

FEBRUARY 2025

New Zealand Police

Applicant Fitness Training Pack

What you need to know



NEW ZEALAND
POLICE
Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa



Introduction

Becoming a police officer is a fantastic choice of career and being physically fit is an important aspect. You will need to demonstrate a level of physical fitness that is aligned with the role of a Constable and be in excellent health.

About Police's fitness standards and testing

During the recruitment process, you'll be tested against our Physical Appraisal Test (PAT) standards.

The testing will be completed by one of New Zealand Police's Physical Education Officers (PEOs), located throughout the country.

This test will ensure you are physically fit to meet the physical demands of both training at the Royal New Zealand Police College and frontline Policing.

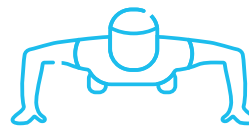
New Zealand Police's PAT consists of four components:



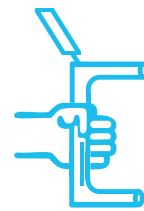
2.4km run



Vertical jump



Press ups



Combined grip strength

About this pack

This pack has been designed by New Zealand Police PEO's for those who are considering, or are already in the process of applying to join New Zealand Police. This information is specific and will assist in successfully completing the PAT.

You'll find a section with advice on each component of the test and training plans, followed by FAQs at the end of this document.

Our PEO's are qualified health and fitness professionals who are experienced in New Zealand Police fitness standards and testing – they know what works! If you have any further queries regarding fitness and testing, contact them at peo@police.govt.nz

For more information about New Zealand Police's recruitment process, including videos from our PEO's about the PAT, please visit www.newcops.govt.nz/PAT

Disclaimer:

Should you experience any specific pain beyond expected muscle soreness following exercise, especially that which is constant or disrupts sleep, seek health provider input. This training guidance does not replace individualised advice. Speak with your GP regarding health concerns.

PAT standards and scoring matrix

All candidates need to achieve a total of at least 11 points across the four tests.

2.4KM RUN

Must score at least 2 points

Male

Times in mins	Points Male BMI		
	<19	19-30	>30
Over 12:00	0	0	0
11:16 - 12:00	0	0	2
10:15 - 11:15	2	3	4
Under 10:15	4	5	6

Female

Times in mins	Points Female BMI		
	<19	19-30	>30
Over 13:00	0	0	0
12:16 - 13:00	0	0	2
11:15 - 12:15	2	3	4
Under 11:15	4	5	6

Vertical Jump

Must score at least 1 point

Male

Jump in cm	Points
48 & over	3
40 - 47	2
32 - 39	1
Under 32	0

Female

Jump in cm	Points
40 & over	3
33 - 39	2
26 - 32	1
Under 26	0

Press Ups

Must score at least 2 points

Male

Number	Points
34 & over	3
25 - 33	2
Under 25	0

Female

Number	Points
20 & over	3
15 - 19	2
Under 15	0

Grip Strength

Must score at least 1 point

Grip measured is the total of your right and left hands.

Male

Grip in kgs	Points
120 & over	3
105 - 119.9	2
90 - 104.9	1
Under 90	0

Female

Grip in kgs	Points
70 & over	3
60 - 69.9	2
50 - 59.9	1
Under 50	0

TRAINING FOR THE PAT



2.4KM RUN

There are three types of running sessions that we recommend incorporating into your training:

1. Long distance/endurance
2. Fartlek
3. Interval

Long Distance

Long distance is exactly that – **LONG!**

- These runs will help build a strong aerobic base which is important for stamina and preparing you for the challenging, speed focused runs later on in your training.
- Start with anything from 30mins - 60mins, depending on your current fitness level. * If you can't yet run for 30mins continuously, follow our Walk to Run program (see appendices) before progressing
- The pace is slow-moderate i.e. low-intensity.
- Change up the terrain – flat, hills etc.
- Aim to increase your running duration each week by 5-6mins (or 1km).

You should initially aim for 2-3 long distance sessions per week.

- If you have just begun your run training, gradually build up to 3 sessions per week to avoid injury and supplement with low impact cardio options (e.g. bike, rower, xtrainer).

Fartlek

This training method involves changing speeds during a single continuous run. Faster efforts for short periods of time are followed by running at a recovery pace, providing a great way to introduce faster running into your routine. Due to the increased intensity and faster speeds, you should begin with 15mins and progress from there. Always complete a 10-15min warm up and cool down (i.e. jog for minimum of 1km, followed by functional drills/ strides etc).

Examples:

- Try using lampposts as cues. Hard pace from one lamppost to the next and then recovery pace until you reach the next one. Repeat for 15-20mins.
- 1min hard pace/1min easy/30s moderate/30s easy. Repeat for 15-20mins.
- 5mins moderate-hard/3mins easy. Repeat for 15-20min.

You should aim for 1-2 fartlek sessions per week.

Interval

Intervals are short periods of high-intensity efforts followed by dedicated rest periods. This training style allows you to really start improving your run speed and develop the running pace you'll need to complete the 2.4km run in your required time. *See our Interval Pacing Guidelines program for top tips (in appendices).

- You can adjust the duration and intensity of the run (and recovery time), or simply adjust the total number of intervals you do (or both if you're feeling brave).
- You should be able to complete each interval in roughly the same time (it should feel harder after each one).
- A running track or clear space is ideal for these sessions.
- If you can't complete sets in around the same time, reassess whether the pace you're attempting is right for your fitness level.

You should aim for 1 interval session per week.



Example training plan

Training plan A: For individuals 2 mins or more off target 2.4km run time:
focus is long distance

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
A	30min long distance	REST	30+ mins cardio	30min long distance	REST	40min long distance	REST

Training plan B: For individuals 1 ½ mins or more off target 2.4km run time:
focus is long distance and fartlek

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
B	15+min fartlek	REST	30+ mins cardio	30min long distance	REST	40min long distance	REST

Training plan C: For individuals 1 min or less off target 2.4km run time:
focus is increasing pace

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
C	Intervals	REST	40+ mins long distance	20+min fartlek	REST	50+ mins long distance	REST

*Do not move to schedule B until you can complete schedule A



Common mistakes when training

- ▶ **Only running 2.4km** each session – training will plateau, and you risk injury.
- ▶ **Running only on treadmills** – this does not simulate a realistic running environment. Use only if necessary (weather, late night etc).
- ▶ **Not testing your 2.4km/testing too often** – changes don't happen overnight, so test every 3-4 weeks. Use these runs as a monitoring tool to ensure your training is working. Test yourself after a rest day.
- ▶ **Footwear** – a good pair of running shoes is a must. Running shoes aid in the prevention of injuries and can promote improved running performance. Go to a sports footwear shop to have a pair recommended for your specific running gait.
- ▶ If you are **injured or ill**, do not train. Seek professional medical advice if in doubt.
- ▶ **Overtraining** – recovery reduces your risk of overuse injuries and fatigue, and allows your body to adapt to the training load.

For further information and guidance on meeting the run standard, refer to the appendices at the end of this pack, including engaging with your local parkrun.

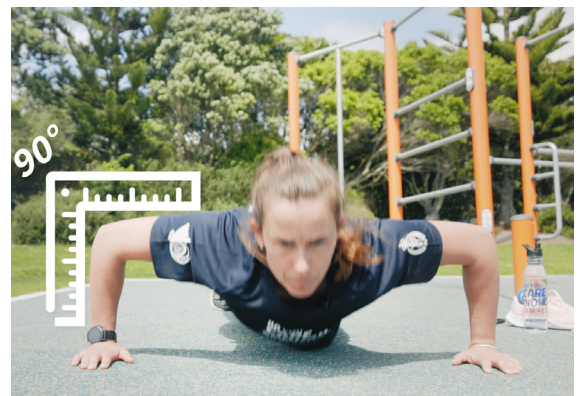


PRESS-UPS



Lie with your stomach on the ground and arms straight out to sides, in a cross position. Have someone mark the inside of your elbows - this is where your middle finger should be placed.

Elbow and shoulder joint are horizontal at bottom of push-up then extended fully at elbow, back to the start position. Quality first, then quantity. If you can't achieve the correct technique (see image), begin with incline press-ups by placing hands on a stable, elevated surface, like a bench, to achieve depth.



Once you have mastered the full press-up technique, you should begin focusing on the quantity of press-ups.

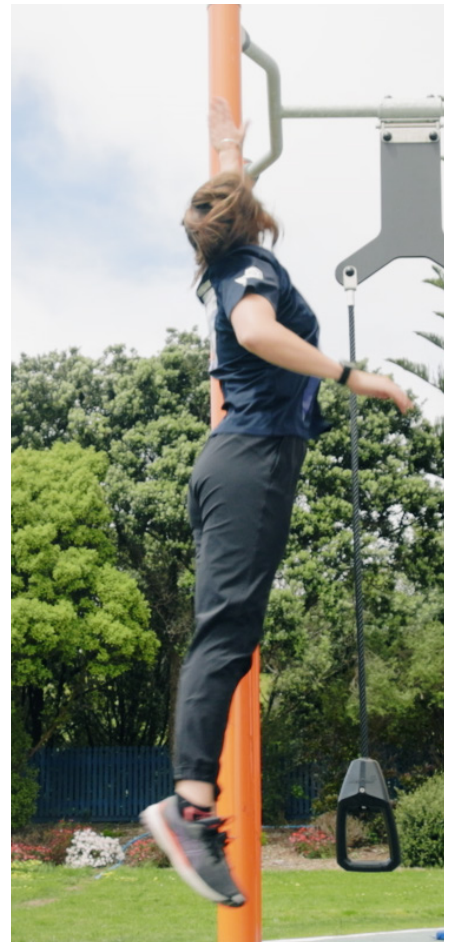
- ▶ Begin with 4-6 sets at 50-70% of your maximum quality press-ups (1-2min rest between). As you improve, add more repetitions to your sets, or add more sets (Or both!).
- ▶ **You should be doing 3-4 sessions per week**, ensuring you have a rest day between each session. At least one or two sessions should be after a run.
- ▶ Mix up your sessions to avoid a plateau by incorporating some of the following:
 - ▶ Isometric press-ups (90 degree holds)
 - ▶ Slow press-ups (3secs up/ 5secs down)
 - ▶ Go below 90 degrees.

VERTICAL JUMP

Technique and coordination should be your initial focus. Practice the technique of the jump and coordination of the arm swing and hand placement.

- ▶ Warm up before jumping, including movements like squats, calf raises, leg swings and 4-5 below maximum vertical jumps.
- ▶ Start with arms straight out in front of your body. As you bend your knees, let arms swing past your sides and slightly behind you.
- ▶ Spring up from your crouch position and bring your arms forward, allow the arm closest to the board to continue all the way up to hit the board.
- ▶ Train by doing 5-8 reps with about 45-60secs rest between each jump.
- ▶ At least one or two sessions should be after a run.

You should aim for 3-4 training sessions per week.



GRIP STRENGTH

- ▶ It's important to remember that you're training for maximal strength, not endurance.
- ▶ The device we use in testing does not give 'feedback' i.e. it does not move when squeezed.
- ▶ The best way to replicate the test is by finding a small block of wood, 45-75mm wide and 10-20mm thick (depending on the size of your hand) to practice squeezing.
- ▶ Squeeze for 5-8secs, rest for 60 seconds and repeat 3-5 times.
- ▶ Mix up your training by including gripping heavy objects, hanging from monkey bars or trying pull-ups.

You should aim for 3 training sessions per week.



Appendices

parkrun

Why parkrun?

For many New Zealand Police applicants training for the Physical Appraisal Test (PAT) and in particular, achieving the necessary level of fitness for the 2.4km run, can be challenging.



Distance running and increased running capacity is a crucial part of your training, however this step is often overlooked. A common training error is running 'just 2.4km' or opting to engage in other fitness options such as sprints, group classes or gym sessions. While these types of training options are great in terms of your health and fitness, they lack specificity in training for PAT and in particular, the run.

In order to improve your run time running is the most effective form of training. parkrun is a training platform New Zealand Police recommend incorporating into your fitness programme.

What is parkrun?

parkrun are free community led 5km events that take place every Saturday morning and are accessible to most, currently offering 56 locations across New Zealand with several more launching in 2025. Individuals can participate by walking, jogging, running, or volunteering. This means that regardless of where you are positioned in your fitness journey, this training would be suitable for you.

And even when you are away from home, you can find a local parkrun near you.

parkrun is welcoming, and inclusive, there is no time limit, and no one finishes last. Everyone is welcomed to join. It also allows for people to come along and support (friends and family) and potentially engage with other Police applicants who are preparing for their PAT.

When you register with parkrun you receive a unique parkrun ID number, which is then valid at any parkrun in the world every Saturday. It's totally free to take part, and there's no commitment – you just turn up at any parkrun whenever you feel like it!

Find out more here for both information and where your nearest parkrun is located visit www.parkrun.co.nz/ or scan the QR code:



Walk to run program

Building up from walking to running allows your body to adapt to increasingly harder efforts and workouts. Aim to complete 3x week. If you have trouble progressing, repeat the week you are able to achieve before re-attempting the next longer session.

Week 1 (16 min)

- 4 min walk
- 8 rounds of 30s jog / 30s walk (total of 8 mins)
- 4 min walk

Week 2 (16 min)

- 4 min walk
- 6 rounds of 1 min jog / 30s walk (total of 9 mins)
- 3 min walk

Week 3 (16 min)

- 4 min walk
- 5 rounds of 1:30 min jog / 30s walk (total of 10 mins)
- 2 min walk

Week 4 (18 min)

- 4 min walk
- 4 rounds of 2:30 jog / 30s walk (total of 12 mins)
- 2 min walk

Week 5 (18 min)

- 2 min walk
- 3 rounds of 4 min jog / 40s walk (total of 14 mins)
- 2 min walk

Week 6 (22 min)

- 2 min walk
- 3 rounds of 6 min jog / 30s walk (total of 20 mins)

Week 7 (21 min)

- 2 min walk
- 2 rounds of 9 min jog / 30s walk (total of 19 mins)

Week 8 (23 min)

- 2 min walk
- 1 round of 12 min jog / 30s walk
- 1 round of 8 min jog / 30s walk (total of 21 mins)

Interval pacing guidelines

Your interval training will involve several reps of high intensity running for a set distance followed by a recovery period.

To plan your interval training:

- ▶ Complete a 2.4km run and record your time.
- ▶ Work out your 400m lap time to calculate your 'base pace'. E.g. If you ran 2.4km in 12min, your 400m lap time is 2min – this is your base pace.
- ▶ Re-test your 2.4km every few weeks. Adjust your 400m 'base pace' as you get faster.
- ▶ Use the pace chart below as a guide for the interval speed you should aim to run at. Your goal is to complete all intervals at the same pace.
- ▶ If you are a 'beginner' and new to running intervals, you can reduce the 'paces' of sessions and increase gradually (i.e. week 1, 400m = 2sec faster than 'base pace' instead of recommended 5-6sec). You can also modify the number or reps and/or extend the rest period.
- ▶ Don't run the first rep faster and then slow down across the session. The goal is to hit every rep as close to the required pace as possible.

Complete 1 interval session per week (alongside your other run training).

Work out your pace

You should adjust your speed based on the distance of your run.

400m run = 5-6sec faster than 400m 'base pace'

800m run = 4-5sec faster than 400m 'base pace'

1km run = 3-4sec faster than 400m 'base pace'

1.2km run = 2-3sec faster than 400m 'base pace'

Example Programmes

Always complete a 10-15 minute warm up and cool down (i.e. jog for minimum 1km/ functional drills/ strides etc).

BEGINNER

Session 1:

6x 400m

- ▶ 2min recovery jog, walk between sets

Session 2:

3x 800m

- ▶ 3min recovery jog, walk between sets

Session 3 :

2x 1200m

- ▶ 3min recovery jog, walk between sets

1-2x 400m

- ▶ 2min recovery jog, walk between sets

INTERMEDIATE

Session 1:

4-5x 800m

- 90sec recovery,
jog between sets

Session 2:

2x 1200m

- 2min recovery,
jog between sets

3-4x 400m

- 1min recovery,
jog between sets

Session 3 :

1x 1200m

- 2min recovery,
jog between sets

6-7x 400m

- 90sec recovery,
jog between sets

ADVANCED

Session 1:

1-2x 1200m

- 2min recovery,
jog between sets

2-3x 800m

- 90sec recovery,
jog between sets

Session 2:

3-4x 1200m

- 2:30min recovery,
jog between sets

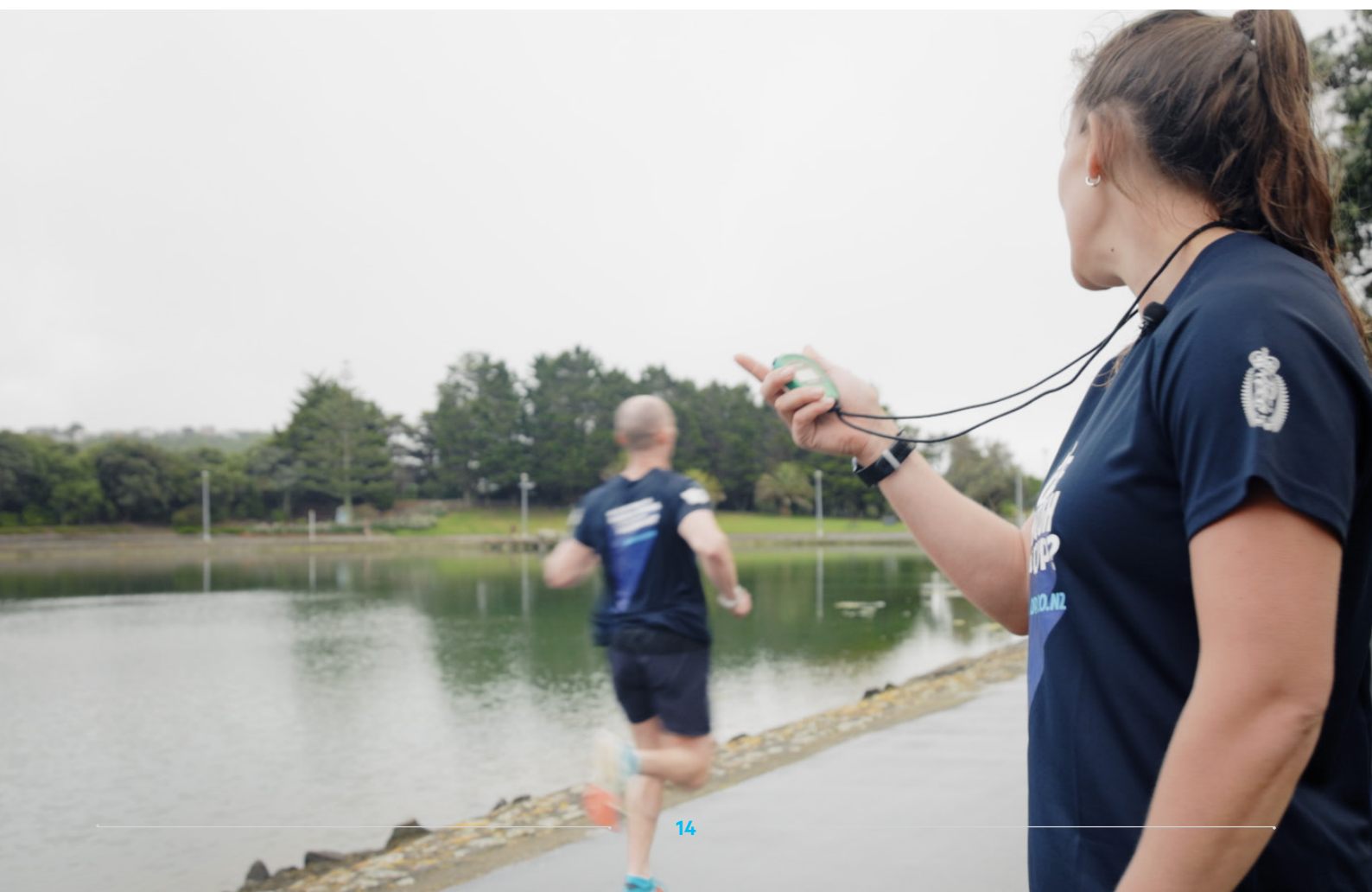
Session 3 :

2-3x 800m

- 90sec recovery,
jog between sets

1-2x 1200m

- 2min recovery,
jog between sets



Leg workout

Building up leg stability and strength is recommended to improve performance and avoid injury as you progress the intensity of your training.

Complete the below 2 – 3x week (less to maintain, more to improve).

Warm Up: 3-5 min jog, followed by active stretches of choice.

Complete 3 round work out: Begin with 8 reps of an exercise from each category at the level you can achieve with good technique without failing a rep or hitting pain threshold.

If level 0 is “you could do this all day” and level 10 is you failing a rep, work at an effort of 7 out of 10 - work hard but still have a few reps left in the tank after each set.

Start at 3 x 8 reps, then progress to 3 x 10 following week, and 3 x 12 week after that if going well.

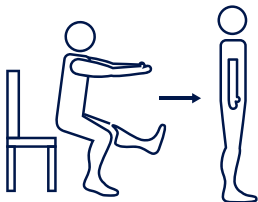
SINGLE LEG BALANCE



<i>Level 1 easier</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4 harder</i>
▶ Eyes open ▶ No assist	▶ Eyes closed ▶ Finger on wall assist	▶ Eyes closed ▶ Finger taps on wall assist	▶ Eyes closed ▶ No assist

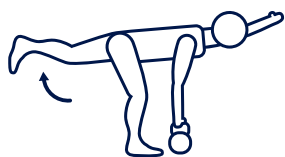
You should be able to hold 30 sec of easier level before progressing to a harder level.

SQUATTING



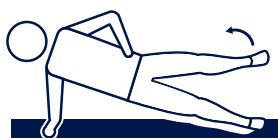
<i>Level 1 easier</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4 harder</i>
▶ Double Leg sit to stand	▶ Single leg lower ▶ Double leg stand	▶ Double leg lower ▶ Single leg stand	▶ Single sit to stand

Lean chest slightly forward when beginning to stand or sit. Keep knee in line with foot- don't roll in.

HIP HINGE

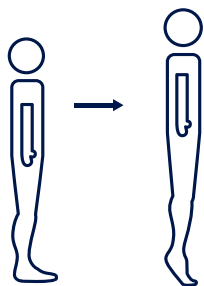
<i>Level 1 easier</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4 harder</i>
▸ Double Leg	▸ Split stance	▸ Single leg	▸ Weighted single leg

Knees slightly bent. Bend at hip. Fingertips to below knee or as low as comfortable. Back straight.

SIDE PLANK

<i>Level 1 easier</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4 harder</i>
▸ From Knee	▸ From knee + lifts	▸ From knee + leg hold	▸ From Feet

Progress from 10s - 20s - 30s at easier level before progressing to a harder level. Drive elbow down firm into floor. Lift hip towards ceiling. Keep body in a straight line- don't bend.

CALF RAISES

<i>Level 1 easier</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4 harder</i>
▸ Double leg up	▸ Double legs up	▸ Single leg up	▸ Single leg up
▸ Double leg lower	▸ Single leg lower	▸ Double leg lower	▸ Single leg lower

Move slow; don't bounce. Press through the big toe. Keep ankle straight; don't let it roll in or out.

PAT FAQ'S

1. Why is the PAT the measure of fitness used to become a Police Officer?

The Physical Appraisal Test (PAT) is a test of general fitness for New Zealand Police applicants and is one of many measures used to assess suitability for frontline policing. Being PAT fit is a good indication of general health but also means you're well prepared to safely undertake the training required of you during Police College (things like training tactical options, driver training and marksmanship). It also improves the likelihood of passing the Physical Competency Test (PCT).

2. There are a few steps to the recruitment process- when should I start training for my PAT?

You should be at, or very close to, your PAT standard before you apply. The best time to start training for your PAT is as soon as possible.

3. How long will it take me to get fit enough for my PAT/ How do I know I'm ready to attend testing?

How long it takes to get fit enough depends entirely on where you are starting from and how consistently you train. If you are already active and regularly running, you may find you're already close to meeting the PAT standard. If you are newer to regular exercise or haven't trained the specific aspects of the test, it could take several weeks or even months. A great place to start is by measuring yourself against the PAT standards and, based on how you go, using the programs in the New Zealand Police Applicant Fitness Training Pack. We've provided programs for any level of fitness.

4. Why do Police test 2.4km run, vertical jump, press-ups and grip strength specifically?

The particular components of the PAT give us a broad overview of an applicants physical ability that is relatively simple and efficient to test. Between the four components we test cardiovascular fitness, lower body power, upper body strength and grip strength. These attributes can be safely and reliably assessed using the PAT and give us a balanced picture of an applicant's physical ability, readiness for further job-specific training, injury risk and general health. For more information, please visit www.newcops.govt.nz/PAT

5. Why is the press-ups hand placement for the PAT so wide?

The press-up technique for the PAT may be wider than what you are used to. It's important that any fitness test can be replicated and is fair for everyone (i.e all applicants do the same thing). By placing your middle finger in line with your elbow joint and working to a depth of 90 degrees, we ensure that everyone completes their press-ups to the same standard.

6. What if I don't pass my PAT?

Our Physical Education Officers will provide you with specific training advice based on your test result and will also give a realistic training timeframe before you reattempt your PAT. Your recruitment specialist will talk you through what happens next based on this advice.

7. Is it better to train alone or with others?

It's best to do what works for you. Training with other, likeminded people can be extremely helpful in terms of motivation, a shared sense of purpose, safety and even fun! It can be particularly beneficial to work with people who are at the same level as you or even a little fitter. Others may find they get more from training alone and being able to focus entirely on themselves and their goals without any distraction. Try different approaches and see what you get the most out of.

8. I don't live near any parkrun events- what else can I do?

While parkrun is a fantastic way to complete some distance runs in a safe and friendly environment, however it is not your only option. There may be other running groups active in your community or options to connect with other applicants for training. It is also entirely possible to train alone.

10. I have an injury and have still been training- do I need to tell anyone?

Yes. You should be communicating this information to your selection specialist. We have rigorous health screening before applicants can complete the PAT and we will not test anyone who is carrying an injury. If you are injured, you should stop training, seek medical advice and rest/ rehab appropriately before recommencing training.

11. After I pass PAT, can I stop training?

No. It's expected that recruits present at College physically fit and in excellent health and that Police Officers, throughout their careers, maintain a good level of fitness.

The PAT is the first, but by no means the last, fitness test you will encounter on your Police journey. There are several physical assessments at Police college and on-going assessments throughout a Constable's career. Our advice is to build on the habits you have used to pass PAT, to continue to stay fit and healthy for yourself and your future career.

12. What types of physical activity will I be doing at RNZPC?

In addition to having to pass the Physical Competency Test (PCT) at College, you'll be trained in a number of physically demanding aspects of Policing. This includes firearms, driving, cognitive conditioning and defensive tactics (e.g handcuffing, baton and taser training). You will also be deployed into districts during your time at RNZPC, meaning exposure to real world policing and to shift work, which can be both physically and mentally challenging.

13. I've been told that once I'm at College I need to pass the Physical Competency Test (PCT) What is this?

The PCT is a timed run through an obstacle course. You'll be tested in 12 physical tasks including a 200m run, negotiating a balance beam, jumping a 1.8m mat, crawling under hurdles, climbing through a window, going over 1.8m wall and dragging a 74kg dummy.

The PCT establishes your ability to cope with the routine physical tasks of frontline policing and, in addition to completing at College, all Police officers must pass the PCT every 2 years.

You do not need to train the specific PCT obstacles in the recruitment phase- you will be taught the techniques required once at College. PCT tasks can be managed by people with good fitness, strength, coordination and balance so the training required for PAT should be your focus. A good result on the PAT is the best predictor for performance on the PCT.

14. I see there are a lot of social media groups/ personal trainers that give advice on Police fitness. Should I join in with these? Where can I get help?

The best place to get training advice is straight from the source. Police's Physical Education team (PEOs) are the experts in training for PAT, PCT and all other aspects of fitness required for operational policing in New Zealand. Our PEOs have developed fitness resources/ programs for applicants and are best placed to offer advice and answer questions.

Email any fitness or training related queries to peo@police.govt.nz

15. Will supplements like pre-workouts, protein powders and energy drinks help my training or PAT performance?

Probably not, there are no shortcuts and there is no magic. Your performance will improve by training with specificity, eating well and allowing time to rest and recover from training.

Before you take any supplements, seek the advice of your doctor or a sports dietician about whether you really need them or whether changes to your diet could get you the results you're looking for. We recommend a 'food first' approach to your nutrition. A well-balanced diet usually delivers all the nutrients we require- even if you're very active.

Police also has a Drug and Alcohol Policy which includes pre-employment drug and alcohol testing. Because it is very difficult to be certain of the exact ingredients in your supplements, using them can present a risk of returning a 'not-negative' test result.

