



# Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District Pre-Fire Academy Conditioning Recommendations



If you are selected to enter a Metro Fire academy, this is a note regarding the importance of preparing yourself for a physically and emotionally demanding experience. It is simply NOT an option to enter an academy in poor physical condition. If you do so, at a minimum you risk multiple weeks of struggle and soreness. However, it's possible that you risk much more, including poor performance with physically demanding evolutions, and a heightened risk of injury during the academy. Neither of these possibilities is acceptable.



It is not too early to begin considering the following, very general recommendations:

## AEROBIC CONDITIONING

- 3 days per week of aerobic conditioning exercise. Due to the fact that fire academies typically employ running as the primary mode of aerobic conditioning, I recommend that 2 of the 3 days be primarily running, with 1 day per week of cross training if you prefer.
- 1 of your running days each week should be focused on duration and not intensity. If you can slowly build up to a long run of 45 minutes once per week, that would be ideal. However, DO NOT increase the duration of your long run by more than 10% per week.
- 1 other running day per week should be focused on intensity, not duration. You can do this with pick-ups, intervals, a tempo run, occasionally entering a 5k-road race, or ideally a variety.

## MUSCULAR CONDITIONING

- 2 days per week of major muscle group *strengthening* exercise.
- I do not intend to prescribe a specific exercise routine in this document; rather I recommend compound/multiple joint exercises that are highly functional and specific in nature. These compound exercises should be employed with a variety of intensities and repetitions. If you don't know how to interpret this recommendation please call me in advance of the academy.
- 3 days per week of callisthenic-type muscular *endurance* exercise. These can include push-ups, pull-ups, static planking, jumping routines etc.
- You can maximize your training time, and perhaps your fire academy training out comes by incorporating "circuit-type training". This training involves using multiple exercises, moving quickly between exercises, and taking nothing more than very brief rest periods so the heart rate stays elevated throughout.

## **MUSCULAR FLEXIBILITY**

- Perform an appropriate joint mobility routine on a daily basis. Pick exercises that are specific to your needs. Flexibility and weight training programs help the body develop increased joint range of motion over time. The key is to be consistent with your programs week-to-week.

## **NUTRITION**

- Begin to look critically at your diet. A performance-orientated diet is composed of whole, minimally processed foods. You can't achieve this with a predominately fast food focus; it takes work to eat properly. See how much you can eliminate eating out of bags, boxes and wrappers, and increase the consumption of foods just the way they look in nature. Do not short-cut this important aspect.
- Keep a water bottle with you **AT ALL TIMES** as you go about your daily activities and get in the habit of adding an electrolyte tab or powder to your water. Some of the commercial brands that are readily available at local grocery and sporting goods stores are Nuun Tabs and Emergen-C packets. Avoid sports drinks that have added artificial colors and flavors, which can interfere with your body's ability to absorb and assimilate the nutrients. Furthermore, chemical additives have been found to contribute to increased risk of cancer. So, it's best to avoid artificial additives in food and drink at all costs. Finally, the best source of naturally occurring electrolytes are fresh fruits and vegetables consumed in their most natural state.

## **SLEEP**

- You recover best from the daily loads you place on yourself when you sleep. Chronically poor sleep habits will, over time, lead to poor performance, both physically and mentally. Set a standard bedtime, stick to it and plan for 7-8 hours depending on your needs. As the academy nears, begin the habit of getting to bed early, and awakening early.

If you have any questions regarding these basic recommendations, I'd be happy to take your call.

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