metres, then jog back 100 metres.
- Pick up and carry a simulated 'Light Portable Pump' for 100 metres (weighing approximately 30kgs)

Again, you will be required to perform this test within a specified time.

Stage Four

Interview

The purpose of the interview is to assess your general aptitude for the role of a firefighter. Candidates will be unable to do any preparation, as the interviewer will ask questions about life experiences with regard to the relevant Fire Service Personal Qualities and Attributes.

The interview is up to an hour long, including a ten-minute conversation, which is not part of the overall assessment but designed to help the candidate to relax.

The candidate will be told when the assessment element begins. There are no right or wrong answers; candidates need only answer in a considered way drawing from their own experiences.

Occupational Health Medical

You may be asked to attend your medical before or after completing the physical tests. This will be confirmed to you in writing

There will be a full medical carried out by the Fire & Rescue Service's medical adviser. The purpose of the medical is to assess the general level of health, including weight, blood pressure and lung function. Candidates will also have a hearing test, eyesight test and a urine test.

.A report may also be required from a hospital where you have received treatment or an independent specialist if the Service Medical Adviser requires it.

Your consent is required to access these records and it is a condition that, for your progression through the recruitment process, this consent is given as requested.

3. GENERAL INFORMATION

Declaration of Criminal Offences

If you have a record of offence(s), this will not necessarily disqualify you as all applications are considered strictly on their merits. However, you are required to declare any offence for which the conviction is not yet 'spent' within the meaning of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Incorporating the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act [Exceptions] 1975 and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 [Exceptions] [Amendment] Order 1986). You are advised to declare any charge that is pending; a subsequent conviction could lead to your dismissal from the Service.

Broadly, the Act provides for anyone who has ever been convicted of a criminal offence and not sentenced to more than 2.5 years in prison to become a 'Rehabilitated Person' at the end of the Rehabilitation period, provided there have been no further convictions. At the end of this period, the conviction is considered 'spent' and thus to be treated as if it never happened.

There is no requirement to disclose 'spent' convictions.

These sentences have fixed rehabilitation periods:

Sentence	Rehabilitation Period	
	People aged under 18 when convicted	People aged 18 or over when convicted
Prison sentences* of 6 months or less	3 ½ years	7 years
Prison sentences* of more than 6 months to 2 ½ years	5 years	10 years
Borstal (abolished in 1983)	7 years	7 years
Detention Centres (abolished in 1988)	3 years	3 years
Fines, compensation, community service, combination and curfew orders	2 ½ years	5 years
Absolute discharge	6 months	6 months

** Including suspended sentences, youth custody (abolished 1988) and detention in a young offender institution.*

Further guidance on the Act can be found in the Home Office Booklet "A Guide to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974" issued by HM Stationery Office. If you are in any doubt about your declaration, you can get legal advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau, local Law Centre etc.

Note: Should the candidate knowingly provide any particulars given in the answers within the application form that are found to be false within the knowledge of the candidate or should there be any wilful omission or suppression of any material fact, the candidate will, if appointed, be liable to dismissal from the Fire & Rescue Service.

Driving

If you hold a licence, you must inform us if your licence is endorsed, giving details to the nature of the offence, offence code (Examples; CD10 Driving without due care and attention, DR10 Drinking and driving...) and also give details of the penalty (Example; £00.00 fine and number of penalty points and if you had to attend court, give details of outcome. Please see Rehabilitation Period on page 8.

Reference

You are asked to supply the names of two people who can be contacted for a character reference. Preferably these people should have known you well for at least three years.

- Neither of the names supplied should be people who are related to you or resident with you.
- If you are currently in employment, the name of your present or most recent employer must be one of your referees. * [NOTE: Your current employer will not be approached until all checks are completed so as not to prejudice your employment).
- If you are still in full/part-time education, you should give the name of your College / University tutor to whom reference can be made.
- If you have never been in employment, then the names of a referee who knows you in some capacity may be substituted for that of your employer.

It is important that these referees are willing to supply us with details regarding your character. You should, therefore, contact them to verify this prior to submitting their names. Note: Serving Police Officers cannot give you a reference.

Work Permit (Asylum and Immigration Act 1996)The Service is required by law to ensure that any persons it employs has the right or permission to reside or work in the United Kingdom. Any person to be offered employment will be required to produce relevant original documentation when requested.

Health and Safety Policy Statement

The Fire & Rescue Service is committed as an organization to the implementation and maintenance of the highest standards of health, safety and welfare for all its employees and also to other persons who may be affected by its activities.

To achieve this, the Service will operate a system of health and safety management designed to be proactive which will integrate both health and safety into all aspects of its work.

The Service is committed to the provision of information, support and training to enable all employees to carry out their responsibilities with minimum of risk. To achieve this, the Service will maintain its plant, equipment and workplaces to a high standard and conduct risk assessments to produce safe systems of work.

The Service will strive to maintain a positive culture that encourages participation, co-operation and commitment of all employees to work together to promote health and safety.

The South East Fire Services Equality and Fairness at Work Policy Statement

The South East Fire Services are community services that are committed to ensuring equality and fairness in employment and to giving a high level of service to all people of and visitors to the area.

Our aim and commitment is to ensure no person whether an applicant for employment, employee or member of the community receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, marital status, having dependants, sexual orientation, political or religious belief, trade union activity, disability or any other factors.

All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and consideration at work. This extends to the right to work in a safe and healthy environment free from harassment, bullying, discrimination or intimidation either directly or indirectly by other employees.

The Services are committed to the implementation of this Policy and will actively pursue practices designed to promote Equality and Fairness at Work and to eliminate discrimination, bullying and harassment.

The overall responsibility for the Policy lies with the Chief Fire Officer / Fire & Rescue Service, however, all staff are expected to comply with the policy and to act in accordance with its objectives so as to remove any barriers to equality and fairness.

Any act of discrimination by employees or any failure to comply with the terms of the Policy will result in disciplinary action.

4.

RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM

Introduction

Generally the role of a Retained Duty System Firefighter is the same as that of a whole-time firefighter with exception to salary and certain conditions of service.

We look to recruit committed, dedicated people who will be required to attend weekly training periods of between 3-5 hours. You will have the opportunity to carry out additional duties such as, community fire safety, fire hydrant inspections, equipment maintenance and testing and general station routines. These duties are in addition to responding to emergencies for which you will receive a retaining fee, turnout fee and additional hourly rate payments. The range of duties and opportunities to earn more are expanding.

Retained Duty System Firefighters

The role of a Retained Duty System Firefighter offers the chance to serve your local community. Retained firefighters do a whole range of jobs and attend the same operational incidents as whole-time firefighters varying from fires, floods, road traffic collisions and chemical spills.

Retained Duty System Firefighters are a diverse group of men and women from various vocational backgrounds. They are ready to go to an incident the moment an emergency call comes in. They are committed, professional, highly trained competent people on the front line, saving lives and making headlines. The role allows for great flexibility.

How do you become a Retained Duty System Firefighter?

You need to live or work within one mile of the Retained Fire Station at which you wish to serve and should be able to respond within five minutes of an alarm, on foot or by vehicle at normal road speeds.

As we are unable to predict when you will be called out you need to be flexible. Ideally you will be able to provide cover 24 hours per day on a regular basis either from your home or place of work. Alternatively, you may be a 'part-time' or shift worker who could provide regular daytime cover when required as well as night cover.

Career Development

All members of the Fire & Rescue Service start their career gaining the essential front-line experience and training needed for employment as a competent firefighter. For those retained firefighters seeking promotion, there are opportunities available to the roles of Retained Crew Manager and Retained Watch Manager.

Interested? Need more Information?

If you think you have what it takes to join the retained service why not call your local Fire & Rescue Service where you can talk to the people who are already doing the job. They will be able to give you a true insight of what life is like as a Retained Duty System Firefighter. Alternatively, you can contact the Personnel / Human Resources Department of the Service who will gladly supply further information.

5. SUGGESTED FITNESS PROGRAMME

General Exercise Guidance

Good exercise training advice is highly specific to the individual. It should be understood, therefore, that the advice provided here can only be general.

If you require further information, you are advised to seek individual advice, specific to your needs, from a qualified fitness professional.

The role of a firefighter can be physically demanding. Firefighters are required to be aerobically fit, have good all-round body strength and stamina. As a result, the entry selection tests are designed to reflect the actual physical tasks that firefighters are required to perform.

Safety Points

If you are in any doubt about your health or physical ability to exercise, **consult your doctor** before you commence physical activity. This is especially important if you are pregnant (or think you may be), have not exercised for the last six-months or had a recent illness or injury.

Always warm up before commencing any exercise. Wear the correct clothing and footwear; do not train if you are unwell or injured.

Preparing for Exercise (Warm-Up)

Performing a warm-up prepares the body for the activity about to be undertaken. The length of time needed to warm up correctly depends on many factors; however, you should allow at least 10 minutes for this very important activity. In order to reduce the risk of injury in the warm-up period, a number of steps should be followed:

Be Specific: Make sure your warm-up session is geared towards the activity that you intend to perform. For example, for cardiovascular workouts, such as running, start with a brisk walk leading into a light jog. For weight training, it is important to warm up the particular joints and muscles that are involved in the resistance exercise. This will increase blood flow to those muscles and activate the nervous system, prior to any additional stress being placed on them.

Start Slowly: At the start of your workout your muscles will be relatively cold. Start exercising slowly and build up the intensity throughout the warm-up period. This will increase your muscle temperature steadily and keep the risk of injury to a minimum.

Keep Warm: If you are exercising in a cold environment, wear additional clothing during the warm-up period and try not to stand still for too long.

Stretching: For many years it was thought that stretching immediately prior to exercise would prevent injuries. However, new research suggests that this may not prevent muscle or tendon injury. Any form of flexibility or stretching activity should be performed following a warm-up period or an exercise session.

How to improve your physical fitness

Improving your physical fitness will require some self-discipline and efficient use of your spare time, as an effective exercise routine needs to be completed on a regular basis.

In order to improve your physical fitness you will need to alter the frequency, intensity, and duration of your exercise above your current level. Your training should be gradual and progressive. You should start small and then build up the intensity over time. This will produce an improvement in your fitness by placing greater demands on your body. In general, the less exercise you perform the less improvement, and the more exercise you perform the greater the fitness improvement.

Whilst certain exercises are more specific to fire-fighting tasks, a well-rounded training programme, which includes aerobic, resistance and flexibility exercises, is recommended. This will improve and maintain the muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility of the major muscle groups.

Although age in itself is not a limiting factor to fitness training, it is sensible for older people to follow a more gradual approach.

Aerobic training

Depending on your current level of aerobic fitness standard, follow these guidelines to improve your aerobic fitness.

Frequency of training: 3 to 5 days per week.

Intensity of training: 55 to 90 % of your Predicted Maximum Heart Rate (PMHR)

A heart rate monitor is a useful tool to check that you train at the right intensity.

If you have access to a heart rate monitor you can calculate your desired training intensity by using the following equation:

Heart rate percentage of 55-90% of your Predicted Maximum Heart Rate (PMHR) is calculated by:

220 minus your age = your Predicted Maximum Heart Rate.

Predicted Maximum Heart Rate x 0.7 = 70% PMHR

Predicted Maximum Heart Rate x 0.8 = 80% PMHR and so on.

OR

Level 10-17 on your Rating of Perceived Effort (RPE) scale

Level 6 - 20 percent effort - rest

Level 7 – 30 percent effort - very, very light

Level 8 – 40 percent effort

Level 9 – 50 percent effort - very light - gentle walking

Level 10 – 55 percent effort

Level 11 – 60 percent effort - fairly light

Level 12 – 65 percent effort

Level 13 – 70 percent effort - moderately hard - steady pace

Level 14 – 75 percent effort

Level 15 – 80 percent effort - hard

Level 16 – 85 percent effort

Level 17 – 90 percent effort - very hard

Level 18 – 95 percent effort

Level 19 – 100 percent effort - very, very hard

Level 20 – Exhaustion

Duration of training: 20 to 60 min of continuous or intermittent aerobic activity (minimum of 10 minute bouts) accumulated throughout the day.

The duration is dependent on the intensity of the activity; thus, those exercising at higher levels of intensity should train for at least 20 minutes, and for those exercising at a lower intensity activity should be conducted over a longer period of time – at least 30 minutes.

Type of activity: any activity that uses large muscle groups, which can be maintained continuously, and is rhythmical and aerobic in nature, e.g., walking-hiking, running-jogging, cycling, cross-country skiing, aerobic dance/group exercise, rope skipping, rowing, stair climbing, swimming, skating, and various endurance game activities or combination thereof.

To maximize the efficiency of your training you should focus on exercises that are similar to those in the entry tests. These include running-jogging, stepping, stair climbing and other weight bearing activities.

Resistance training

In order to improve your strength and/or muscular endurance you will need to exercise against a resistance. This resistance can be your body weight (for example a press-up) or may involve the use of specifically designed equipment such as dumbbells, barbells or resistance machines. Resistance training should be progressive in nature, individualised, and provide sufficient stimulus to all the major muscle groups to develop and maintain muscular strength and endurance. You should follow the subsequent guidelines to improve your muscular strength and endurance.

Frequency: 2 to 3 days per week.

Exercises: At least one set of 8 to 15 repetitions of 8 to 10 exercises that condition the major muscle groups of the body. Multiple set regimens may provide greater benefits if time allows.

The effect of exercise training is specific to the area of the body being trained. For example, training the legs will have little or no effect on the arms, shoulders, and trunk muscles. Therefore a whole body approach should be adopted.

Muscles should also be worked in balance and the following exercises are recommended:

Chest press, seated row, shoulder press, lateral pull down, squats, lunges, step-ups, abdominal crunch, back extensions.

Rest: If performing multiple sets, adequate rest should be given to allow the muscles to recover before performing another 'set'.

NB You should not perform the same resistance exercise on consecutive days. At least 24 hours rest should be allowed before repeating the exercise.

Weights Exercises

Chest Press

1. Whilst lying flat on the bench with feet planted firmly on the floor either side of the bench with your arms extended.
2. Slowly lower the weight to chest level. Push the weight back to the start position.

Tips: Ensure your back is flat on the bench and not arched. Perform slowly and in control.



Seated Row

1. From a seated position, with arms extended in front of the body and knees slightly flexed, draw the hands into the abdominal area squeezing the shoulder blades together.

Tips: Look straight ahead and maintain the natural curve of the spine. Keep elbows tucked close to the body throughout the movement.



Shoulder Press

1. From an upright position, with dumbbells overhead, slowly lower the weight to shoulder level. Push the weight back up to the start position.

Tips: Ensure the back is flat on the bench. Perform slowly and in control. Look straight ahead.



Lateral Pull Down

1. From a seated position, grasp the overhead bar just wider than shoulder width. Lean back slightly and draw the elbows in towards the side of the body so that the bar rests at the top of the chest.

Tips: Do not swing during the exercise.



Squat

1. From a standing position with feet between hip and shoulder width apart, bend at the knees and flex at the hip until your thighs are parallel with the floor. Push through the heels to return to the standing position.

Tips: Ensure that the knees are aligned with the feet and do not pass beyond the toes.



Lunge

1. From a split leg position, with one foot in front of the other, lower the back knee towards the floor so that the front thigh is almost parallel with the ground. Push off the front leg to return to the start position.

Tips: Look straight ahead. Ensure the front knee is aligned with the foot and does not pass beyond the toes.



Abdominal crunch

1. Lie face up on a soft surface, bend knees and bring feet close to the buttocks. Fold your arms across your chest, or place hands lightly behind the head. Draw your belly button towards your spine by contracting your lower abdominal muscles. Whilst holding this contraction with normal breathing, slowly raise your shoulders towards your thighs while keeping the lower back on the floor.

Tips: Lower your shoulders and upper body slowly and with control.



Back extension

1. Lie on your stomach on a mat. Place hands lightly at the side of your head. Raise your head and shoulders off the mat as high as comfortably possible. Hold for 1 to 2 seconds. Lower the head and shoulders.

Tips: Do not tense your shoulder muscles.



Flexibility

Flexibility exercises should be incorporated into the overall fitness programme sufficient to develop and/or maintain your range of motion. These exercises may also reduce the likelihood of injury, reduce muscle soreness following exercise and may enhance muscular performance. These exercises should stretch the major muscle groups of the body. There are a number of forms of stretching techniques. However those without specific up-to-date knowledge in this area are advised to adhere to the following guidelines.

Frequency: 2 to 3 days per week.

Duration: hold the stretch 1 to 3 times in a static or still position for 10 to 30 seconds.

Exercises: Below is a list of recommended stretching exercises that should be performed:

Triceps and Upper Back Stretch

1. Sit or stand upright with one arm flexed, raised overhead with elbow next to your ear, and your hand resting on your opposite shoulder blade.
2. Grasp your elbow with the opposite hand.
3. Inhale and pull your elbow behind your head.
4. Hold the stretch and relax.
5. You should feel the stretch in the back of the arm.



Rear Deltoid and Upper Back Stretch

1. Sit or stand with one arm straight.
2. With the other hand grasp the elbow of the straight arm.
3. Inhale and pull the elbow across the chest and in towards the body.
4. Hold the stretch and relax.
5. You should feel the stretch in the back of the shoulder and upper back.



Pectoral and Upper Back Stretch

1. Kneel on the floor facing a bench or chair.
2. Extend your arms above your head with your hands side by side and bend forward to rest your hands on the bench or chair with your head in its natural position.
3. Exhale and let your head and chest sink towards the floor.
4. Hold the stretch and relax.
5. You should feel the stretch in your chest and upper back.



Quadriceps Stretch

1. Stand upright with one hand against a surface for balance and support.
2. Flex the opposite knee to the hand that is outstretched and raise your heel to your buttocks.
3. Slightly flex the supporting leg.
4. Exhale, reach behind, and grasp your raised foot with the other hand.
5. Inhale, and pull your heel towards your buttocks.
6. Hold the stretch and relax.
7. You should feel the stretch in the top of the thigh.



Hamstring Stretch

1. Sit upright on the floor with both legs straight.
2. Flex one knee and slide the heel until it touches the inner side of the opposite thigh.
3. Lower the outer side of the thigh and calf of the bent leg onto the floor.
4. Exhale, and while keeping the extended leg straight, bend at the hip and lower your extended upper torso from the hips towards the extended thigh.
5. Hold the stretch and relax.
6. You should feel the stretch in the back of the thigh.



Adductor Stretch

1. Sit upright on the floor with your legs flexed and straddled and feet flat against one another.
2. Grasp your feet or ankles and pull them as close to your groin as possible.
3. Exhale, rest your elbows on your knees, pushing them down towards the floor.
4. Hold the stretch and relax.
5. You should feel the stretch in the inside of the thighs.



Calf Stretch

1. Stand upright slightly more than an arms length from a wall.
2. Bend one leg forward and keep the opposite leg straight.
3. Keep the heel of your rear foot down, sole flat on the floor and feet pointing straight forward.
4. Exhale, and flex your forward knee toward the wall
5. Hold the stretch and relax.
6. After 10 to 15 seconds slightly flex the knee of the back leg keeping the heel of the foot down.
7. Hold the stretch and relax.
8. You should feel the stretch in the back of the lower leg.



Buttocks and Hip Stretch

1. Lie flat on your back with one leg crossed over the knee of the straight leg.
2. Inhale, flexing the uncrossed leg off of the floor in towards the body ensuring that you head shoulders and back remain on the floor.
3. Hold the stretch and relax.
4. You should feel the stretch in your bum and back.

GENERAL PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAMME

The following programme is 8 weeks long and is an example of how you could go about training to pass the selection tests. It consists of 3 running sessions, 2 weights sessions and 2 flexibility sessions per week. The programme starts relatively easy and gets progressively harder. You should alternate between your running and weight sessions so that you do not perform the same training on consecutive days e.g.

Mon	-	steady run
Tue	-	weights
Wed	-	fartlek
Thu	-	flexibility
Fri	-	steady run
Sat	-	weights
Sun	-	flexibility

If you miss an exercise session, do not attempt to do 2 sessions in 1 day to make up. If you are unwell or injured then do not train until you have fully recovered.

Make sure you have read and understood the programme before you start training

Below is an explanation of all the sessions included in the programme. The actual details of the workouts are set out on the back of the 8-week plan.

Steady pace running: This should be performed at a comfortable pace i.e. you should be able to hold a conversation throughout your run. This type of exercise will increase your aerobic fitness. This is included 2 times per week in the programme.

Fartlek training: This type of running involves changing pace throughout the session. A steady pace of running should be interspersed with faster running, sprints, jogging, uphill running and walking. The aim of the session is to work continuously for about 20 minutes using the various speeds of running whenever you feel like it. There is no set order to this session, however you should begin with about 5 minutes of steady running before you do any faster running. This session will increase your aerobic and anaerobic fitness.

Note - Where possible you should run on grass or trails, try to avoid road running. This will reduce the stress placed on the joints of the body.

Resistance training: These sessions will target all the major muscle groups and will help to improve your muscular strength and endurance.

Flexibility training: This is to help improve or maintain your range of motion. These exercises may also reduce the likelihood of injury, reduce muscle soreness following exercise and may enhance muscular performance.

Please see the 8-week training programme below

8 WEEK PROGRAMME

WEEK	SESSIONS	DURATION	INTENSITY	TIMES PER WEEK
WEEK 1	Steady pace run	20 minutes	55-90percent of PMHR or RPE level 10-17	2
	Weights	1-2 sets of 12-15 reps		2
	Fartlek	20 minutes		1
	Flexibility	10-30 seconds		2
WEEK 2	Steady pace run	20 minutes	55-90percent of PMHR or RPE level 10-17	2
	Weights	2 sets 12-15 reps		2
	Fartlek	20 minutes		1
	Flexibility	10-30 seconds		2
WEEK 3	Steady pace run	20 minutes	55-90percent of PMHR or RPE level 10-17	2
	Weights	2 sets 12-15 reps		2
	Fartlek	20 minutes		1
	Flexibility	10-30 seconds		2
WEEK 4	Steady pace run	25 minutes	55-90percent of PMHR or RPE level 10-17	2
	Weights	3 sets 10-12 reps		2
	Fartlek	20 minutes		1
	Flexibility	10-30 seconds		2
WEEK 5	Steady pace run	25 minutes	55-90percent of PMHR or RPE level 10-17	2
	Weights	1-2 sets of 12-15 reps		2
	Fartlek	20 minutes		1
	Flexibility	10-30 seconds		2
WEEK 6	Steady pace run	30 minutes	55-90percent of PMHR or RPE level 10-17	2
	Weights	2 sets 12-15 reps		2
	Fartlek	20 minutes		1
	Flexibility	10-30 seconds		2
WEEK 7	Steady pace run	30 minutes	55-90percent of PMHR or RPE level 10-17	2
	Weights	2 sets 12-15 reps		2
	Fartlek	20 minutes		1
	Flexibility	10-30 seconds		2
WEEK 8	Steady pace run	30 minutes	55-90percent of PMHR or RPE level 10-17	2
	Weights	3 sets 10-12 reps		2
	Fartlek	20 minutes		1
	Flexibility	10-30 seconds		2

Warning: A significant reduction in aerobic fitness occurs after only 2 weeks of not training