



Physical Readiness Assessment (PRA) Preparation Guide

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A career as a Corrections Officer or Instructor requires a reasonable standard of physical fitness. This guide will prepare you for the Physical Readiness Assessment (PRA).

Custodial staff may face physically challenging situations and may have to go from a state of relative physical inactivity to maximum effort in a very short time.

Intense physical activity makes high demands on your body's energy systems, and so custodial staff must be physically fit.

As a Corrections Officer or Instructor you must complete a Physical Readiness Assessment (PRA) that reflects the typical activities you might do while on duty.

The PRA provides assurance that you will be safe in emergency situations by ensuring that you are able to reach an incident quickly, in a physical condition to be able to influence the outcome.

The PRA also gives you assurance that your colleagues are physically capable of providing the necessary support during an emergency.

About the PRA



The PRA is based on tasks undertaken by custodial staff. The assessment scenario reflects a sequence of activities that might occur during a normal working day.

For example

- Walking from one unit to another
- A search
- A call to an emergency
- Spontaneous Control and Restraint activity
- Rescue of an unconscious colleague
- Walking back to the original unit

Scoring

Each activity of the PRA produces a score from 1 to 9 based on the time you take to complete the activity or the force you can apply.

The scores for the activities are combined to form an overall score for the PRA. The performance zones (Red, Amber, and Green) and the associated scores are shown below. To be successful in your application you must achieve an overall score in the GREEN zone (6 or better).

Score	Description
1	Well below average
2	
3	Below average
4	
5	Average
6	Above average
7	
8	Well above average
9	

The activities of the PRA are described in this guide together with the performance standard for each activity.

To achieve an overall score in the Green zone you must score at least 6 on every activity except the Emergency Response where you are allowed a minimum of 5.

1

Three hundred metre maximum speed walk

Walk as fast as you can round the marked figure-8 course covering the 15 x 20m laps as quickly as possible. This is a continuous walking activity. You will be warned if you are considered to be running and repeated warnings will mean you have to start the PRA again.

Performance standard

Element			Description						
300m Max Speed walk			Complete 15 laps of a 20m figure 8 circuit walking as quickly as possible.						
Conditions			Wearing appropriate physical activity clothing and footwear						
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Time (Seconds)	>238	238 -227	226 -216	215 -205	204 -183	182 -172	171 -162	161 -151	<151



2

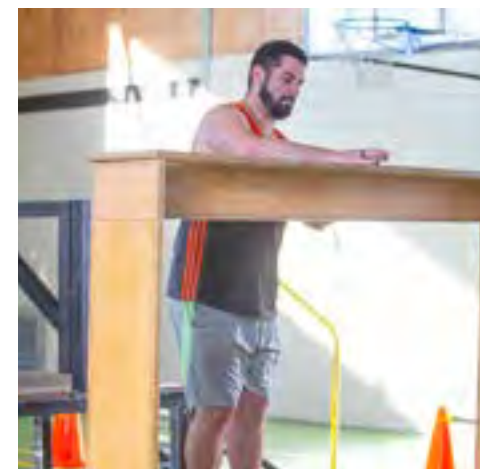
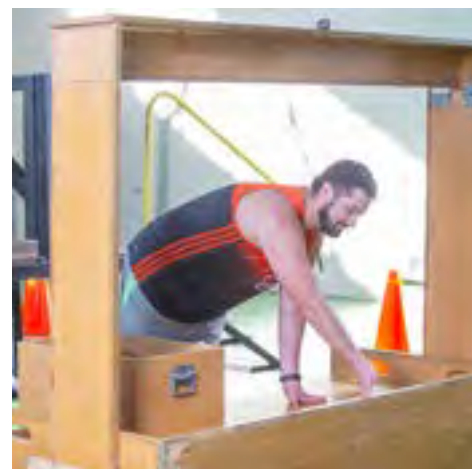
Simulated Search

This element is designed to measure your general functional flexibility and strength in relation to being able to meet the physical demands of a thorough cell search. It is not designed to test searching skills or technique.

Your assessor will demonstrate what you must do. There are four touch pads at fixed positions around the bunk unit and you must find and touch each of them. Once the element is complete an emergency response "Break – Break – Break" call will be made, and you must immediately begin the next element, the Emergency Response. The Simulated Search is not timed individually but it will contribute to the score for the total time.

Performance standard

Element	Description								
Simulated bunk search	Touch 4 locations around the bunk unit as quickly as possible.								
Conditions	Order of search: - Remove mattress from bed area and hold at arm's length for five seconds. - Lift storage box onto the bed & touch target in the box. - Touch target on back of bed. - Touch target on shelf area above bed. - Touch target under the bed. - Replace box under bed. - Replace mattress on bed.								
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Time (Seconds)	Untimed								



3 Emergency Response

Complete 5 laps of the circuit as quickly as possible, crossing the platform on each lap. On the first lap unlatch and open the gate, leaving it open until the final lap when you must close and relatch it. You must not miss steps on the way up or down and you must not jump off the platform. This element must be completed as safely and as quickly as possible.

Performance standard

Element		Description								
Emergency response		Complete 5 laps of a 20m circuit as quickly as possible at a fast running pace.c								
Conditions		Wearing appropriate physical activity clothing and footwear								
Score		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Time (Seconds)		>79	79-74	73-70	69-64	63-53	52-48	47-43	42-39	<38



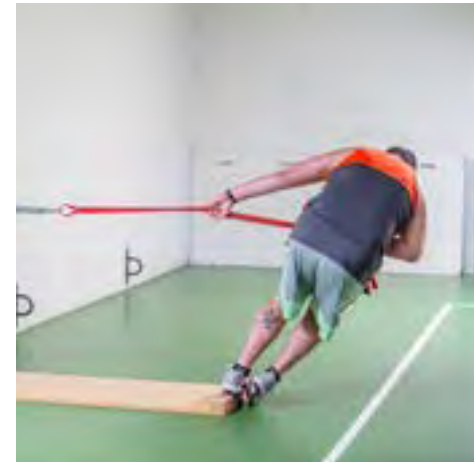
4

Control & Restraint (C&R) Simulation

This activity assesses your functional grip strength and ability to generate and maintain a sustained pulling force for 5 seconds. Your assessor will demonstrate the three pulling positions and each effort must be maintained for 5 seconds. You must not wrap the rope round your hands or wrists. Ensure you have at least one foot braced against the floor stop. Maintain a straight back, bend your knees and use the hip and thigh muscles to generate maximal force during the measurement.

Performance standard

Element	Description									
Control & Restraint (C&R) Simulation	Exert a maximal steady horizontal pull for 5 seconds.									
Conditions	Without wrapping the rope round hands; In backward and sideways (both left and right) directions; With at least one foot braced against the stop.									
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
% Body Weight	<33	33-36	37-40	41-45	46-56	57-64	65-77	78-90	>90	



5 Simulated Rescue

This activity assesses your ability to move an unconscious person away from danger. You must move the 50kg rescue dummy 10 metres as quickly and as safely as possible. You may drag the dummy or use a safe lifting technique. Move the dummy backwards around the cone and return it to the start position. The Simulated Rescue is not timed individually **but it will contribute to the score obtained for the total time.**

Performance standard

Element	Description									
Simulated rescue	Move a soft bodied rescue dummy a total distance of 10 metres as quickly and safely as possible.									
Conditions	Using a safe lifting technique with arms wrapped round the dummy torso; moving backwards round the marker cone and leaving the dummy in the original location.									
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Time (Seconds)	Untimed									



6

300m Recovery Walk

This activity assesses your ability to recover from high intensity exercise and resume normal activity. You must complete the 15 x 20m laps as quickly as you can, walking at a comfortable but purposeful pace. This is a continuous walking exercise. You will be warned if you are considered to be running, repeated warnings will mean you have to start the PRA again.

Performance standard

Element			Description						
300m Max Speed walk			Complete 15 laps of a 20m figure-8 circuit walking at your quickest comfortable pace.						
Conditions			Wearing appropriate physical activity clothing and footwear.						
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Time (Seconds)	>277	277 -262	261 -247	246 -232	231 -202	201 -187	186 -172	171 -157	<157

7

Total Assessment Time

The total time from starting the PRA is recorded and so you must complete the PRA as quickly as you can.

Performance standard

Element		Description							
Total Assessment Time		Total time taken to complete the PRA.							
Conditions		Wearing appropriate physical activity clothing and footwear.							
Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Time (seconds)	>721	721 -684	683 -646	645 -609	608 -533	532 -496	495 -459	458 -421	<421

Training for your PRA

Routines

If you follow the sample programme below you will quickly and safely reach the level of fitness you need to score well on the PRA.

The assessment has the same scoring ranges regardless of gender and age.

The benefits of exercise should far outweigh the risks. However, if you have any concerns about your health, either before or during your exercise programme, then consult your GP.

Week 1: Walk

Walk for 20 minutes at a pace at which you could hold a conversation with someone else.

Walk on a flat open area outdoors or indoors for 4 minutes. Rest for 30 seconds then pick up the pace and stride out increasing the arm swing with a slight bend in the elbows to set the increased pace. Keep the head and chest up to assist breathing.

Introduce a turn every 30 seconds and when turning shorten the strides before opening up again to stride out.

Repeat 4 minutes walking and 30 seconds rest 5 times.

Week 3: Walk and Jog

Exercise for a full 20 to 30 minutes at a pace at which you could still hold a conversation.

Walk on a flat open area outdoors or indoors for 2 minutes turning every 30 seconds.

Stride out increasing the arm swing with a slight bend in the elbows to set the increased pace. Keep the head and chest up to assist breathing. After minutes walking increase speed to a jog for 30 seconds then return to walking for 2 minutes before jogging again for 30 seconds. Repeat for full 30 minutes.

Week 2: Walk and Jog

Walk and jog for a full 20 to 30 minutes at a pace at which you could still hold a conversation.

Walk on a flat open area outdoors or indoors for 4 minutes turning every 30 seconds.

Stride out increasing the arm swing with a slight bend in the elbows to set the increased walking pace. Keep the head and chest up to assist breathing.

After 4 minutes walking increase speed to a jog for 30 seconds then return to walking for 4 minutes before jogging again for 30 seconds.

Week 4: Walk, Jog, and Squats

Exercise for a full 30 minutes at a pace at which you could still hold a conversation.

Walk at a moderate to fast pace for 2 minutes turning every 30 seconds and then jog for 30 seconds.

Immediately after the jog introduce 10 free squats. Keep head and chest up, back flat and neutral. Bend at the hips and knees keeping knees over the feet.

Repeat 2-minute walk, 30 second jog and 10 squats for the full 30 minutes.



Week 5: Walk, Jog, Squats and Pull

Exercise for a full 30 minutes at a pace at which you could still hold a conversation.

Walk at a moderate to fast pace for 2 minutes and then jog for 30 seconds. Immediately after the jog introduce 10 free squats and 10 squat pull holds. Keep head and chest up, back flat and neutral. Bend at the hips and knees keeping knees over the feet, grip a tree or bench with arms extended, sink into a squat and lean back and hold for 5 seconds.

Repeat whole exercises sequence for the full 30 minutes.

Week 6: Walk, Jog, Squats, Pull, and Press

Exercise for a full 30 minutes at a pace at which you could still hold a conversation.

Walk at a moderate to fast pace for 2 minutes and then jog for 30 seconds. Immediately after the jog introduce 10 free squats, 10 squat pull holds and 10 press ups.

Keep head and chest up, back flat and neutral. Bend at the hips and knees keeping knees over the feet, grip a tree or bench with arms extended, sink into a squat and lean back and hold for 5 seconds. Then do 10 press ups.

Repeat whole exercises sequence for the full 30 minutes.



Sample programme

Phase One

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Rest
Week 2	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Rest
Week 3	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Rest
Week 4	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise
Week 5	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise
Week 6	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Rest

Phase Two

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise
Week 2	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise	Exercise
Week 3	Exercise	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise
Week 4	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Rest
Week 5	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise
Week 6	Rest	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Rest	Rest	Rest

Have a question or need a hand?

Learn more at

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or call 0800 437 668



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