

NSCA TACTICAL

**FITNESS PROGRAM
IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT**





STEP 1: ANALYZE THE OPPORTUNITY PAGE 3

Analyze your agency's opportunity for fitness success.

STEP 2: PRESCRIBE THE PROGRAM PAGE 10

Strategically plan measurable exercise program success using practical, evidence-proven principles and user-friendly best practices.

STEP 3: IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM PAGE 14

Efficiently schedule program preparation, implementation, and evaluation.

STEP 4: EVALUATE THE RESULTS PAGE 18

Evaluate program success and growth/expansion opportunities.

STEP 5: PROGRESS & EVOLVE PAGE 19

Leverage key, evidence-proven principles to safely and continually fuel positive results.

***Cycle repeats for continuous success**

STEP 1

ANALYZE THE OPPORTUNITY

A | ANALYZE YOUR FITNESS PROGRAM SCOPE

Industry Served

- Law Enforcement
- Fire Rescue
- Civilian Support
- Other: _____

Program Size

- Individual training program
- Shift/unit training program
- Academy class
- Agency/department-wide program
- Multi-agency or regional program for _____ agencies

B | ANALYZE RELEVANT FITNESS NEEDS

When possible, use the results of your agency's legally validated Job Task Analysis to determine occupational demands. If that is not available, you're welcome to refer to the general, research-based information below. All physical fitness programs that are designed based on the information below should be voluntary and non-punitive.

| GENERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT JOB TASKS | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Stair-climbing | Lifting |
| Pulling | Dragging |
| Pushing (e.g., cars) | Leaping |
| Bending | Jumping |
| Squatting | Sprinting |
| Carrying | Running |
| Dodging | Climbing (e.g., fences) |



| CORRESPONDING PHYSICAL STRENGTH NEEDED |
|--|
| Power |
| Muscular strength |
| Muscular endurance |
| Speed |
| Agility |
| Endurance |
| Flexibility |

Sources:

- Brent A. Alvar, Katie Sell, and Patricia A. Deuster, NSCA's Essentials of Tactical Strength and Conditioning (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, Inc 2017).
- Joe Dulla et al., "Physical Demands of Patrol," Focus on Officer Wellness, Police Chief (March 2020): 22-23.
- Collingwood, T. (n.d.). Underlying Physical Fitness Factors for Performing Police Officer Physical Tasks. Police Chief magazine. <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/underlying-physical-fitness-factors-for-performing-police-officer-physical-tasks/?ref=bb9dd89591ab639fe73148a895ab4de4>

Describe the workplace environment (temperatures/altitude/local population density, etc.)

C | ANALYZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR POSITIVE COLLABORATION

Customizing a tactical strength and conditioning program for the agency maximizes program effectiveness. Collaborating with internal and external key stakeholders to do so helps optimize cohesion and synergy, increasing the sustainability of the program. You can do so by forming a committee, advisory board, or task force with the individuals /groups listed below. Please mark everyone with whom you plan to collaborate.

Potential Internal Key Stakeholders

- Tactical professionals (e.g., frontline officers, deputies, firefighters, EMTs, etc.) of varying fitness ability levels and at different career stages
- Supervisors (e.g., sergeants, lieutenants, captains, etc.)
- Command Staff (e.g., Chief, Sheriff, Colonel, etc.)
- Legal staff
- Agency Wellness Program Coordinator / Manager
- In-Service Instructors
- Academy Instructors
- Union leaders (Vice President, President, etc.)
- Wellness Program Coordinator/Manager
- On-site Athletic Trainers / Physical Therapists
- Human Resources Manager/Director
- Risk Management Manager/Director
- Others (please describe)





Potential External Key Stakeholders

- National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) Tactical Program Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
- Mentor provided by the NSCA
- Program donors / collaborators (e.g., university/college personnel assisting with program implementation, management team of local gym providing exercise space, etc.)
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Board of County Commissioners
- County Risk Management Committee
- Mayor
- State health department
- Others (please describe)

D | ANALYZE YOUR AGENCY'S NEEDS & SUCCESS OPPORTUNITIES

The following list offers a small glimpse into the abundant positive, proven outcomes that law enforcement physical fitness programs have helped agencies all over the world achieve. You can use it as inspiration to plan your agency's fitness program outcomes. Ask your agency and key stakeholders which outcomes they believe are the most valuable and meaningful, then list those on the following page.

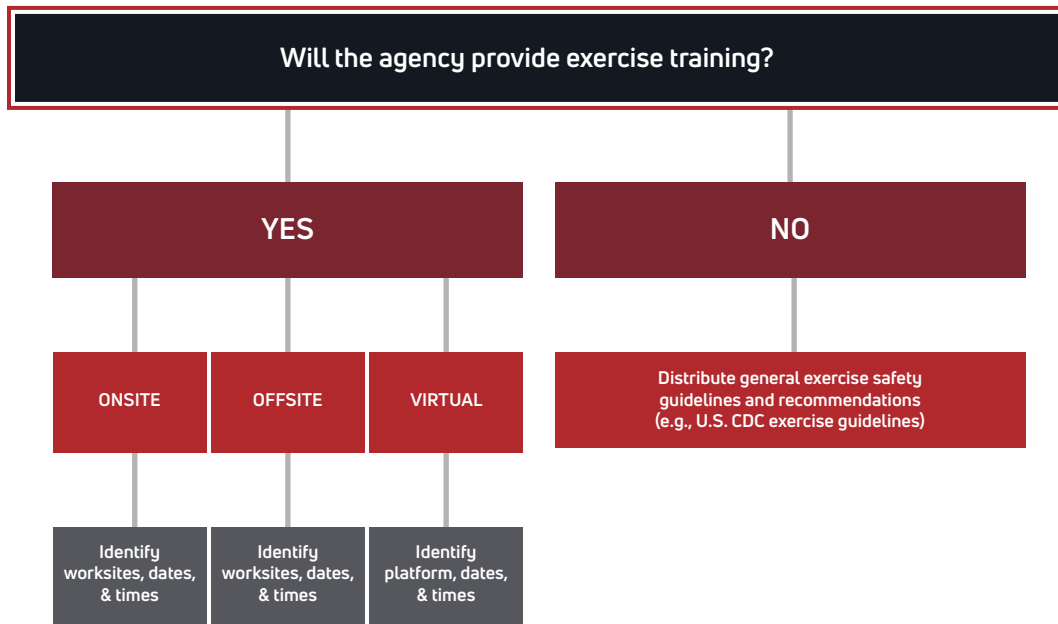
EXAMPLES AGENCY GOALS & PROVEN, PUBLISHED SUCCESS

| AGENCY NEED | FITNESS PROGRAM GOAL | RESULT |
|---|---|--|
|  <p>REDUCE OPERATING COSTS</p> | <p>REDUCE INJURY RATES & CORRESPONDING COSTS</p> | <p>SUCCESS! The FBI National Academy Associate Magazine recognized the agency for reducing their annual rate and cost of injuries by \$250,000.</p> |
| | | <p>SUCCESS! The agency was recognized for reducing healthcare premiums and increasing the operational value of the agency to the public, all through measurably increasing officer fitness and health.</p> |
| | | <p>SUCCESS! Best practices to reduce short and long-term injuries that stem from load carriage were published in The IACP's Police Chief Magazine. The best practices centered around increasing aerobic fitness and strength in relation to body weight.</p> |
|  <p>IMPROVE EMPLOYEE PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH</p> | <p>WEIGHT LOSS</p> | <p>SUCCESS! The agency was recognized in the IACP's Police Chief Magazine for helping employees achieve over 1,000 pounds of weight loss.</p> |
| | <p>MENTAL HEALTH</p> | <p>SUCCESS! Best practices the agency used to reduce obesity rates, number of sick days used, and employee disability rates were recognized by the U.S. DOJ COPS Office.</p> |
|  <p>MAXIMIZE OFFICER READINESS</p> | <p>SHARPEN PHYSICAL FITNESS AND MENTAL SKILLSETS</p> | <p>SUCCESS! Agencies were recognized in the IACP's Police Chief Magazine for using In-Service training to integrate physical fitness and mental skills into scenario-based training drills.</p> |
| | <p>IMPROVE PERFORMANCE ON PHYSICAL ABILITY TESTS (PAT)</p> | <p>SUCCESS! The agency was recognized in the IACP's Police Chief Magazine for consistently averaging a 90% Physical Ability Test (PAT) pass rate across the agency, increasing readiness and retention.</p> |
| | <p>EFFICIENTLY INCREASE OFFICER CARDIO FITNESS</p> | <p>SUCCESS! Best practices to minimize cardio fitness training time needed to maximize results were published in the IACP's Police Chief Magazine.</p> |
|  <p>INCREASE COMMUNITY TRUST</p> | <p>BUILD POSITIVE COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS</p> | <p>SUCCESS! The agency was recognized in the IACP's Police Chief Magazine for forming positive community relationship with their local gym and businesses, which ultimately heightened officer camaraderie.</p> |
| | | <p>SUCCESS! The agency increased officer engagement and retention and improved community trust, relations, and positive interactions, increased job satisfaction, and higher quality work environment.</p> |

After considering the positive outcomes listed above and input from your agency and key stakeholders, what are the most valuable, meaningful, and measurable outcome(s) your agency's new fitness program can achieve?

E | ANALYZE AVAILABLE EXERCISE TRAINING TIME

Use the decision tree and space below to analyze available time for exercise training.



Describe your agency's exercise training schedule (dates/times/locations).

1F | IDENTIFY AVAILABLE FITNESS TRAINING EQUIPMENT

Use the chart below to list available fitness equipment. If your agency plans to use more than one exercise facility/location, complete the chart for each facility/location.

Address: _____

Size: _____

| FITNESS EQUIPMENT | QUANTITY | DESCRIPTION |
|---|----------|-------------|
| Assessment and/or testing equipment | | |
| Strength training equipment (e.g., machines, power racks, free weights, benches, TRX suspension system, etc.) | | |
| Conditioning equipment (cardio machines, etc.) | | |
| Agility training equipment and other elements (e.g., battle ropes, BOSU, medicine balls, etc.) | | |
| Recovery equipment (e.g., foam rollers, massage guns, etc.) | | |
| Other training equipment (unconventional equipment, home gym equipment, tactical strength and conditioning training program apps, other technology, etc.) | | |

1G | ASSESS PROGRAM FUNDING / SUPPORT NEEDS

Successful tactical strength and conditioning programs can be established with any budget, even if the budget for program development is zero. Tactical strength and conditioning programs can even be used as fundraisers to support worthy causes (e.g., 100% of registration fees go toward the family of a fallen officer / firefighter / military personnel). Use this section to mark any anticipated funding needs.

Staff Training

- Sponsor staff members to earn an accredited Tactical Strength and Conditioning Facilitator (TSAC-F) certification
- Host a Tactical Strength and Conditioning Practitioners Course onsite or sponsor staff members to attend a publicly held course

Personnel

- Fitness instructors / strength coaches
- Tactical strength and conditioning coaching apps / technology
- Other:

Equipment

- Strength training equipment
- Cardio training equipment
- Assessment/testing equipment
- Agility/plyometric training equipment
- Other:

Space

- Rental costs or gym membership dues

Participation / Achievement Incentives

- Tangible/extrinsic incentives (e.g., challenge coins, t-shirts, gift baskets, exercise equipment, gift cards, paid time off, etc.)
- Intangible /intrinsic incentives (official award certificates, positive recognition, etc.)

1H | IDENTIFY FUNDING / SUPPORT SOURCES

There are a number of ways to acquire funding if it is needed. Suggestions are included below. Please select any that will be used for your agency's tactical strength and conditioning program.

Internal

- Training budget
- Health insurance provisions (e.g., funds earmarked for wellness initiatives)
- Asset forfeiture / seizure funds
- State-provided training funds (e.g., Texas Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education Fund/LEOs, Florida Sheriffs Risk Management Fund, etc.)
- Police/sheriff union funds (to train leadership, etc.)
- Other (please describe) _____

External

- Grants (e.g., IACP CRI-TAC Technical Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance, COPS Office, National Police Foundation, etc.)
- Donations (e.g., from police/sheriff foundations, non-profit organizations such as the Rotary Club, 100 Club, local gyms, local healthy restaurants, fitness technology companies such as Bridge Athletic/Train Heroic/Soflete/TrainWithPush, local Chamber of Commerce, etc.)
- Partnerships with colleges/universities
- Other (please describe) _____

1I | IDENTIFY PROGRAM SAFETY PROTOCOLS & FILL ANY GAPS

Please mark the safety protocols that will be completed prior to implementation of a strength and conditioning program.

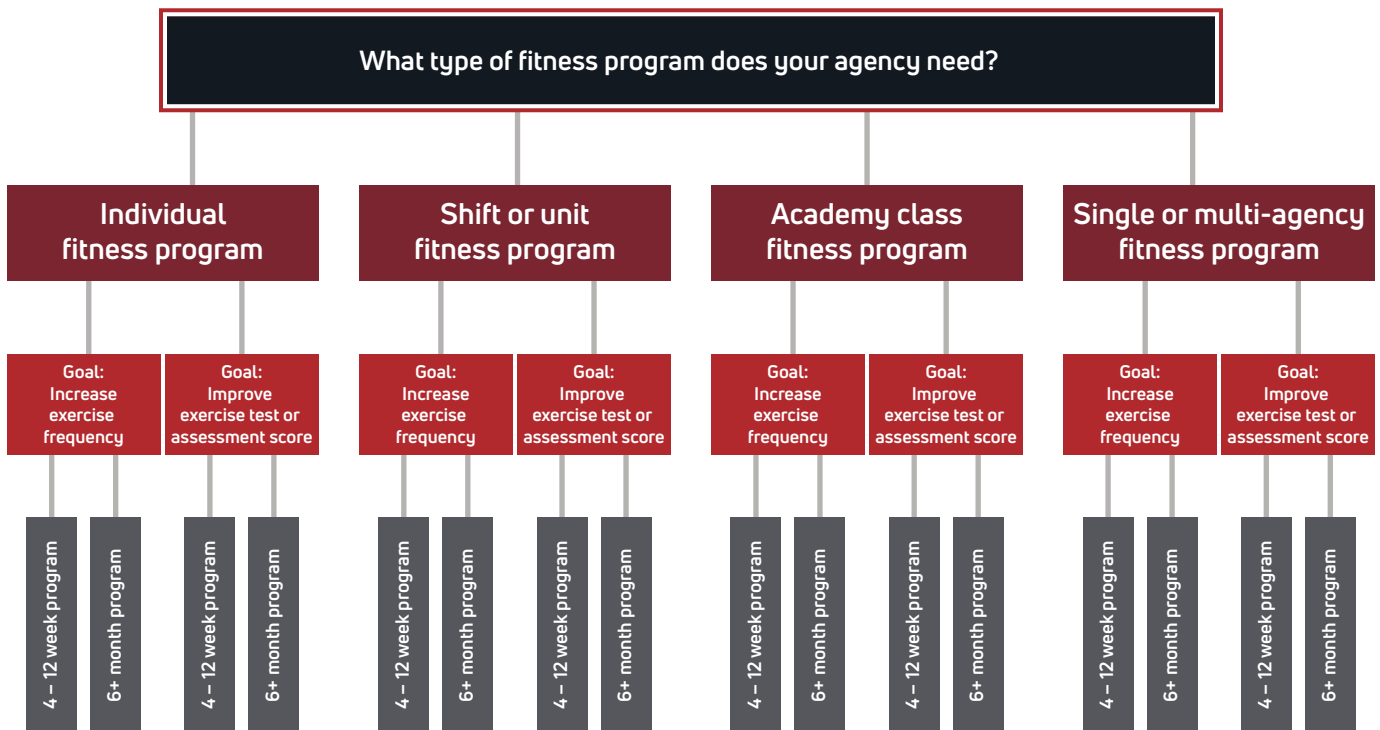
- Physician's clearance collected from all participants
- PAR-Q collected from all participants
- Liability waiver collected from all participants
- Written and approved Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for injury risk reduction and an incident management system
- Written and approved Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for COVID-19/pandemic safety precautions and an incident management system
- Other (please describe) _____
- Other (please describe) _____
- Other (please describe) _____

STEP 2

PRESCRIBE THE PROGRAM

2A | CHOOSE A PROGRAM STRUCTURE

To maximize program safety and effectiveness, recruit a Tactical Strength and Conditioning Facilitator (TSAC-F), an athletic trainer, or an exercise physiologist to help you prescribe exercise program(s). You can collaborate using the decision tree and space provided below. For optimal results, we recommend that all physical fitness programs invite voluntary participation and use a non-punitive approach.



Based on choices made in the decision tree above, describe the structure of the fitness program.

2B | CHOOSE PROGRAM METRICS

To maximize program safety and effectiveness, recruit a Tactical Strength and Conditioning Facilitator (TSAC-F), an athletic trainer, or an exercise physiologist to help you choose program metrics. You can collaborate using the decision tree and space provided below. The metrics listed on the decision tree are purely to provide examples. Feel welcome to customize program metrics to fit your agency/academy. For optimal results, we recommend that all physical fitness programs invite voluntary participation and use a non-punitive approach.



Based on choices made in the decision tree above, describe the metrics of the fitness program.

2C | PRESCRIBE EXERCISE

Consider the agency's goals, corresponding training goals, and (if available) the assessment/test results. Collaborate with a Tactical Strength and Conditioning Facilitator (TSAC-F), an athletic trainer, or an exercise physiologist to incorporate all into a results-focused exercise program that uses safe, evidence-based exercise training protocols is key to maximizing the safety and effectiveness of the program.

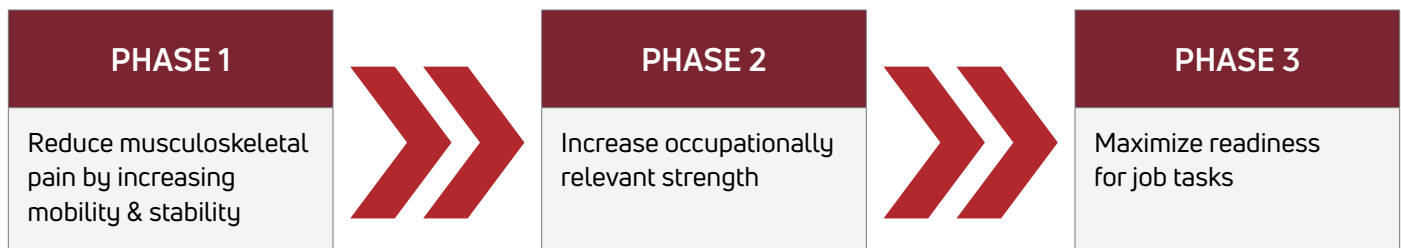
Key principles for exercise program design

1. Specificity (SAID) – Specific Adaptations to Imposed Demand(s)

Essentially, this principle emphasizes that exercising a certain body part, component of the body, or particular skill primarily develops that part of the body or skill. This principle can be leveraged by prescribing an exercise program that directly corresponds to the physical fitness needed to perform occupational job tasks.

2. "Progressive Overload" (i.e. gradual increase in exercise difficulty)

Many agencies can benefit from helping employees gradually and systematically increase their fitness level. Here is an example of how you can use that principle to implement a 3-phase exercise program:



3. "Reversibility" (i.e. the loss of training effect over time)

Essentially, this principle is important for safety. If someone has a low fitness level and/or has not consistently exercised recently, they may have lost strength, endurance, reaction time, and/or coordination. Providing their doctor has provided full clearance for them to exercise, they should start with the lightest level of exercise possible, then gradually and systematically increase their exercise level over time.

The evidence-proven exercise protocols below are included as a convenient reference for the Tactical Strength and Conditioning Facilitator (TSAC-F), an experienced athletic trainer, or an experienced exercise physiologist(s) with whom your agency/academy is collaborating. For maximum program safety and effectiveness, all protocols should be integrated into a strategic and periodized program.

Key Definitions

- » Frequency – number of training sessions in a given time period
- » Volume – amount of work (reps, sets, distance, duration)
- » Intensity – % of maximal effort (MAS, vVO2 Max, speed, RPE, wattage)
- » Exercise – movement or modality
- » Rest – time between sets/reps/rounds (work: rest, heart rate, recovery, RPE)

Resistance Training Protocols

| GOAL | INTENSITY | REPS | SETS | REST |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|------|-----------|
| Power | | | | |
| Single-effort | 80-90% | 1-2 | 3-5 | 2-5 min |
| Multiple-effort | 75-85% | 3-5 | 3-5 | |
| Ballistic | 30-60% | 3-5 | 3-5 | |
| Strength | ≥85% | ≤6 | 2-6 | 2-5 min |
| Hypertrophy | 67-85% | 6-12 | 3-6 | 30-90 sec |
| Muscular Endurance | ≤67% | ≥12 | 2-3 | ≤30 sec |

Conditioning Training Protocols

| GOAL | INTENSITY | VOLUME | REST |
|--------------------------|--|--------------|--|
| Aerobic | Low RPE 4-5 60-80% HR Max Conversational | High 20+ min | Low (or none) |
| Anaerobic Lactic | High Max Effort, RPE 8-10 | Low | High (but incomplete) 2:1 to 1:3 |
| Anaerobic Alactic | Max | 6-12 | High (complete) 1:5 to 1:20 |

Source:

— Brent A. Alvar, Katie Sell, and Patricia A. Deuster, NSCA's Essentials of Tactical Strength and Conditioning (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, Inc 2017).

STEP 3

IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM

3A | ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE

Voluntary fitness programs for 2+ people can be implemented simply by having each individual commit to participating in the program and maintaining accountability with other participants. However, programs for academies, agencies, and regions require more planning. Establishing a Task Force and assigning roles and responsibilities can help ensure success. Including at least one Tactical Strength and Conditioning Facilitator (TSAC-F), experienced athletic trainer, or experienced exercise physiologist and National Strength and Conditioning Association Subject Matter Expert (SME) on the Task Force is highly recommended to maximize program safety and effectiveness.

Qualities to look for in Task Force members:

- » Exceptional leadership skills
- » Exceptional communication skills (written and oral)
- » Exceptional collaboration skills
- » Effective project management skills
- » Organized, outgoing, approachable, personable, and optimistic traits/tendencies
- » Health/fitness-oriented

If at all possible, day-shift and night-shift sworn and non-sworn professionals should be included on the task force. Diversity in experience levels, fitness levels, age, gender, race, and ethnicity is encouraged. Task Force members may be appointed or may volunteer. Positive recognition and/or offering incentives for task force members is highly encouraged.

List all individuals that will be invited to join the task force below. If possible, designate at least one task force member per worksite.

| NAME | UNIT | PHONE NUMBER | EMAIL |
|------|------|--------------|-------|
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3B | INVITE TASK FORCE MEMBERS TO CHOOSE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Task Force can implement the fitness program in 3 phases: program preparation, program implementation, and program evaluation. Suggested tasks for each phase are included below. Feel free to skip any that your agency does not need and/or add tasks not listed as necessary.

| PHASE 1: PROGRAM PREPARATION TASKS | | RESPONSIBLE TASK FORCE MEMBER(S) | DEADLINE |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Task 1 | Meet with key stakeholders, including a National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) Subject Matter Expert (SME), to establish safe, measurable program goals. | | |
| Task 2 | Collaboratively complete the Fitness Training Schedule form on the next page, ensuring all rooms, gym space, and/or equipment reservations are made. | | |
| Task 3 | Team with your NSCA SME and key stakeholders to create a Fitness Program Proposal for your supervisor/Command Staff and key stakeholders. It should include program parameters, roles, goals, metrics, safety measures, a budget plan, a positive program promotion plan, a program implementation schedule, and (if possible) a participant incentive/award/reward system. | | |
| Task 4 | Present the proposal to your supervisor and Command Staff to request approval. | | |
| Task 5 | Once Command Staff approves the proposal and gives permission, update key stakeholders. | | |
| Task 6 | Order any approved supplies (e.g., incentives/awards/rewards, etc.) and fitness equipment and complete any necessary installations. | | |
| Task 7 | Create deliverables for the positive program promotion plan (e.g., email announcements, posters, shift briefing announcements, etc.). Include encouragement from Command Staff in the promotion campaign messaging (example 1, example 2). Attain all necessary approvals to deploy the plan. | | |
| Task 8 | Coordinate and schedule the program promotion plan and clearly communicate it with all task force members and key stakeholders. | | |
| Task 9 | Schedule a launch date to officially open program registration and an official launch date for implementation. Communicate all to Task Force members, all key stakeholders, and all eligible participants. | | |

| PHASE 2: PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION TASKS | | RESPONSIBLE TASK FORCE MEMBER(S) | DEADLINE |
|--|---|---|-----------------|
| Task 1 | Open program registration, maintaining clear and accurate records of all documents related to participant registration while also abiding by HIPAA law. Consider having one records manager per worksite/shift. | | |
| Task 2 | If applicable, conduct Pre-Program Assessment(s)/Test(s) and/or provide instructions for participants to conduct self-assessments. | | |
| Task 3 | Launch tactical strength and conditioning training program. | | |
| Task 4 | Host live and/or virtual workouts and, if possible, provide encouragement and training tips to participants in between workouts (e.g., on nutrition, recovery techniques, etc.). All training tips should be safely within one's scope of practice. | | |
| Task 5 | Communicate any and all post-program assessment/test dates to all program participants and key stakeholders. | | |
| Task 6 | If applicable, conduct post-program assessment(s)/test(s). | | |

| PHASE 3: PROGRAM EVALUATION TASKS | | RESPONSIBLE TASK FORCE MEMBER(S) | DEADLINE |
|--|--|---|-----------------|
| Task 1 | Analyze pre and post-program assessment/test results and use aggregate results to create an Executive Results Report that complies with HIPAA law. | | |
| Task 2 | Submit the Executive Results Report to the appropriate supervisor and/or Command Staff. | | |
| Task 3 | If permitted, present the Executive Results Report to key stakeholders. | | |
| Task 4 | Request approval to continue and/or expand the fitness program. | | |
| Task 5 | Distribute participant incentives/awards/rewards (e.g., at awards ceremonies/celebrations) with senior command members present (if possible). Also, announce invites to the next tactical strength and conditioning program (if applicable). | | |

3C | ESTABLISH THE FITNESS TRAINING SCHEDULE

If your agency/academy has chosen to use fitness tests/assessments and/or offer fitness training, use the following chart to plan the Fitness Program Training Schedule.

| PROGRAM COMPONENT | DATE(S) | LOCATION(S) | NOTES |
|--|---------|-------------|---|
| Pre-program test(s)/assessment(s) | | | Type of assessment(s) / test(s) conducted: Record-keeper(s): |
| Live workouts (if applicable) | | | Duration of each workout: |
| Virtual workouts (if applicable) | | | Duration of each workout: |
| Post-program test(s)/assessment(s) | | | Type of assessment(s) / test(s) conducted: Record-keeper(s): |

STEP 4

EVALUATE THE RESULTS

4A | EVALUATE THE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT / TEST RESULTS

» Program Duration: _____

» Program Time Frame: _____

» Total # of Program Participants: _____

» Program Goals Achieved

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

» Top Measurable Program Outcomes

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

» Return on Investment (if applicable / available): _____

» Testimonies from all program participants and/or contributors (please attach)

PROGRAM SOAR ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

OPPORTUNITIES

ASPIRATIONS

RESULTS

STEP 5

PROGRESS & EVOLVE

5A | UTILIZE EXERCISE PROGRESSION STRATEGIES

Fitness programs can evolve and expand in many different ways, depending on the needs being fulfilling and the program scope. In support of helping law enforcement professionals all over the world continuously increase their strength and health, evidence-based principles of exercise progression are included below. Above all, safety should be prioritized. Consult with a Tactical Strength and Conditioning Facilitator (TSAC-F), athletic trainer, or exercise physiologist for professional, customized program progression recommendations.

Strength Training Progress Strategies per Training Adaptation

- » Power – Increase velocity and/or load
- » Strength – Increase load and/or create mechanical disadvantage
- » Hypertrophy – Increase volume-load and/or TUT
- » Muscular Endurance – Increase density and/or duration of work

Conditioning Progress Strategies

- » Manipulate one of the variables below at a time for safe, sustainable progress
- » Volume – increase distance or duration of work
- » Intensity – increase velocity (speed), RPE, HR, Weight, Wattage, Impact
- » Density – manipulate volume/intensity/rest to achieve more work in less or same amount of time
- » Complexity – increase skill component or specificity

Use the space below to list the progression strategies that will be used to progress and evolve your agency/academy's fitness program.

- » _____
- » _____
- » _____
- » _____
- » _____

The **National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA)** appreciates the International Association of Chiefs of Police Officer Safety and Wellness initiatives. We are proud to support the fitness and health of noble law enforcement professionals and the communities they serve. For more information on tactical strength and conditioning training please visit nsc.com. To connect with experienced, credentialed NSCA Subject Matter Experts, standing ready to help guide and support your agency, please contact NSCA Tactical Program Manager, Mandy Nice at 407-754-6190 or mandy.nice@nsc.com.



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