LAW ENFORCEMENT
FITNESS PROGRAM
Development
Considerations
CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING A FITNESS PROGRAM

This checklist outlines the considerations and action steps recommended to start and maintain an agency-wide fitness program.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND STANDARDS

- Review the included fitness essentials program considerations to determine priorities
- Review liability considerations with legal counsel
  - Confirm fitness policy alignment with agency, local, state, and national policy
  - Create program liability forms
- Assemble team
  - External Stakeholders
    - Elected officials
    - Local government departments (i.e. health and recreation)
    - Medical professionals
    - Union/Fraternal Police Association
    - Business owners - especially fitness and wellness professionals
    - Other:
  - Internal Stakeholders
    - Officers
    - Fitness Coordinator
    - Other:
- Identify resources
  - Who will lead the program internally
  - What is the budget and what activities will it cover
  - What facilities and equipment will employees use for workouts

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT PLAN

- Confirm leadership participation and support at all levels
- Develop a communication plan
- Set goals and benchmarks
- Plan for recognition of employee success

DATA TRACKING AND EVALUATION

- Develop employee readiness and risk assessment tool
- Prepare a data collection and management plan for the program
- Plan for security and storage of officers’ personal data
INTRODUCTION

Law enforcement working conditions and exposure to stress and trauma places officers at a greater risk for health-related injuries and illnesses than the public. Research has shown that police officers are more likely to be obese and to have metabolic syndromes, including elevated blood pressure, elevated blood sugar, and abnormal cholesterol. They are also at an increased risk for heart attacks and sleep disorders. These issues pose a serious risk to officers’ personal health and wellbeing and can also affect officers’ ability to do their job safely and effectively.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) are committed to providing law enforcement professionals with the resources they need to remain healthy and safe every shift, every day. Developing a fitness program for a department is vital for the health and wellbeing of all officers. The average age of a law enforcement officer (LEO) who has suffered a heart attack is 49 years old, compared to 67 years of age for the general population. Officers have 30 to 70 times higher risk of sudden cardiac death (SCD) when they are involved in stressful situations compared to when they are in non-stressful situations. By taking the time to develop a fitness program for their officers, departments can effectively save officers’ lives through improving their physical health and prepare them to be better equipped to reduce injuries and shorten recovery time. On average, officers in the United States sustain 30,900 injuries a year that require at least one day away from work. With reduced risk of injury, physically fit officers have better attendance, resulting in reduced personal and work-related medical costs for the agency.

The ability of sworn officers and civilian staff to consistently perform critical and essential job functions to ensure the public’s safety is at the core of policing. Physical fitness is necessary to perform policing duties in the safest and most efficient way possible. Officer safety and physical wellness go hand in hand. Remaining physically healthy and fit to meet the demands of the job is crucial in every phase of an officer’s career.

The following suggested guidelines are intended to address those public safety agencies that presently have no physical fitness programming in place or those that are looking to revamp existing programs.
Implementing a fitness program is not as simple as opening the doors to a gym facility, rather it requires a mindset and organizational culture that values fitness and wellness and provides its staff with resources and information to educate them on the many topics and factors related to overall fitness and wellness.

This means that it is essential to be thoughtful in the planning process, incorporate feedback from internal and external stakeholders, and carefully evaluate the program throughout planning and implementation. Ultimately, law enforcement agencies should design a program that will work for their specific departments, taking into consideration demographics, internal culture, and individual employee needs.

Setting a strong foundation in program design and standards will lead to easier implementation, increased buy-in, and sustained success. The following structural components should be considered:

- **Staff requirements** - Will the program be mandatory or voluntary for staff? Who will lead the program? What stakeholders, internal and external, will support program operations?
- **Fitness access** - Where and when will employees work out?
- **Benchmarks** - What goals will you set – weight loss, level of staff participation, number of workout hours? How often will you assess these goals – weekly, monthly, annually?
- **Engagement and recognition** - What stakeholders, internal and external, will provide support and resources? How will you communicate about the program to employees and external stakeholders? How will you recognize and incentivize success? How will the department reinforce engagement and continue to encourage a culture that promotes physical wellness/fitness?
- **Evaluation** - How will you track program participation and effectiveness? What data will you track? Will participants take a fitness test?

**FITNESS PROGRAM ESSENTIALS**

It is important for police executives and command staff members to have a fundamental understanding of the physical readiness of the officers under their command. Fitness programs should incorporate elements that officers need for their day-to-day working conditions, as well as situations that are more physically challenging. Some departments model their programs to reflect standards from national or state agencies, while many design their own standards based on functional fitness methodologies.

**FUNCTIONAL FITNESS**

Functional fitness training prepares officers for real-life movements and activities that they may experience while in the field. It provides officers with training to improve all aspects of their fitness and prepare them for the job specific challenges they will face. Functional fitness encompasses traditional fitness training, but tailors it to specific tasks police officers may encounter throughout their course of duty - with the goal of confidently and successfully performing all job specific tasks. These practices can reduce the risk of injury as officers improve muscle and ligament strength and train their bodies to withstand stressors. In addition, functional fitness can improve balance,
coordination, flexibility, muscle strength, and agility through working all the muscles in
the body and enable an officer to perform patterns of movement.8

Functional fitness tools can help determine if an officer is ready to return to duty after
recovering from an injury. This methodology has been developed and used by agencies
to reduce injuries and lost time, while improving worker health and productivity. These
methods streamline the work injury management process and provide objective
information in making the determination when an officer is ready to return to work
following an injury. Functional fitness testing after the injury can be crucial to the officer
having confidence in their abilities and providing a safety-net for any potential liability
for an injury that has not fully healed.

FITNESS PROGRAM ESSENTIALS

■ Strength Training
Strength training is an important aspect of any fitness program, but it does
not have to include the traditional bench press, squat, and/or shoulder press
exercises. Strength or weight training can also be more functional in nature,
enabling officers to use movements that would likely be used during a shift.
Examples of additional weight training exercises include high-intensity interval
training, body-weight exercises, resistance bands, and kettlebells. Muscular
strength and muscular endurance are both vital to health, fitness, and overall
officer safety.

■ Conditioning Training
Another key component of any fitness program is cardiovascular health,
achieved with aerobic exercise. Aerobic exercise involves the heart, lungs,
and blood vessels. These areas of the human body engage in the process of
carrying needed oxygen to body tissue. Running is most frequently associated
with cardiovascular health and an officer’s duties. However, there are many
other ways to boost the heart rate into a target zone for 20 to 30 minutes.
Examples of alternative cardiovascular exercises include rowing, swimming,
elliptical, walking, jogging, and team sports. Varying activities keep participants
interested and engaged.

■ Mobility and Flexibility
Mobility and flexibility allow police officers to perform functional movements
through a full range of motion. On any given day, police officers will perform
a variety of work-related functions that require a vast range of motion and
movements. For officers, these movements are second nature, but at times
they can result in soft tissue injuries ranging from mild sprains to soft tissue
tears. The field often uses the terms mobility and flexibility interchangeably,
but mobility involves a degree of core strength, whereas flexibility does not
necessarily. Flexibility is a facet of mobility. Exercises that increase mobility
include yoga, stretching, and Pilates.
**Injury management needs**

Sprains and strains can occur due to the physically demanding aspects of the job. Injuries can happen because of overuse, force, or overextending part of the body such as an ankle or wrist. It is important to perform a light warmup exercise such as a jog or a brisk walk for five to ten minutes prior to exercising in order to get the blood flowing and to warm up muscles. Additionally, injuries that are not properly treated may create problems for an officer by increasing re-injury rates or limiting current functions.

When an officer is on restricted duty, a physician can safely determine appropriate physical activities and progress physical restrictions in a manner that will allow the officer to perform their work and not aggravate their injury or illness. If a work injury or illness occurs, it is to the benefit of both the officer and the agency that return to work is accomplished as quickly as appropriate with objective means to define reasonable accommodations or tasks that can be done. This proactive approach results in reduced re-injury and additional lost time. Consider collaborating with an athletic trainer, athletic therapist, physical therapist, physician, or other allied medical professionals to address specific concerns.

By focusing on the physical fitness essentials, departments can develop programs that can improve multiple aspects of an officer’s fitness and health. These components are all part of an officer’s functional fitness to complete tasks they will experience on a service call and in their daily lives. This will ultimately provide officers with a benefit that extends beyond the job and will help them become well rounded and improve their physical, mental, and emotional health as well.

**Department Requirement**

Some agencies choose to implement mandatory fitness programs for officers and employees across the board. There are a few common characteristics and considerations for a mandatory program. First, by definition, this is programming that will be required for all officers and have a physical standard officers must comply with each year. This type of programming is typically seen in the promotional process, fit for duty scenarios, or return to work testing. Mandatory-based programs provide an officer with a minimum standard that is consistent with physical tasks that will be necessary on the job.
ASSEMBLING YOUR TEAM AND RESOURCES

Involving internal and external stakeholders from the beginning is important when planning a fitness program. Partners can provide subject matter expertise, identify potential problems, assist with accessing resources for the program, and support greater buy-in for the program. Beyond the planning stages, these partners can serve as an advisory group to support and evaluate the program.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Local Government
Local government endorsement of fitness and wellness programs for agencies may benefit the project budget and help with navigating the political and legal landscape. Important advocates may include the mayor, city manager, city council, and other elected officials. The local government may be willing to provide dedicated funding to the efforts when made aware of the possible savings on insurance premiums. In addition, they may be able to connect the agency with fitness centers to provide free or discounted fitness programs, memberships for officers, or access to equipment. They may also be able to provide connections to established wellness programs that have proven successful. State or local governments may also be able to provide incentives or programs to help start a wellness program. Municipal administrators can also help advise on legal issues of liability, program guidelines, and protocols.

Other local government agency partners can be a great resource when it comes to sharing expertise and resources. The local Health Department and Parks and Recreation Department, for example, may be able to assist with access to facilities and knowledge about fitness programming.

Medical Professionals
For liability purposes, all fitness participants should seek formal medical clearance prior to engaging in physical fitness exercise. Even though many of the participants might already be exercising on a regular basis, the agency benefits by having all participants medically cleared. The IACP offers a checklist of recommended questions officers can pose to their physicians addressing common medical concerns affecting law enforcement personnel. The checklist can be found below under Resources. Engaging partners from doctor’s groups, universities, emergency medical services, fitness centers, community centers, and health insurance companies may aid in facilitating these medical screenings for the department. Medical professionals might also be willing to help the department with any program data collection or testing oversight as the program continues.

Police Unions and Fraternal Organizations
It is important to include these organizations in the early planning discussions concerning the fitness program, regardless of whether the program that is being developed is voluntary in nature or not. Forging strong relationships with the unions and fraternal organizations may greatly improve support and participation in the program, particularly if the long-term goal is to make the program mandatory.

Business Owners and Community Members
Community members and business owners will be great partners in planning the program, offering training, and providing resources and donations. Those who are in the
health and fitness industry may be able to provide training for staff on exercise routines, health risk prevention, and proper sleep habits. Given the critical connection between fitness and nutrition, community members and business owners in the restaurant and nutrition industry can be good partners to provide training on preparing healthy meals and snacks. The IACP Eating Right on the Go tip sheet is a good starting point for learning about nutritional recommendations for officers. If the department does not have access to a fitness facility, it may be able to contract with a local health club for facility use. If using an external source, engage the business owner in conversations early to keep all parties focused on the mutual needs for the program. Privately owned fitness facilities may have different or more stringent contracts that are necessary for use agreement. Agencies might have to develop more in-depth contract terms. Specifically, agencies should consider hours of operation, liability, instruction, and length of contract.

Consider working with an athletic trainer, physical therapist, tactical strength and conditioning specialist, nutritionist, or a health and wellness specialist to address these. Engaging partners in the planning of the fitness program can help minimize risk to the organization and ensure that it approaches the fitness program with the whole officer in mind.

**INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

**Command Staff**
As the leaders of the agency, it is of great value to participate and help lead the fitness program. By showing support and interest in the program, officers will see that the agency cares about their wellbeing and will be more likely to participate. Command staff will be able to help with planning the fitness program by determining what are the needs of the agency and understand how to cater the program to everyday responsibilities. They will also be able to work in real time with the officer’s needs through either allowing them to participate in the fitness program while on shift or ensure they can while off duty. In turn, Command staff will also set an example for other officers by actively participating and will benefit their health as well.

**Fitness Coordinator**
Having a strong leader who can lead the planning and operation of the fitness program is an important consideration. Many agencies have success with selecting an in-house fitness coordinator in a full- or part-time capacity. The agency may hire a professional with appropriate credentials to take on this role or look within the department to choose an existing officer or supervisor with this interest and skill set. Hiring an external lead means that this responsibility is solely theirs and not overshadowed by other duties. Choosing an internal lead for the fitness program can promote buy-in from officers and allows the internal designee to develop their skills/interests and gain motivation through this responsibility. The decision to hire internally or externally should be based upon what is realistic and most fitting for your agency.

- **Primary roles of a fitness coordinator may include:**
  - Developing, designing, and implementing the fitness program.
  - Serving as a program ambassador to help employees meet agency fitness goals and standards.
  - Providing individual personal training and motivation to assist employees with the proper nutrition, exercise techniques, and recuperative efforts.
  - Leading agency-wide trainings on health risks for officers and recommendations for improving diet, fitness, and sleep habits.
Managing program and participant records.

- Tracking baseline fitness evaluations of employees and ongoing fitness statistics to evaluate the impact of the program.
- Sharing program successes with leadership and staff.

The coordinator can encourage lifestyle changes with sworn members and civilian staff through direct interaction, education, fitness, and nutrition supervision. In choosing a fitness coordinator, leadership should make sure that the individual embodies the culture and attitude of what the department is trying to achieve with the fitness program. Staying current on fitness requirements and best practices is important, and agency leadership should provide the coordinator with the time and availability to continue fitness education to maintain certifications and annual training requirements.

Officers

The success of a fitness program depends on having officer engagement and participation, and the best way to support engagement is to have officers involved from the beginning. Selecting officers from various ranks will ensure that all perspectives and needs are incorporated when determining the program design. It is helpful to engage officers who show a personal interest in fitness, as they will be a motivating force for the planning team and for the rest of the officers upon program implementation. By including officers, they feel valued and have an opportunity to gain additional career experience that is applicable beyond policing.

Officer Engagement Plan

Because fitness programs may require a shift in agency culture and, in some cases, the personal mindset of officers, special care should be taken to make the program inviting and engaging for all to encourage participation. Some successful program characteristics that departments have used include:

- **Ease of access** – Officers have long, busy days, and they often find it challenging to find time to work out. The easier agencies can make it for officers to participate, the more likely they are to do so. It is helpful to provide:
  - Gym and fitness resource availability during late night and early morning hours that accommodate all shift workers
  - On-duty time for officers to work out
  - A range of workout options, including one-on-one sessions and group classes
  - Internal employee wellness webpages, email blasts, or bulletin boards with fitness, wellness, and nutrition information and regular updates

- **Motivation** – Setting goals, providing incentives, and recognizing success are important considerations for getting staff invested in the goals of the program. Officers have personal and professional reasons for engaging in fitness activities, so it is important to account for these different levels of motivation. Consider providing:
  - Education on the unique health risks officers face and the benefits of wellness
  - Personal and agency goal setting
  - Fitness instruction training and certifications for those who want to teach other officers
  - Agency recognitions at roll call, special events, and on social media
  - Paid time off or monetary bonuses for successfully meeting goals
Information about how adopting physical fitness into their daily routines can help improve officer safety. Being physically fit for duty is a key component to performing the job. Improved officer safety can help keep both officers and the community safe.

**Support and fun** – Exercise can often feel like an obligation for officers, especially through a workplace fitness program. Fitness programs should aim to incorporate activities that are fun and engaging. These activities can promote wellness, while also supporting camaraderie amongst officers and enhancing job satisfaction. Consider:

- Friendly competitions to keep personnel motivated
- Workouts with the chief, mayor, or other notable locals
- A buddy system with a fellow employee
- Engaging officers’ families and community members
- Creating an advisory board, with external and internal members, to promote health and wellness

**LEADERSHIP**

Getting staff to embrace a new policy, procedure, or task can be challenging. Designing a program that has attractive components to it and is led by a coordinator who is passionate and helpful to others will aid in changing the culture of the agency.

Agency executives must always show full support of the program. It is also important for leadership to actively participate in the fitness program and all safety and wellness efforts, as this can influence the acceptance of the programs overall and will begin to alter the culture of the agency to increase the focus of wellness throughout. The chain of command will empower officers by setting an example and showing them there is support for this initiative. It also shows leadership cares about the wellbeing of the officer and is willing to make positive changes to the culture and needs of the department.

**COMMUNICATION**

Agency communication, both internal and external, can have a significant impact on fitness programming. The fitness coordinator can work with leadership to develop strong messaging about the benefits of the fitness program to help ease the transition for all. It is important to take care in how wellness, health, nutrition, and stress management programs are presented, as labels and dissemination approaches can affect how receptive officers are to these programs.

For example, research shows that officers may be more receptive to “wellness” programs than those labeled “stress management.” Some departments report success with reframing fitness language to be more active and more aligned with performance and tactical advantage versus working out to “feel better.” Language about the fitness and wellness programs should be consistent and readily available in multiple formats. Flyers, brochures, and informational sessions are examples of messaging that can be developed to inform staff of the program and its elements.

Throughout the development and implementation of the program, it is important to keep the lines of communication open. Command staff, governing bodies, or insurance carriers may request input and feedback about the level of program participation; the
details of program goals, successes, and shortcomings; and any perceived or proposed modifications. Details of the program should be well documented by either the fitness coordinator or the leadership developing and implementing the programming.

Additionally, the need for regular, consistent messaging is also important. It is not enough to provide strong messaging during the implementation phase of the program. To remain sustainable, regular reminders about the program should be included in the overall communication plan. As time goes on, departments should find what messaging is most successful and continue using those outlets to communicate updates, additions, and new opportunities within the program.

DATA TRACKING AND EVALUATION

PROGRAM DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Data maintenance and collection is important for the longevity and value of a fitness program. Data can show what areas of a department’s fitness program are working and what may need improving. If the department maintains good data over the progress of a program, the importance of continuing a program can be easily conveyed to local budget managers, other funders, and agency personnel.

When working with data involving personnel, privacy and legal concerns must be addressed, particularly if working with an outside partner. If data is being collected and/or analyzed by a university or outside organization, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) should be developed and agreed upon by both parties. The MOU should include the background of the project, purpose of the MOU, roles and responsibilities of each party, and specifics on what data will be collected and how it will be shared and secured. Even when data is being collected internally by the police agency, those involved should be aware of what data is being collected, the purpose of the data collection, and how specifically it will be used. Not only will data maintenance and collection benefit the specific department, but it could also be used by organizations, other agencies, and other professions to help identify trends, inform training and policy changes, and raise awareness and knowledge of law enforcement fitness requirements.
PHYSICAL FITNESS TESTING AND ASSESSMENT DATA

EMPLOYEE RISK ASSESSMENT

Pre-participation screening can help identify individuals who have existing health factors or medical conditions that could present an immediate risk or be exacerbated by certain physical fitness activities. Pre-participation screening may also identify those individuals who have symptoms or risk factors for medical ailments that require further medical evaluation. A physical activity readiness questionnaire can be used to identify the small number of adults for whom physical activity might pose some risks or danger. The questionnaire serves to identify those individuals that require more robust medical clearance from a physician prior to exercise and testing. Questions pertain to past or current medical conditions that could affect the individual’s capacity for fitness activities, such as heart disease, chest pain, bone or joint problems, or a history of fainting. Agencies should consult with their local medical, human resources, and legal advisors to determine what questions should and should not be asked on the physical activity readiness questionnaire.

Agencies might have some officers or civilian staff members who have concerns or questions about pre-existing conditions. These individuals should be encouraged to go to a medical professional prior to engaging in fitness exercises to properly address such concerns. Partnerships or MOUs with medical professionals for this purpose will be helpful. It is important to consider those that are unable to exercise when designing a fitness program. Departments should address this scenario specifically and outline levels of participation in which those that are on light or restricted duty could be included. If the program is mandatory and/or incentive based, departments need to address how these individuals will still qualify for benefits.

ANNUAL FITNESS EVALUATION

Agencies engaging in a fitness program may consider conducting an annual fitness assessment. The initial assessment gives the fitness coordinator the baseline fitness level of those members to measure progress as the program continues. They allow for the employee and fitness coordinator to plan appropriate fitness and nutrition activities and track the quantitative changes in weight, strength, cardiovascular capacities, and mobility.

Ideally, the testing is the initial baseline tool used to monitor fitness improvement for the agency moving forward. Voluntary testing and participation should not be used for work assignments, promotion, or for any purpose other than for program data collection and promotion of employee health and wellness. The data analysis can be utilized to improve program goals or to identify deficiencies that could necessitate program changes.

As the program moves forward, some agencies move to mandatory fitness testing. In doing so, having policies in place about participation can assist with the transition. Furthermore, keeping a log of the test scores might help ease any employee anxiety over testing and meeting agency standards.

Fitness coordinators should share the program assessment results with agency management and the individual employee in accordance with data management guidelines. The dissemination of general fitness data can lead to greater participation for those that are not actively involved.
Offering health risk assessments and conducting employee surveys can gather valuable information for agencies attempting to gauge employee interests and determine what possible health risks employees might be facing.

**LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**WORKPLACE LEGISLATION**

If an agency chooses to implement a fitness program, it is important that the programming does not violate national, state, or local workplace statutes and legislation. Leadership should engage the agency’s legal division to make sure that all fitness policies and protocols also meet federal and state workplace guidelines. Agency leadership must keep in mind that there are differences in fitness and wellness programs and, therefore, different criteria are required. For example, if implementing a health-contingent fitness program, a wellness program that requires an individual to meet a series of requirements related to overall health to obtain a reward, there are very specific federal criteria that must be met.

In addition, it is important to consider the legal liability that comes with mandatory programs. Below are supportive references and considerations for mandatory programming.

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: Title VII prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. With respect to tests in particular, Title VII permits employment tests if they are not “designed, intended, or used to discriminate because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.”

- Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title I of the ADA prohibits private employers and state and local governments from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities based on their disabilities. The ADA specifies when an employer may require an applicant or employee to undergo a medical examination, i.e., a procedure or test that seeks information about an individual’s physical or mental impairments or health.

- The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) prohibits discrimination based on age (40 and over) with respect to any term, condition, or privilege of employment. Under the ADEA, covered employers may not select individuals for hiring, promotion, or reductions in force in a way that unlawfully discriminates based on age.

- Any agency thinking about starting a mandatory health-contingent wellness program should consult with the agency’s legal division for specific local, state, or other federal guidelines for program compliance.

**LIABILITY**

Whether using a fitness center within the agency or whether the agency has contracted with a private or a community-owned facility, every agency should provide a usage agreement with a liability release or assumption of risk to each officer or civilian utilizing the fitness center. This agreement should outline facility policies and procedures to which all fitness center users must strictly adhere to ensure the safety of themselves and others. The agency’s legal counsel can help draft standard liability language. The liability release form should be signed prior to using the fitness facility and kept on file within the department. It is incumbent upon each member to understand the risks involved with exercise and to ask questions if there is some portion of the release they do not understand or if they have any other concerns.
MOVING FORWARD

Each agency may approach fitness programming differently. While important, physical fitness is only one portion of wellness. Other types of programs can be implemented to provide a holistic wellness offering from the department. Utilizing a variety of different wellness programs encourages buy-in from those who are resistant to or unable to participate in fitness-focused programs. Wellness programs may include intellectual, social, emotional, and occupational components to include things like meditation workshops, nutritional planning exercises, sleep coaching, team-building activities, support groups, and daily or weekly wellness tips. Fitness program goals should be complementary and intertwined with the agency’s overall wellness goals. Changing the culture of a department to embrace physical wellness and integrate it into daily work life may not be easy, but it is a crucial step to ensure a healthier and safer department.

Fitness and wellness are important aspects of every officer’s job. A properly maintained program will help keep personnel healthier, happier, safer and less prone to injuries. A successful program is beneficial to the individual officers, the department as a whole, and the community the department serves.

If your department has a successful program or sample document to share, contact osw@theiacp.org.
RESOURCES

IACP Officer Safety and Wellness Resources


Support for officer safety and wellness is vital to the field and community, as well as the wellbeing of their colleagues, agencies, and families. The IACP believes in prioritizing officer safety every shift, every day. Explore the collection of IACP resources that support the safety, health, and wellness of every officer, and use these resources when developing comprehensive officer safety and wellness strategies. Learn about building resilience, injury prevention, peer support programs, physical fitness, proper nutrition, stress, mindfulness, suicide prevention, and more.

IACP Agency Assessment Tool and Action Planning Roadmap


From obtaining leadership buy-in to determining program priorities, agencies have a lot to consider when developing or updating a program. The information in the Officer Health and Wellness Agency Assessment Tool and Action Planning Roadmap is intended to serve as a guide for law enforcement executives or wellness program personnel who seek to establish or enhance an officer wellness program. Recognizing the diversity between departments and among wellness initiatives, this resource includes various approaches to help agencies determine which will work best for their personnel.

Eating Well on the Go Officer Nutrition Leadership Guide Fact Sheet


This fact sheet provides information on how agencies can provide education and support to improve officer nutrition and well-being, highlighting the impact nutrition has on an officer’s performance, ranging from long-term affects to shift-by-shift consequences.

Supporting Officer Safety Through Family Wellness: Nutritional Needs Infographic


Proper nutrition is an important factor in the job performance of police officers. This Nutrition Infographic includes tips for making proper eating and nutrition a priority for officers and families and contains ideas on how to make eating and preparing food more family friendly.


Sleep deprivation takes a toll on an officer’s wellbeing. This Sleep Infographic reviews the effects on the body and other dangers associated with sleep deprivation and offers helpful suggestions for families of law enforcement.
Officer and Family Wellness Series: Healthy Sleep Habits

https://vimeo.com/637540493/65156b35e3

This video provides an overview of the risks of not getting enough sleep on their health and provides some helpful suggestions for officers to improve their quality of sleep.

Health Watch: Check-In on Officer Physical Wellness With Your Doctor


This checklist provides officers with recommended questions to discuss with their physician to ensure that they are healthy and prepared for their duties both on-shift and at home.

Officer Health Watch Wallet Card


This wallet card provides considerations and information for officers to check for common health issues and potential lifestyle changes to help prevent these issues.

Officer and Family Wellness Series: Injury Reduction

https://vimeo.com/637542926/76200afc52

This video provides an overview of the risks that increase the chances of officers being injured while on duty and how they can reduce these risks.

BJA Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement Officers and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR)

https://www.valorforblue.org/Spotlight-On-Safety/PhysicalHealth

The VALOR Initiative is designed to protect the safety, health, and wellbeing of our nation's law enforcement officers and agencies. The initiative provides up-to-date tactical, skill-, and awareness-building education, technical assistance, and resources to our nation's law enforcement on officer safety and wellness that have a direct impact on their resilience and survival. It seeks to achieve its goals through a multifaceted approach that includes the delivery of training, research, resources, and partnerships that benefit 21st century law enforcement.
ENDNOTES


7 muscle and ligament strength


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