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## LAW ENFORCEMENT RECRUITS PUSH PHYSICAL LIMITS IN BASIC TRAINING

**RICHMOND, Ky.** – The days of doughnut-eating cops in Kentucky are over.

Since 1999, the Peace Officer Professional Standards Act has required that all recruits wishing to become officers in the commonwealth achieve a minimum level of physical fitness before they can graduate and become an officer. But many of the state's officers have chosen to pursue an even greater level of fitness to prepare themselves for the job.

In fact, an average of 70 to 75 percent of officers who attend basic training at the Department of Criminal Justice Training are achieving the goal of graduating from the Physical Fitness Excellence Program, said DOCJT Physical Training and Defensive Tactics Instructor Buck Adkins. PFE program recruits graduate in the 80th percentile of physical fitness among national recruits.

“You don't have to have 80th percentile to graduate,” Adkins said. “All you have to do is be able to meet minimum standards. However, the more physically fit you are when you leave here, the better enabled you are to do your job.”

To earn the pin for the Physical Fitness Excellence Program, recruits must bench press 1.1 times his or her body weight, complete 43 sit-ups, run 300 meters in 53 seconds or less, complete 44 push ups and run one-and-a-half miles in 12 minutes and 30 seconds.

Law enforcement, especially for patrol officers, can be very difficult on a person's body, Adkins said.

“You're driving around at 2 a.m., eating a 99-cent heart attack in a bag and in a moment's notice you have to jump out of the car and chase somebody 300 meters down the road,” Adkins said. “Then you have to actually apprehend them, you might have to struggle with them a little bit – and you want these guys to be prepared the best they can and hopefully if they can accomplish this it's kind of instilled in them how important it is to stay in shape and continue doing some kind of exercise.”

When recruits enter the academy, Adkins said the entire physical training and defensive tactics staff begins working to instill in them the relationship between their level of fitness and their ability to return home to their families at the end of their shifts. On day one, the recruits are asked how many of them have families and how many want to return home to them at night, Adkins said.

“They all raise their hands,” he said. “After that, [Physical Training and Defensive Tactics Supervisor Jim Simpson tells them] physical fitness is the most important thing they can do to ensure they are going to go home at night and see their families. That is true. If you are physically fit, if you have to engage someone in some type of hand to hand [combat] or struggle, you are more apt to be able to come away from that using less force, and still come away in tact yourself.

“Two, physical fitness improves your reasoning abilities,” Adkins continued. “It is proven that if you're physically fit, you think clearer and you are able to act and react a lot quicker. It has been shown that physical fitness is a key element in firearms training.

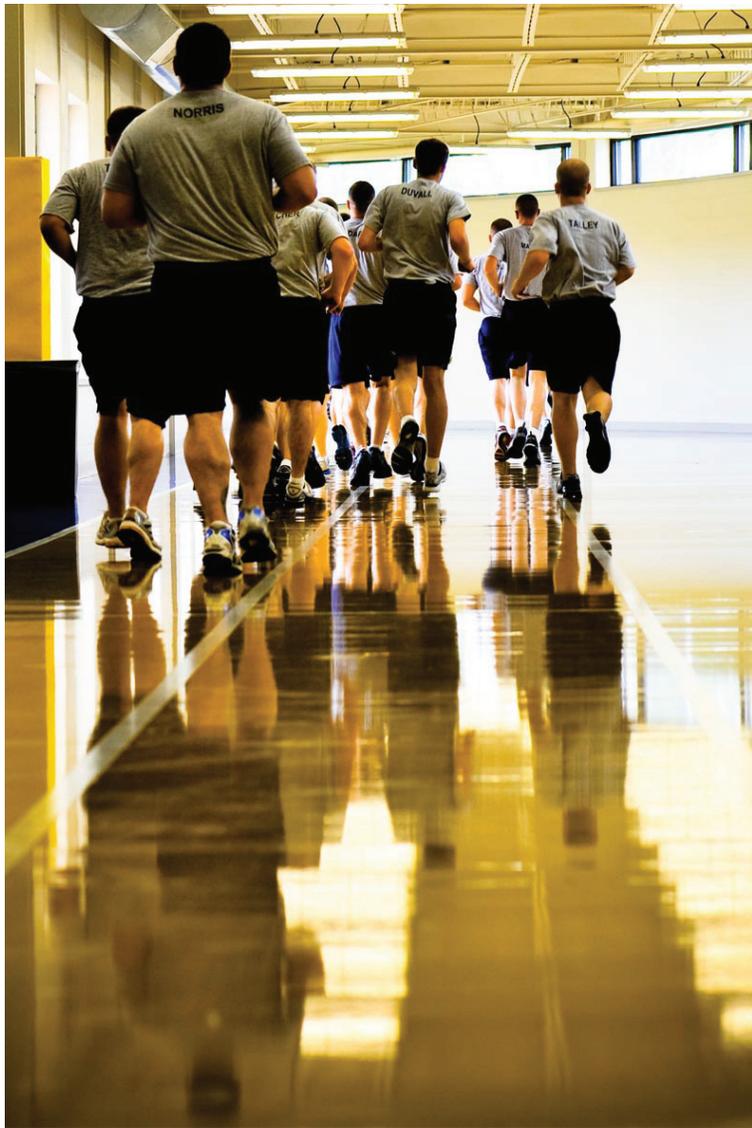
If the officers are physically fit, they can control their breathing, have firm grips and are able to handle the weapons. You've got to be physically fit for every little part that we do in police work, so it is extremely important to them."

During the 18-week basic training academy, physical training and defensive tactics are the only content areas in which the recruits have to participate daily. Officers may study and learn a variety of maneuvers necessary in engaging a criminal, but without the endurance to follow through, "it doesn't matter what you know," Adkins said.

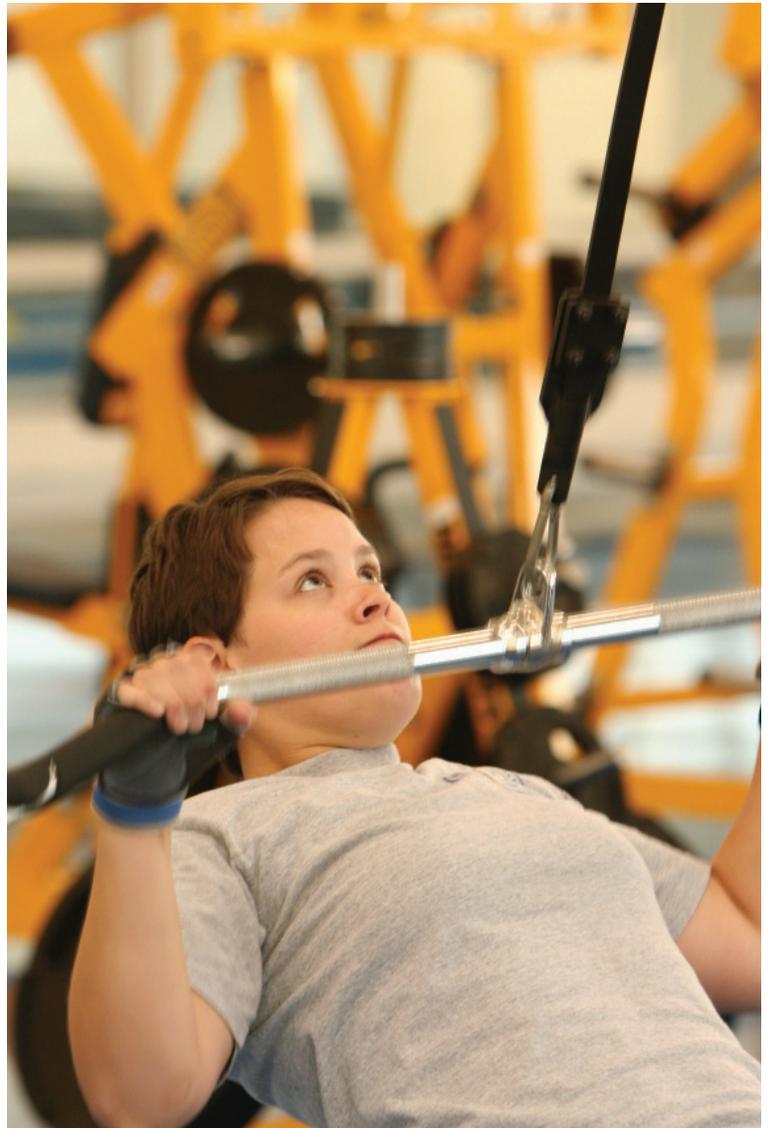
Since the physical fitness standards were enacted under the POPS Act, for which the 10th anniversary is being celebrated this year, Adkins said he has seen the level of recruits entering the academy change. Recruits who come to the academy are in better shape when they arrive, and more are maintaining their level of fitness after they leave.

"Think about it from an employer's standpoint, too," Adkins said. "If you are a chief, the better shape your officers are in, the less you have to worry about those increased insurance claims – if you're physically fit and continue an exercise program you're going to be more flexible, you're not going to be as prone to injury as you would be living a sedentary lifestyle sitting in the car eating doughnuts. The day of that doughnut-eating, coffee-drinking cop is gone by the wayside. If you look at the guys who are coming out [of the academy] now you see some physically fit, mentally trained and well-rounded officers capable of doing what they need to do to accomplish the job for the commonwealth."

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To be eligible for the Physical Fitness Excellence Program, recruits must run 300 meters in 53 seconds or less and run one-and-a-half miles in 12 minutes and 30 seconds.



In addition to running requirements, recruits striving for the Physical Fitness Excellence Program must complete 43 pushups, 44 sit ups, and bench press 110% of his or her body weight. Many recruits use a variety of machines in the Weber Fitness Training Facility during their off-hours of academy training to train for the excellence.