

PRT ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS

After safety, the most important element in the administration of the PRT is following the proper protocol. If possible, the sequence of testing and the equipment used during testing should be the same. The purpose of this is to diminish, if not avoid, the possibility of testing inconsistencies. The order for testing push-ups, sit-ups, and flexibility is left to the discretion of the Health and Wellness Instructor. It is recommended that the cardiovascular assessment (1.5-mile run or 3-mile walk) be the final event. The reasoning behind this is that the cardiovascular assessment taxes virtually all major muscle groups, which may have an adverse impact on the other events if they are performed after this test. If there are multiple instructors, it may be advisable to divide the participants up into even sections and rotate them among the push-up, sit-up, and flexibility tests.

Prior to the participants beginning, demonstrate the PRT event, except for the cardiovascular assessment, to ensure that the special agents fully understand the proper protocol and disqualifiers for each event. After the demonstration of each event, the instructors should ask if there is anyone who is unable to perform the event due to injury or illness, and should ensure that special agents with limited medical clearances do not participate if the particular test is restricted.

In order for the PRT to be meaningful, the testing protocols and disqualifiers **must** be followed for each of the five tested components of the assessment. The assessment charts for the individual events are located at the end of this section.

Prior to performing the assessments, warmup activities should be performed. These activities should include light calisthenics, stretching, and other low-intensity activities. The purpose of the warmup is to provide a mild stimulus to the muscle groups that will be used during the remainder of the assessment, thereby reducing the risk of injury.

FLEXIBILITY (TRUNK FLEXION) TEST

The flexibility testing protocol should be explained and demonstrated to all participants prior to performing the test. Following the demonstration, the instructors should ask if there are any questions and ascertain if there is anyone who feels he or she cannot perform the assessment. As previously mentioned, the instructors must also ensure that special agents with limited medical clearances do not perform restricted exercises.

1. Recommend to the participants that it is to their advantage to remove their shoes prior to performing this assessment. Depending on the style or type of shoe being worn, scores could be diminished due to the thickness of the sole. Additionally, removing the shoes creates a distance more similar to that of touching the floor while standing. If a participant does not wish to remove his or her shoes, he or she is not required to do so.
2. The participant will be seated on the floor with feet flush against the flexibility box. The feet should be 8 inches apart with toes pointing up.

3. The participant's legs must be straight and the calves **must** remain in contact with the floor at all times. If it is difficult for the special agent to do this, other participants may hold the special agent's legs down by placing one hand above the knee and the other hand below the knee on the shin. Never allow assisting participants to hold the special agent's legs down by pressing on the knees due to the potential for injury. It is important that the assisting participants do not otherwise interfere or assist with the special agent's assessment.
4. When the special agent is ready to perform the assessment, advise him or her to take a deep breath and exhale slowly while pushing the slide forward. The fingertips of both hands **must** remain in contact with the slide at all times. Once the special agent has reached his or her farthest extension point, the position **should** be held for a "two count." This will ensure the push was a true measure of the special agent's flexibility rather than a lunge.
5. The participant may have two more attempts, if desired, and the best of the three will be recorded. The special agent is not required to make more than one attempt if he or she does not wish to do so. Measure scores in quarter-inch increments rounding up to the nearest quarter-inch. For example, record a push of 16 1/8 inches as 16 1/4 inches.

Flexibility Disqualifiers

1. The push must be smooth and static. If the participant lunges or pushes the slide in a ballistic manner, the attempt will not count.
2. The fingertips of **both** hands **must** remain in contact with the slide at all times. If one hand comes off the slide during the push, the attempt will not count.
3. The legs must be straight and the calves **must** remain in contact with the ground at all times. If a participant's legs (calves) leave the ground, the attempt will not count. Be sure to advise participants that they may have other special agents assist in holding their legs down.

Sit-Up (Trunk Strength) Test

The sit-up test measures the individual's upper abdominal strength, lower back strength, and muscular endurance. The goal of the test is to perform the maximum number of correct sit-ups in 60 seconds. The testing protocol should be explained and demonstrated to all participants prior to performing the test. Following the demonstration, the instructors should ask if there are any questions and ascertain if there is anyone who feels he or she cannot perform the assessment. As previously mentioned, the instructors must also ensure that special agents with limited medical clearances do not perform restricted exercises.

1. Special agents begin the test lying on their backs with knees bent, heels flat on the floor. A partner may hold the participant's feet down during the test. The participant's hands

must be placed on the sides of the head. **Do not** allow the special agents to interlace their fingers behind the head. As participants become fatigued, there is a tendency to pull with hands, resulting in a risk of hyperextension of the neck.

2. The trunk is raised up and the special agent's elbows **must** touch his or her knees to receive credit for a proper repetition.
3. When returning to the down position, the special agent's shoulder blades **must** touch the floor before beginning the next repetition.
4. Either an instructor or an assisting participant should count the number of properly performed sit-ups. At the conclusion of the test, the assisting participant will give the score to the instructor for recording.
5. If necessary, a participant may rest in the "up" position, but cannot hold on to their legs in order to stay up.
6. Breathing should be as normal as possible; make sure the subject does not hold their breath as in the Valsalva maneuver.

Sit-Up Test Disqualifiers

1. During the "up" phase, if the special agent's elbows do not touch the knees, the sit-up will not be counted.
2. During the "down" phase, if the special agent's shoulder blades do not touch the floor before beginning the next repetition, the sit-up will not be counted.
3. If during the assessment the special agent stops in the "down" position, terminate the test for that individual and record the number of correctly executed sit-ups to that point.

Push-Up Test

Push-ups are used to assess the strength and endurance of the upper body muscle groups. The goal of the test is to perform the maximum number of correct push-ups in 60 seconds. The testing protocol should be explained and demonstrated to all participants prior to performing the test. Following the demonstration, the instructors should ask if there are any questions and ascertain if there is anyone who feels he or she cannot perform the assessment. As previously mentioned, the instructors must also ensure that special agents with limited medical clearances do not perform restricted exercises.

1. Special agents begin the test in the "up" position with their elbows locked out, body straight, hands placed slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, with fingers pointing

forward and both feet on the floor. A partner should be positioned either in front or to the side of the participant to observe, along with the instructor(s), the proper execution of the push-ups.

2. The participant must lower his or her body, while keeping the back straight, until the shoulders drop **below** the level of the elbows.
3. The participant must return to the “up” position, pushing until full elbow extension is achieved (without locking out the elbows) to receive credit for a properly executed push-up.
4. The assisting partner should count the number of properly executed push-ups and give this number to the instructor at the conclusion of the test.
5. If necessary, participants may rest in the “up” position.
6. The total number of correct push-ups in 1 minute is recorded as the score.

**Since traditional push-up standards are not available, females aged 50 or older may elect to perform modified push-ups. The modified push-up is performed on the hands and knees with the back straight and the hands slightly in front of the shoulders in the up position.

Push-Up Test Disqualifiers

1. During the “up” phase, if the special agent’s elbows do not fully extend before beginning the next repetition, do not count the push-up.
2. During the “down” phase, if the special agent’s shoulders are not lowered past the elbow level before returning to the “up” position, do not count the push-up.
3. If during the assessment, the special agent stops in the “down” position, including going to one’s knees (except for modified position), terminate the test for that individual and record the number of correctly executed push-ups to that point.

CARDIOVASCULAR ASSESSMENTS

The 1.5-mile run and 3-mile walk are used to assess an individual’s cardiovascular endurance and fitness. A special agent may choose to walk the entire 1.5 miles, but his or her performance will be evaluated using the 1.5-mile run assessment chart. The protocols for each of the above-mentioned exercises will be detailed separately. The testing protocols should be explained to all participants prior to performing the assessment. Following the explanation, the instructors should ask if there are any questions and ascertain if

there is anyone who feels he or she cannot perform the assessment. As previously mentioned, the instructors must also ensure that special agents with limited medical clearances do not perform restricted exercises.

1.5-Mile Run

1. If possible, the instructors should have more than one stopwatch available and have an assistant to count laps if there is a large group of participants being tested.
2. Instructors should caution participants about overexerting themselves and advise them to listen to their bodies and pace themselves. Non-runners may want to follow the guidance of “running the straights and walking the curves.”
3. If running on a quarter-mile track, the participants must complete six laps. The quickest route is on the inside lane, however, track courtesy should be observed. If a slower runner is about to be overcome by a faster runner, the faster runner should yell, “track!” Upon hearing this, the slower runner should move to the right to allow the faster runner to pass and then return to the inside lane once it is safe to do so.
4. All participants should start at the same time, preferably with the faster runners in the front. The instructors start the stopwatches on the word “GO!” Remember, it is advisable to have more than one timekeeper in the event of a stopwatch malfunction.
5. As participants pass by the timekeeper, the times should be called out. If running on a quarter-mile track, inform participants when they are at the halfway, mile, and final lap points.
6. As participants finish, call out their final times but ask them to remember it as well. When the assessment is completed, the special agents should check with the recorder to verify their time. All participants must complete the entire assessment unless they become ill or injured. **NO** pro-rating of times is allowed for slower participants.
7. As participants finish the assessment they **must** walk one lap (or the equivalent of a quarter mile if not on a track) as a cool down. This cool down should be performed on the outside lanes of the track or testing area in order to leave the inside lanes open for participants who are still running. At least one instructor **must** remain at the track until all participants have completed their cool down lap.
8. If a participant gets sick or injured during the test, instruct him or her to move quickly and safely to the outside of the track (or other designated area) so the instructors will know there is a problem.
9. During this type of testing, it is critical to have some type of medical support in place, especially during the 1.5-mile run. Emergency procedures should be formulated, approved by management, distributed and posted, and rehearsed.

10. Dangerous climate conditions (such as hot/humid weather) should be avoided and water or other fluids should be made available to the special agents upon completion of the assessment. Instructors should assess the participants' condition upon completion of the test to ensure that everyone is all right.

3-Mile Walk

The protocol for the 3-mile walk is the same as that of the 1.5-mile run except that the distance to be completed is 3 miles. In addition, advise participants doing the 3-mile walk of the following.

1. In order for the measurement charts for the 3-mile walk to be accurate, participants **must** keep one foot on the ground for the duration of the assessment. If an individual begins to “jog or run” the course, the participant will be disqualified because the measurement will be skewed.
 2. If runners and walkers are to be assessed at the same time on the same track, it is advisable to have the walkers perform the assessment to the right of the innermost lane until the runners are finished. This will minimize the risk of collision and injury due to special agents constantly shifting lanes. Once the runners are finished, the walkers should proceed to the innermost lane.
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