



Physical Readiness Assessment Preparation Guide

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DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS
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To work as a corrections officer or instructor, you need a good level of fitness.

In a prison, things can change quickly. Staff must be ready to help in an emergency at any time. This can mean moving fast or doing physical tasks with little warning.

Before you can start the job, you must complete a Physical Readiness Assessment (PRA).

The PRA checks that you can safely do the physical tasks needed for the role. These tasks may include responding to emergencies and moving quickly around the prison.

This guide will help you prepare for the PRA.

Every task in the PRA is based on something you may do in your role. For example:

- Walking between units
- Carrying out a search
- Responding to an emergency
- Helping to manage a physical incident
- Moving an unconscious colleague to safety.



Scoring

The PRA uses a scoring scale from 1 to 9.



Each activity in the PRA is scored individually. To pass the assessment, you must achieve an overall result in the **green zone**.

To achieve a green zone result, you must meet the required standard for each activity. Most activities require a score of 6 or higher. The emergency response run requires a score of 5 or higher.



1

Fast walk

Walk 15 laps around the marked figure-8 course as fast as you can **without running**. This course is 300m in total.

You must always keep at least one foot on the ground. If you run, the assessor will warn you. Repeated warnings will mean you need to restart the PRA.

Your time for this activity will be scored.

More than 3 min 47 sec		3 min 46 sec - 3 min 03 sec			3 min 02 sec - 2 min 42 sec		Less than 2 min 41 sec	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Does not meet the standard requirement					Meets the standard requirement			



2

Simulated search

This activity looks at your **mobility and strength** and how well you can carry out the physical movements needed during a cell search. It is **not** a test of your search knowledge or search techniques.

Your assessor will show you what to do before you start and talk you through it during the assessment:

- There are four touch pads placed around a bunk unit. You must find and touch each one.
- You need to get up from the floor unassisted - without using the bunk - as the cell search is also a test of mobility.

When you have touched all four pads, you will hear an emergency call: "Break, break, break." When you hear this call, you must immediately start the next activity, the emergency response run.

The cell search activity is not timed on its own, but the time it takes to complete forms part of your overall PRA score.



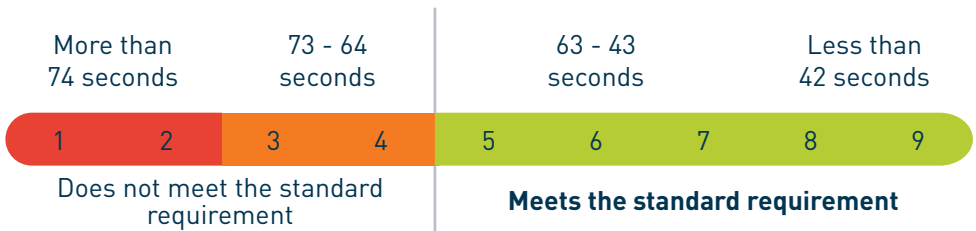
3

Emergency response run

This is a **running activity**. Run around the course five times as quickly and safely as you can.

- On each lap, you must cross the platform:
- On your first lap, open the gate and leave it open.
- On your final lap, close the gate and latch it shut.
- Use every step when going up and down the platform.
- Do not skip steps.
- Do not jump off the platform.

Your time for this activity will be recorded, so aim to complete it as quickly as you can while staying safe.





4

Control & restraint (C&R) simulation

This activity measures your **grip strength and your ability to pull firmly** for a short period of time. Your assessor will show you the three pulling positions before you start.

For each position:

- Pull as hard as you can.
- Hold the pull for 5 seconds.
- Keep at least one foot against the floor stop.
- Do not wrap the rope around your hands or wrists.

For safety and best performance:

- Keep your back straight.
- Bend your knees.
- Use your legs and hips to help generate force.

Your result is based on the **amount of force you can apply** compared with your body weight. A higher percentage means you are able to apply more pulling force. For example, if you weigh 100 kg, you would need to apply at least 57 kg of pulling force to achieve a score of 6.

Less than 36% of body weight		37% - 56% of body weight			57% - 77% of body weight		More than 78% of body weight	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Does not meet the standard requirement					Meets the standard requirement			



5

Simulated rescue

This activity measures your ability to **move an unconscious person** away from danger.

You must move a 50 kg rescue dummy 10 metres, around a cone, and back to the starting point as quickly and safely as possible. You may drag the dummy or use a safe lifting technique.

The simulated rescue activity is not timed on its own, but the time it takes to complete contributes to your overall PRA time, which can impact your score.



6 Recovery walk

This activity measures how well you **recover** after physical activity.

Walk around the course as quickly as you can at a steady pace. You must walk at all times – do not run. If the assessor thinks you are running, you will be warned. If you continue to run after being warned, you will need to restart the PRA.

The course consists of another 15 laps of the 20-metre figure-8 track. It is 300m in total.

Your time for this activity will be scored.

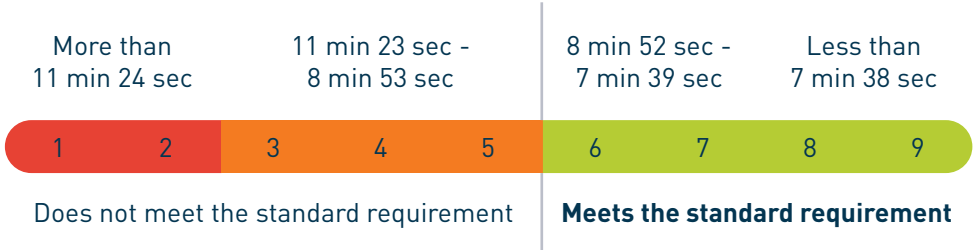
More than 4 min 22 sec		4 min 21 sec - 3 min 22 sec			3 min 21 sec - 2 min 52 sec		Less than 2 min 51 sec	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Does not meet the standard requirement					Meets the standard requirement			



7

Total assessment time

The PRA is timed from start to finish. Try to complete all activities as quickly as you can.





NOTICE
PUT ALL WEIGHTS
AND EQUIPMENT AWAY
AFTER EACH USE





Training tips

The following tips will help you prepare for the PRA.

No matter your current fitness level, there is a programme to help you get ready.

Start at the right level

Choose a training programme that matches your current fitness level. Starting at the right level can help you build confidence and reduce the risk of injury.

There are three training levels:

- **Level 1** – For people who are new to exercise, not currently active, or have health concerns.
- **Level 2** – For people who are reasonably active but do not train regularly.
- **Level 3** – For people who exercise regularly, play sport, or go to the gym.

Each level is available in two options:

- **Gym-based** – For people who have access to a gym and exercise equipment.
- **Home-based** – For people who want to train at home using only a small amount of equipment.

Choose the level that best matches your current fitness level.

Progress takes time

Don't worry if you need to repeat a level. Many people do. Training regularly and improving a little at a time is the best way to prepare for the PRA.

Stay safe: Consult your doctor

Before starting a new exercise programme, check with your doctor if you have any health conditions. Always put your health and safety first.

Stay motivated

Training for the PRA can be challenging, but staying motivated can help you reach your goal.

Here is some advice:

- Train with a friend to help keep each other motivated.
- Consider working with a fitness trainer for extra support and advice.
- Set small goals and celebrate your progress.
- Keep track of your workouts and improvements.

Remember why you want this job and the goals you are working towards.



Level 1 Home-based programme

Rest periods

30-60 seconds
between exercises.

*In the PRA, each element
is one after another, with
no rest period between
each exercise.*



20 to 30 minute walk

3 times a week

*Start at an easy pace. Try to
walk a bit faster each week.*



Sit-to-stand

10 reps, 3 sets



Wall push-ups

10 reps, 3 sets



Step ups

10 reps, 3 sets



Plank

20 sec, 3 sets



Towel holds

30 sec, 3 sets

Grip a rolled towel tightly for 30 seconds.



Weighted bag drag

5-10 metres, 3 sets

*Fill a backpack with books or water bottles
and drag it across the floor for 5-10 metres.*



Level 2 Home-based programme

Rest periods

30-60 seconds
between exercises.

*In the PRA, each element
is one after another, with
no rest period between
each exercise.*



**Walk for 3 minutes,
then jog for 1 minute.
Repeat for 30
minutes.**

3 times a week



Squats

15 reps, 3 sets



Push-ups

10 reps, 3 sets



Step ups

10 reps, 3 sets



Plank

30 sec, 3 sets



Weighted bag drag

5-10 metres, 3 sets



Rows with resistance band

10 reps, 3 sets



Level 3 Home-based programme

Rest periods

Less than 30 seconds
between exercises.

*In the PRA, each element
is one after another, with
no rest period between
each exercise.*



Walk at maximum pace
100 metre sprints, 5 sets



Squats
20 reps, 4 sets



Step ups
20 reps, 4 sets



Push-ups
15 reps, 4 sets



Plank
45 sec, 3 sets



Weighted bag drag
20 metres, 3 sets



Rows with resistance band
20 reps, 3 sets



Level 1 Gym-based programme

Rest periods

30-60 seconds
between exercises.

*In the PRA, each element
is one after another, with
no rest period between
each exercise.*



Treadmill or cross trainer

20 - 30 mins

*Start slow and
increase time by 5
minutes each week.*



Leg press

10 reps, 2 sets



Chest press

10 reps, 2 sets



Rear row

10 reps, 2 sets

Increase weight slightly each week.

Step ups

10 reps, 2 sets



Assisted squats

10 reps, 2 sets

Plank

20 sec, 3 sets



Dead hangs

10-20 sec, 3 sets



Level 2 Gym-based programme

Rest periods

30-60 seconds
between exercises.

*In the PRA, each element
is one after another, with
no rest period between
each exercise.*



Treadmill or cross trainer

5-minute warm-up, then 20
minutes of intervals

(2 minutes jog, 1 minute walk)



Squats

12 reps, 3 sets



Push-ups

10 reps, 3 sets



Step ups

10 reps, 3 sets



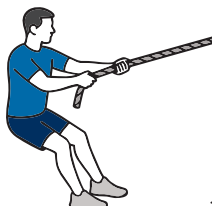
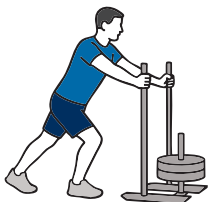
Rear row

10 reps, 2 sets

Sled push

10 - 15 metres

*Push or pull a
weighted sled.*



Rope pulls

20 sec, 3 sets

*Pull a rope
attached to weight.*



Recovery walk

Walk 300 metres at a brisk pace



Level 3 Gym-based programme

Rest periods

Less than 30 seconds
between exercises.

*In the PRA, each element
is one after another, with
no rest period between
each exercise.*



Walk as fast as possible for 300 metres

Do 5 sets of 100-meter
sprints with no rest in
between



Squats

10 reps, 4 sets



Dead lift

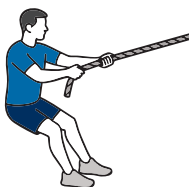
6 reps, 4 sets

Use barbell.



Push-ups

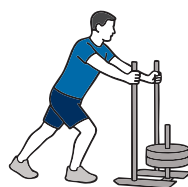
10 reps, 3 sets



Rope pulls or sled drag

3 sets of 20 metres

Pull a rope attached to weight.



Push or pull a weighted sled.



Dead hangs

10-20 sec, 3 sets

Simulate full PRA test once per week.

Have a question or need a hand?

Email us at

careers@corrections.govt.nz

or call 0800 437 668



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