Pre-Academy Fitness Guide

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Welcome to the Aurora Pre-Academy Fitness Guide.

This guide is designed to give the reader better insight into the following categories:

- what to expect during the Essential Job Functions Course (EJFC) applicant test,
- how to prepare for the EJFC before being hired,
- how to successfully meet the physical demands of the Academy and
- how to prepare for a healthy, physically fit career in law enforcement.

Please keep in mind individual needs, limitations, medical conditions, level of fitness and other factors will all influence the outcome of using this guide. Please consult a physician before applying or making any lifestyle changes suggested in this guide.
Essential Job Functions Course (EJFC)

First and foremost, please watch the following video, which explains in detail the two phases and four stations of the EJFC: bit.ly/AuroraPoliceFitnessVideo

Upon arrival at the testing site, the applicant will be required to show a state-issued identification card or driver’s license. Shortly thereafter, all applicants who are participating in the EJFC will watch the above-listed video as a group, ensuring all applicants understand the test. At the conclusion of the viewing, applicants may ask questions related to the testing procedures.

**Phase 1: Job Functions Test (JFT)**

All applicants will then watch a live demonstration of the JFT, with explanation provided by Academy personnel. Questions related to this specific testing station will be answered at this time. All applicants will then attempt to complete the JFT.

The JFT is composed of the following obstacles, which must be completed in under 60 seconds:
- Run 130 yards
- Crawl under a standard-size office table
- Climb through a 30 x 30 inch opening, located approximately 49 inches from the ground
- Climb a set of stairs
- Properly identify a “suspect”
- Drag a dummy weighing approximately 150 pounds approximately 5 feet

If the applicant fails to correctly identify the suspect during the suspect ID portion of this test, or exceeds the time limit (60 seconds), the applicant is allowed a second and final attempt once all other applicants have completed the JFT.

**NOTE:** If applicants fail this station twice, they will be asked to leave the test.
Phase 2: Sit-ups, Illinois Agility Test, Beep Test

Applicants are required to obtain a minimum score of 12 points (out of 24 total possible points) across three categories (Sit-ups, Illinois Agility Test, Beep Test). Applicants must score at least 1 point in each category. Please refer to the scoring matrix provided at the end of this section to determine points.

**Sit-ups:**
Upon successful completion of the JFT, all applicants will watch a live demonstration of the proper sit-up technique (with explanation provided by Academy personnel). Questions relating to this specific testing station will be answered at this time. All applicants will then attempt to complete as many sit-ups as possible in 60 seconds.

**Illinois Agility Test:**
Upon successful completion of sit-ups, all applicants will watch a live demonstration of the Illinois Agility Test (with explanation provided by Academy personnel). Questions relating to this specific testing station will be answered at this time. Applicants will complete the Illinois Agility Test without knocking down/moving cones, or breaking pattern. If a cone is moved/knocked over or the applicant breaks pattern, a second and final attempt at this test is permitted. If unsuccessful twice, the applicant will receive a zero for the station, which is an automatic disqualification for the EJFC.

**Beep Test:**
Upon successful completion of the Illinois Agility Test, applicants will watch a live demonstration of the beep test. Questions relating to this specific testing station will be answered at this time. Once the test begins, applicants will have **ONE** attempt at this test. Applicants will attempt to complete as many laps as possible for the duration of the test. Applicants must follow the instruction of the proctor(s) and are encouraged to do the best they can.

Achieving the 12 required points for the EJFC equates to a 50 percent pass rate. While this is the pass rate for the hiring process, be advised you will be held to a much stricter standard once in the Academy. If applicants struggle to pass/barely pass the test during the hiring process, **THEY WILL STRUGGLE** to be successful in the Academy. Applicants must take steps to prepare for the Academy. Of all the attributes that make a successful Police Recruit, attention to physical fitness and being in top physical condition is the one aspect the applicant can control and influence before starting at the Academy. Do not begin the Academy in poor physical condition!

A loss of 10 percent to 15 percent of Police Recruits early in the Academy is directly linked to their lack of physical preparation.
Preparing for the EJFC

The following demonstrates each of the skills measured throughout the testing process. It is highly recommended the applicant practice each of the skills outlined, multiple times.

- **Sit-ups**: For 60 seconds, with feet secured, perform as many as possible. Compare your score to the scoring matrix. Continue to practice until meeting the maximum score.
- **Illinois Agility Test**: Set up eight cones outside in a parking lot or park, or inside in a gymnasium. The length of the course is 10 meters. The width of the course is 5 meters. The serpentine cones are in the center (2.5 meters) and spaced at intervals of 3.3 meters. If possible, have a partner time you running the course. Continue practicing the Illinois Agility Test until meeting the maximum score possible.
- **Beep Test**: Find an area similar to the agility test. The distance from one baseline to the other is 20 meters, or 65 feet 6 inches. Continue to practice the Beep Test until meeting the maximum score.
- **Job Functions Test**: The Job Functions Test is not as easy to set up and practice. It is also not a fitness test, nor does it rely on being physically fit to complete. Rather, it's a measurement of one's ability to move, perform job-specific tasks, follow directions and perform under light stress. If you score well in the previous three skills, you are more likely to be successful in the Job Functions Test. However, practicing climbing up and over a 6-foot stationary object (like a fence) and climbing through a window or equivalent would be beneficial as well.

Practicing the EJFC

There are many ways to incorporate practicing the various skills being tested. Below are a few examples:

1. **Practice all the skills, several times a week, exactly as described above.**
   - Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the applicant will run through each of the skills one time. Record scores/times and compare with previous attempts.
   
   If the applicant is making positive progress, continue as needed. If not making progress or regressing in scores/times, make adjustments.

2. **Practice each of the skills separately on different days.**
   - Monday, 3-5 sets of sit-ups, as many as possible, for 60 seconds.
   - Wednesday, run the Illinois Agility Test 3-5 times, as fast as possible.
   - Friday, run the Beep Test 2-3 times with optimal rest between each attempt.

   If the applicant is making positive progress, continue as needed. If not making progress or regressing in scores/times, make adjustments.

3. **Pick a day. Practice all the skills multiple times in the same practice session**: 1-5 sets of sit-ups, as many as possible in 60 seconds. Record each attempt and compare. 1-5 sets of running the Illinois Agility Test, as fast as possible. Record scores. 1-5 sets of the Beep Test, as many laps as possible. Record scores.
Scoring Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Sit-ups</th>
<th>Illinois Agility</th>
<th>Beep Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>011 or Fewer</td>
<td>24.44 or higher</td>
<td>18 or Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12-16</td>
<td>24.43-22.64</td>
<td>19-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17-19</td>
<td>22.63-22.01</td>
<td>21-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>22.00-21.39</td>
<td>26-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23-25</td>
<td>21.38-20.76</td>
<td>32-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>20.75-20.19</td>
<td>37-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>31-34</td>
<td>20.18-19.25</td>
<td>44-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>19.24-18.31</td>
<td>53-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>40+</td>
<td>18.30 or Less</td>
<td>62+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequently Asked Questions:

“What can an applicant do to better prepare for the EJFC?”

- Review the video provided: bit.ly/AuroraPoliceFitnessVideo; practice at home.
- Do not let the test date be the first time you complete these tests.
- Practice, practice, practice. The Beep Test has been categorized as the “silent killer” of Police applicants, as many applicants approach this stage of testing incorrectly. Remember, the Beep Test is an endurance test. The test begins with long, slow intervals, and each level gets progressively faster (with shorter intervals).
- Do not strive to attain the bare minimum in each category; train to achieve the highest level possible. Remember, the EJFC’s difficulty level is 50 percent of that of the Academy Fitness Standard and does not include push-ups (which will be tested once the applicant is in the Academy). Train for the Academy; do not train just to meet the minimum qualifications of the EJFC.
- Please do not think you are going to “get in shape” once in the Academy. This is a misnomer that has cost many Recruits a career with the Aurora Police Department.
Preparing for the Physical Demands of the Academy

The physical aspects of the Academy can be broken down into three areas:

- **Wellness**
- **Physical Skills**
- **Remedial Physical Training**

**Wellness** is composed of blocks of education, as well as application of various techniques to ensure the greatest success for our Recruits with the lowest risk of injury. Applicants will be assessed for muscle imbalances and faulty movement patterns in the first week of the Academy. Recruits will then be given direction on how to eliminate compensation through the use of the following tools: self myo-fascial release, corrective stretches, core stability exercises as well as stability training for the first four to six weeks of Wellness. Stability training is composed of primarily body weight exercises. Exercises will be performed at a very slow tempo, 4/4/4. For example, a push-up will start in the up position and descend at a speed of 4 seconds to the bottom holding position. The Recruit will then hold the bottom position for 4 seconds, then lift themselves to the top position at a speed of 4 seconds, repeating 15 times. That equates to 3 minutes of “time under tension”.

This exhausts the large, dominant muscles used in the exercise and forces the deep stabilizing mechanism of the joints and spine to work harder, thus promoting better joint stabilization and core activation. This tempo will be applied to a variety of exercises during the stabilization phase of training for Recruits. Training will progress to include a Strength Phase and Power Phase of training as Recruits show a decrease in compensatory movement patterns.

Recruits will be tested the first week of the Academy and every four to five weeks thereafter. The Physical Fitness Test (PFT) will be composed of sit-ups, Illinois Agility Test, Beep Test and push-ups. Entry-Level Recruits will be tested six times, and Lateral Recruits will be tested four times. The PFT score will count as 10 percent of one’s overall Academy score and will influence class rank. This Academy class placement will also influence seniority for the Recruit’s career with the Aurora Police Department. It is in the Recruit’s best interest to score as high as possible, beginning week one.

**Physical Skills** includes, but is not limited to: Self Defense or Defensive Tactics, Arrest Control, Baton Training, Ground Grappling, Fire Arms, Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC), Building Searches, Rapid Emergency Deployment, Crowd Control and Scenario Based Training. All of these training courses are subject to long hours of training and can/will be conducted in ALL weather conditions. Thus, a better conditioned, physically fit Recruit will handle this stress better than an out-of-shape Recruit. Applicants are highly encouraged to begin the Academy in the best shape possible.

**Remedial Physical Training** is used as a tool to motivate Recruits to adhere to proper Academy behavior, work together as a team, follow directions, have better attention to detail and handle stress while carrying out a variety of tasks. Remedial Physical Training can come in the form of additional push-ups, sit-ups or running laps in the 4-story tower. This can happen at any time in the Recruit’s day and as many times in a day as necessary to correct lapses in the above areas (i.e. team work, following directions, attention to detail, etc). Again, beginning the Academy in top physical condition will ensure you are best able to handle this type of additional physical training.
Preparing for a Physically Fit Career in Law Enforcement

Once the Recruit successfully completes the Academy, all certified officers complete additional training every quarter, which is referred to as in-service. In-service is continued training covering multiple areas to include: wellness (physical and mental health), arrest control, defensive tactics, firearms and driving skills to ensure competency and certifications by the State of Colorado and the Aurora Police Department.

Officers are afforded the opportunity to continue their physical fitness on duty during their career. Continued physical fitness to include strength and cardiovascular training will allow the certified Officer to engage in a successful and fulfilling career.

**Per directive 15.19:** members are allowed to exercise as their schedule permits with supervisor or watch commander’s approval, any time during the member’s shift based on supervisory discretion.

In Conclusion

Hopefully, this guide has given you some insight to better prepare for the applicant test, Academy life and beyond. This guide provided suggestions to prepare for the above-listed categories. However, individual recommendations can better be given by a health and fitness professional, like a personal trainer, for example. A personal trainer can screen, monitor and adjust a personal training program to safely and efficiently help individuals achieve their health and fitness goals.

Whatever path you choose to prepare for the process, best of luck and thank you for considering joining the Aurora Police Department.