



Seattle Fire Department

Recruit Training Bi-weekly Messages

Strength – capacity for exertion or endurance

While the CPAT does simulate fire-related tasks, it DOES NOT at all compare to the physical requirements of the job or Recruit School. Recruits pull hose, throw ladders, and do other related tasks for 10 hours a day, 4 days a week throughout the program. Recruits work hard all day in turnout gear regardless of weather conditions. Wearing turnout gear, especially in sunlight, makes you warmer and strips your energy.

Recruits are expected to lift heavy objects (ex. Rescue saws, ladders, auto extrication tools) and carry them to the location they will be started and used. You will also be expected to lift loads up high or overhead. Often times, we use our equipment in unconventional methods to complete assigned tasks. Recruits are also expected to pull down on ladder halyards without a lot of body movement because ladders have to balance while you are raising them. They are also expected to use our equipment on sloped surfaces and punch ceilings or roofing after cutting vertical ventilation holes in roofs. Forcible entry techniques with hand tools on commercial doors require the use of flathead axes to strike other tools with force. This work is completed over and over each and every day of the program.

Recruits that have physical strength issues are often unable to display satisfactory performance, meet required time frames for drills and/or may not be able to learn all of the curriculum because every ounce of energy and concentration is going into lifting / using a piece of equipment instead of understanding what they are doing and how to do it correctly. Recruits with physical strength issues are also more likely to get injured. Common injuries include back strains, forearm strains, and bicep/tricep strains.

It is extremely important that all potential new firefighters work on strength / conditioning. Regardless of where you think you are in your preparation, if you have not done this job before, it can be hard to imagine how difficult this work can be. Most potential new hires can benefit greatly from improving their strength and conditioning. Consult with a trainer or specialist if you do not know how to target the necessary muscle groups correctly.

TIP: Improve strength and conditioning of essential muscle groups used in fire-fighting.