ACADEMY PHYSICAL TRAINING
EXPECTATIONS

As firefighters, we are expected to achieve and maintain an exceptional level of physical fitness. As members of the Kern County Fire Department, you will be held to a fitness standard throughout your career. To assure your success, this brochure has been constructed to help you gauge your current fitness level, and to improve your physical fitness, prior to the beginning of your academy. Each member of the recruit class will be tested and evaluated at various points in the academy, and will be expected to improve at each interval. Additionally, recruits will be evaluated in terms of effort, or lack thereof, given during Physical Training. Failure to achieve a standard rating for the 3-mile run, push-ups, sit-ups, and pull-ups, or a general lack of effort, will have an impact on your continuance in our program.

THREE MILE RUN
Heading southbound from the ODFTF gate, recruits will proceed to Basilicata and turn eastbound. The next street will be Knudsen at which point recruits turn southbound to Hageman. Recruits will turn westbound on Hageman to Fruitvale. This is the halfway point. Recruits will then reverse the route with times being called at the ODFTF front gate.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED: over 27:01 minutes
STANDARD: 27:00 – 21:01 minutes
ABOVE STANDARD: under 21:00 minutes

PULL-UPS
Recruits will hang with arms fully extended, hands slightly outside shoulder width, in an overhand grip; pull his/her body up in a controlled fashion until his/her chin is over the bar; then return to full arm extension.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED: 0 – 5
STANDARD: 6 – 15
ABOVE STANDARD: over 15

PUSH-UPS
Recruits will begin in the front leaning rest position; arms extended just outside shoulder width; head in the neutral position; body straight; and feet together. Recruits will lower body until arms are at a 90 degree angle; pause; then push up until arms are at full extension. This event will be timed for one minute.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED: 0 – 24
STANDARD: 25 – 60
ABOVE STANDARD: over 60
SIT-UPS

Recruits will work in pairs. The recruit being tested will position himself/herself on their back; with legs bent at a 45 degree angle; and arms across the chest. The recruit's partner will anchor his/her partner's legs by holding the ankles. The tested recruit will then curl his/her body until the arms reach the knees; then back until the shoulder blades touch the ground. **At the end of one minute recruits will switch places.**

**IMPROVEMENT NEEDED:** 0 – 30  
**STANDARD:** 31 – 60  
**ABOVE STANDARD:** over 60

Keep in mind, stronger recruits will also be expected to improve over the course of the academy, and to help their weaker classmates. “Sandbagging” is easily identified and will not be tolerated. Each recruit will be expected to give 100% effort at each and every Physical Training session.

Any injury, no matter how small, must immediately be reported to Training staff. Failure to do so may result in discipline; up to and including separation from our program.

Based on the above information, it is **strongly suggested** you immediately begin to improve your physical abilities to meet these standard levels and that you incorporate the attached stretching information into your regular physical routine.
STRETCHING

The importance of stretching cannot be stressed enough. Stretching is the most neglected area of most workouts. You cannot perform at peak levels during your workout without first warming up your body. Stiffness, or lack of range of motion in your joint structures, tendons, ligaments, and muscles will lead to injury; not strengthening.

You will achieve your best range of motion and flexibility if your muscles are warmed before stretching. For example, it used to be taught that the key to effective flexibility was stretching while your muscles were cold and before any activity. It is known that stretching cold muscles is not the most efficient method. It is best to start with 2-5 minutes of jumping jacks and push-ups before actually stretching. This gets the blood flowing into the muscles and makes them more pliable, or more able to stretch, preparing them for a more effective stretching session. Once this step is finished, and only when you feel warm; begin stretching.

Throughout these stretches, remember to stretch slowly. Try to hold each stretch for at least 15 seconds, and never bounce. You should feel pulling, not pain. Pulling can be described as a gradual discomfort or soreness due to tight muscles. As you stretch longer, tightness will decrease and flexibility will increase. Pain can be described as a sharp, intense sensation causing great discomfort to a specific point. This can happen when you do not stretch slowly. As you continue your daily stretching, you will be able to distinguish pulling from pain and recognize how to loosen your muscles. Using all the stretches listed here, your total stretching time should be 10-15 minutes. When your workout is completed, do at least 10 more minutes of stretching. This is when you will be most limber and get your greatest gains in flexibility. Not only is it important to stretch before and after exercising, but also during. While you are working-out, your muscle fibers begin to tighten. Stretching during your workout will loosen your muscle fibers, allowing more fibers to be affected. This allows greater results.

I hope this manual is of help in achieving your fitness goals. We are all at different levels of fitness; with different goals. With a little education from this and other sources, you are sure to successfully live a healthy active life.

The number one piece of equipment in this department is ....

YOU!!!
**Standing thigh stretch:** Place one hand on anything stable enough to support you. Take your other hand and grab your toes on the same side; pull them up as close as possible to your lower back. Release and do the other side. Once you have gone as far as you can hold it for 10 to 15 seconds.

**Upper thigh stretch:** Pointing both feet in the same direction open your legs as far as comfortable without losing your balance. Put your hands on your waist and with a straight back bring your torso straight down. Lower until you feel a stretch on your upper thigh of the back leg. **Don't bounce** once you have gone far enough to feel the stretch. When you have gone as far as you can; hold it for 10 to 15 seconds.

**Standing hamstring stretch:** Find a solid object on which you can rest your leg at a 60 to 90-degree angle. When you are in position and stable, try touching your head to your knee. Continue stretching, trying not to bounce, until you feel a good stretch in your hamstring. Once you have gone as far as you can; hold it for 10 to 15 seconds. Switch to the other side.
Calf stretch: Putting yourself in the push up position place your left foot over your right heel and in a slow movement try placing your right heel flat on the ground. If the stiffness in your calf becomes painful, stop and ease up on the pressure. Once you have gone as far as you can; hold it for 10 to 15 seconds. Switch to the other side.

Sitting Toe touches: Sitting on the ground you want to keep your legs together and straight. The key factor here is keeping your knees as straight as possible. Do not bend them. Try to touch your toes with your hands, while bringing your head down. Once you have gone as far as you can; hold it for 10 to 15 seconds.

Sitting Hamstring stretch: Lay flat on your back with both legs out straight. Bring one leg up, while keeping it straight, and support it with both hands behind your knee. This is the starting position, and from here you want to pull your leg towards your chest. Once you have gone as far as you can; hold it for 10 to 15 seconds. Get a good stretch, then switch legs.
**Sitting Thigh Stretch:** This stretch is sensitive so take it **slow**. While sitting put one leg out straight and the other bent back along your body. From the sitting position, place your hands on the ground behind you, slowly working your upper body to the point where you are resting on your elbows, or all the way on your back if possible. It is very important that your movements are slow to prevent any injury.

**ITB stretch:** Same position as Sitting Toe Touches, but instead of trying to touch your toes with your hand, place your right foot next to your left knee; while wrapping your right knee with your left arm, followed by your right arm. Begin to slowly bring your right knee towards your chest holding it for 10 to 15 seconds. Next, place the outer part of left elbow against the outer part of your right knee, while reaching back with your right hand. Place it on the ground; 12 inches behind your lower back. Slowly begin to twist to the right while pushing your right knee to the left. Hold for 15 seconds and switch to the leg. This stretch is great for loosening a tight lower back and stretching the ITB tendon, which runs from your hip to your knee.
**Butterfly stretch:** In the sitting position, make a diamond shape with your legs. Placing your heels together, slowly bring your heels toward you until they are close to 6 inches from you. Then, begin to put pressure on your knees by placing your elbows on the knees and pushing them downward. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds, release, and relax. After about 10 seconds, go through the process again. Repeat 2 to 4 times.

**Upper groin stretch:** Like the stretch shown above, this exercise stretches your groin. This standing groin stretch is similar to the upper thigh stretch; the only difference is the placement of the back foot. Follow the same steps for upper thigh stretch, but when you place your back foot, place it pointing out at a 45-90 degree angle from your front foot.

**Shoulder stretch:** Find something stable enough to support you and easy to grab with one hand. Place yourself in front of that object, grab it with one hand at about shoulder level, then slowly twist away; hold for 10 to 15 seconds.
**Two arm shoulder stretch**: Find something that you can grab with both hands at about chest level. Place both arms behind you and grab this object; palms down. Lean to the right and then to the left; concentrating on stretching your chest and arms. Lean as far as you can each way, but do it slowly, to get the best stretch possible. Once complete, begin to slowly move your body away from the support to stretch out your chest.

**Straight-arm shoulder stretch**: Standing with your feet shoulder width apart, put your arm across of your chest and parallel to the ground. Support your arm by grabbing it at the elbow. From this position, slightly twist your torso, using your hand on the elbow to pull towards you. You should feel the stretch on the outside part of your shoulder. Once you have gone as far as you can; hold it for 10 to 15 seconds.

**Triceps stretch**: Standing with your feet shoulder width apart, reach behind your head and touch your upper back. With your other hand grab the elbow and pull towards your head. Once you have gone as far as you can; hold it for 10 to 15 seconds.
**Upper body workout**

**Regular push-up:** Everybody knows this one. Get on the ground in the standard push-up position keeping your arms slightly outside of shoulder width. Keep your body perfectly parallel to the ground, bend your elbows and reach toward the ground until your chest touches. Immediately bring yourself back to the original position. Do not rest your chest on the ground.

**Wide push-up:** Same exercise as regular push-ups except you extend your arms farther out. This allows you to work your chest muscles at a different angle.

**Triceps push-up:** Similar to regular push-ups except you want to spread your feet shoulder width apart placing your hands together; making a diamond shape with your thumbs and index fingers. Lower your body so the diamond shape of your hands touches your lower chest. Raise your body to the extended position.
Other great upper body exercises:

Pull-ups

*Regular grip:* palms facing away from you, hands shoulder width apart

*Reverse grip:* palms facing towards you, hands shoulder width apart

*Close grip:* palms same as describe above, but hands together

*Commando:* grab the bar so that you are facing sideways, thumb against your little finger. Begin raising yourself, touching your right shoulder to the bar. Lower yourself slowly, then raise yourself so the bar touches your left shoulder. That will make one repetition.

*Behind the neck:* Place your hands on the bar, past shoulder width apart, with palms facing away from you. Rise up again, but instead of placing your chin above the bar, make the bar touch the back of your neck; as close to your shoulders as possible.

Lower body workout

Regular sit-up

*Regular sit-up:* Lie on the ground and place your hands so they are barely touching your ears. Maintaining this position, bend your knees and place your feet 12-18 inches from your buttocks. Be sure to maintain that distance throughout the exercise. Bring yourself up so your elbows touch your thighs. Keep your abdominal muscles tight and use the full force of your stomach muscles to raise your upper body. While doing sit-ups, there are two things to remember in order to avoid injuries:

1. Do not place your hands behind your neck; this causes too great a strain on your back and neck.
2. Avoid bringing your chest up to your thighs; this also puts too great a strain on your back. Do not rock during your sit-ups; perform each sit-up in a strict movement.
**Half sit-up:** Assume a normal sit-up position with your knees bent and your feet 2-3 feet from your buttocks. Place your hands on your waist and bring your upper body halfway, or 45 degrees up. Do not go any farther than this. Lower yourself down and raise yourself back up to a 45-degree angle.

**Crunches:** Lay on your back and raise your knees so they are at a 90-degree angle. Maintain this position while placing your hands in the sit-up position. Once again, they should barely touch your ears to avoid added stress to the neck. Using your abdominal muscles, raise your upper body until the elbows touch the knees. In a controlled manner, lower to starting position.
**Side sit-ups:** Lay down in the sit-up position with your left ankle on your right knee; so that the left knee is perpendicular to your body. Place your hands in the standard position, applying little or no pressure to your ears. Raise your upper body so the right elbow touches your left knee and slowly bring yourself back down. Switch sides, reaching the left elbow to the right knee. This is an excellent exercise for the side abdominal muscles.

**Obliques:** To achieve full effect, proper technique is very important in this exercise. Lay on your side, keeping your knees and feet together. Your upper body should be propped up on your elbow. Place your opposite hand by your ear in the same manner as instructed in the sit-ups. Here is the key part. Raise your feet straight up as if someone has a string tied to your feet and is pulling it up and down. At the same time, you want to raise your upper body to the point where your elbow is touching your knees. Slowly lower your upper and lower body. Once you have completed the recommended repetitions, switch sides and begin the process again.
Knee bends: Lay on your back, raise your body to a 45 degree angle. Place your hands on the ground by your side to keep your balance. Keep your feet and knees together while maintaining straight legs. Raise your feet six inches and bring your knees towards your chest in a smooth, fluid motion. Once this is accomplished, begin extending your legs back out until they are straight. Do not allow your feet to touch the ground. If this is not challenging enough, place your hands on your ears instead. A helpful hint: there is a spot to this position, which allows you to keep your balance easier. Extend your legs out straight, heels on the ground. Begin leaning back with your hands by your ears. The moment your feet begin to raise off the ground you have found your equilibrium point. This is the proper position for this exercise.

Helen Kellers: This exercise, like knee bends, requires a lot of balance and control with your abdominal muscles. Only with time and practice will this exercise become more efficient and smooth. Sit on the ground with your back at a 45-degree angle. Raise your legs six inches off the ground and begin to raise your left knee towards you so it makes a 90-degree angle from your hip. As you do this, bring your right elbow across your body so it reaches your left kneecap. Then, lower your left knee and raise your right one to the same angle. As you do this, bring your left elbow to your right kneecap. Continue the exercise in the same manner, alternating knees. Remember, it is very important to extend your legs after every repetition.
**Hand to Toe:** Lay on the ground, flat on your back, with your arms over your head. Begin to raise both your legs, and upper body, and try to touch your toes. Keep your legs as straight as possible throughout the entire motion. It is extremely important to raise your shoulder blades off the ground, otherwise you are defeating the purpose. It's OK if you can't touch your toes. Just reach for your knees. As your physical fitness and flexibility improves, reach for your toes.

---

**Flutter kicks:** Lay down on your back, placing your hands under your buttocks with palms down. This will give your hips support. Raise both feet off the ground six inches, keeping your legs straight. Raise one foot, preferably your left, to thirty inches off the ground. As you lower it, raise your right leg as high as you did your left. This exercise is to be done in a four count mode. Four count means, as each foot hits the thirty inch mark, you count one. On the fourth mark you count the cumulative total. For example: 1-2-3-1, 1-2-3-2, 1-2-3-3. Once the exercise is complete, lower your legs so both feet are again six inches off the ground. Then you may lower your feet to the ground.
**Leg raises:** Once again, place yourself in the exact same position as you did for flutter kicks. Maintain your feet six inches off the ground. But, instead of raising your legs separately, keep them together. Raise them up to thirty inches and back down to six inches. Concentrate on using your abdominal muscles to perform this exercise.

**Cutting edges:** This is an excellent abdominal exercise. Lay down on your back in the same form as flutter kicks. Raise your feet up to the six inch mark. Then, spread your legs apart just past your shoulders, and bring them back together. Continue in this manner until you have finished the required repetitions. Bring your feet together one last time and slowly lower them to the ground.