U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Border Patrol Agent Fitness Testing Fact Sheet

This is to inform you of the Border Patrol pre-employment fitness testing requirement for all applicants who are receiving a conditional offer of employment for a Border Patrol Agent position.

This package contains detailed information about the fitness testing procedures and how to prepare for the tests. **All conditional selectees must take and pass all three (3) fitness tests in order to continue with the hiring process.** The following are some key points about the testing.

Physical Demands of the Border Patrol Agent Position

The Border Patrol Agent position is a physically demanding law enforcement occupation with national security responsibilities. Agents are required to perform strenuous duties under rigorous environmental conditions. Duties require physical stamina, upper and lower body endurance, as well as the ability to hold and operate various firearms for extended periods of time. Some of the physically challenging tasks of this occupation include pursuing and apprehending suspects, walking and running long distances, climbing, jumping, moderate to heavy lifting, and swimming.

Administration of the preemployment fitness tests ensures that all new Border Patrol Agents are able to meet the physical demands of both training and day to day operations.

When and where will I take the fitness tests?

Fitness tests will be administered at the same time and location as your medical examination. While they occur immediately after the medical exam, the fitness tests are not medical tests. They are a separate and distinct preemployment requirement.

What are the tests?

Three tests will be administered:

- Push-Ups
- Sit-Ups
- 5 Minute Cardiovascular Step Test

Detailed information on test requirements including the standards for passing and photographic illustrations of the tests appear later in this packet.

Fitness testing is conducted in compliance with 5 CFR 339.203.

What do I need to bring for the tests?

- When you arrive for your medical examination you should dress in or bring clothing suitable for fitness testing including:
  - gym shorts/sweat pants and T-shirt
  - athletic shoes which provide good support and sweat socks
  - athletic support garments (including braces or supports routinely worn while working, e.g., back brace)
  - water is optional, but not provided at the test site

What if I have a medical condition that may affect completion of the fitness testing?

- You need to bring all pertinent medical information from your treating physician to the Border Patrol medical examination. The examining physician will determine if the fitness test will be administered.

What will happen if I am unable to pass the tests?

- Failure on any one of the tests means that you will not be hired for the Border Patrol Agent position. Your conditional offer of employment will be withdrawn. No retesting is allowed under U.S Customs and Border Protection (CBP) policy for candidates who fail any one of the tests. However, individuals who fail, and subsequently improve their level of physical fitness, may reapply for the Border Patrol Agent position under future vacancy announcements.

  NOTE: Applicant funded or free fitness tests of any kind, performed by any medical provider, fitness center, or organization will not be accepted in fulfillment of the agency physical fitness requirement.

How can I prepare for the fitness tests to increase my chances of passing?

- The underlying physical components being measured by the fitness tests are: the ability to move quickly with balance; upper and lower body strength; and aerobic capacity and endurance. If you are currently out of shape and are not regularly exercising, you may want to consult with your health care provider regarding a progressive exercise program. Your training regimen should include aerobic weight bearing activities such as stepping, brisk walking, jogging, running, push-ups, and sit-ups. To reduce the risk of neuromuscular injuries, it is important to start slowly with walking and stretching activities and progress gradually to more strenuous activities.

- To prepare for the test battery, practice the tests themselves on a gradual and progressive basis until you are able to complete them as required. Start with kneeling push-ups (if necessary) and progress gradually to full push-ups (see Six Week Push-up Improvement Program page 11). If unable to do sit-ups, pull yourself to the "up" position of the exercise using your arms (see Sit-ups, Special Instructions, page 7, figures 8-11 and Sit-up Training Program, page 14). Walk daily — gradually increasing the pace and distance. Progress to alternative walk/jog segments. Start taking the stairs instead of the elevator. After a few weeks, take the steps two at a time when climbing.

- Reduce the risk of injuries by not doing too much too soon. Follow these guidelines:
  - drink water prior to, during, and after exercise to stay adequately hydrated
  - maintain consistency in your physical fitness program — it is the key to success
  - get adequate rest and sleep to allow your body to recover between training sessions

- Trained professionals at local schools, YMCAs, health clubs, and park facilities will be able to give you additional suggestions and guidance. Additionally, there are many excellent books on prudent exercise programs.

- Track your progress on the Daily Fitness Training Log (page 10) and bring it with you to the PFT.

Border Patrol Agent Fitness Testing Instructions

General Information

- Passing all three (3) preemployment fitness tests is a requirement
- Study these instructions carefully
- Physically condition yourself to perform these tests
- Avoid heavy physical exercise 48 hours prior to testing
- Refrain from smoking or drinking caffeine on the test day
- Do not eat a large meal within two hours of testing
- Tests are performed in this order:
    1. Push-ups
    2. Sit-ups
    3. Step Test
- Practice is provided before the step test
- There will be a rest period of three minutes between tests

Push-up Test

The Push-up Test is a timed test, requiring you to complete twenty (20) proper form push-ups in sixty (60) seconds. The depth of the push-up will be measured using a foam block. Rests between push-ups, if needed, must be taken in the "up position." The Test Administrator will evaluate your form during the test and will instruct you when to start and stop.

Sit-up Test

The Sit-up Test is a timed test, requiring you to complete twenty five (25) proper form sit-ups in sixty (60) seconds. The Test Administrator will hold your feet during this test and instruct you when to start and stop.

Step Test

The Step Test is a timed test, requiring you to step up and down on a fourteen (14) inch high bench at a rate of one hundred twenty (120) steps per minute for a total time of five (5) minutes. An audio tape, containing a constant beat and verbal cues, is used to maintain the cadence.

Instructions for Push-ups

This test measures dynamic muscular strength and endurance of the muscles of the upper body.

- Start in the "up position" with your elbows locked and your hands spaced shoulder width apart, with the thumbs aligned with the crease of your shoulder. Keep your body in a straight line with your feet close together (Figure 1).
- Once in the "up position," the Test Administrator will place a foam block 8" long and 4" high in an area directly below your sternum (Figure 2).

Figure 1

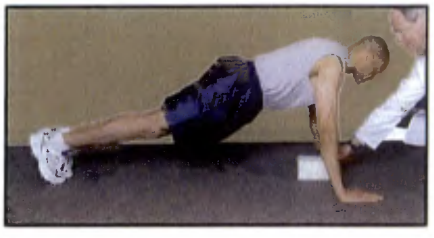

Figure 2

- Upon the command, "Go," keeping your body straight, drop down until your chest touches the foam block (Figure 3).
- Then, maintaining a straight body, push up until your elbows are straight. This completes one push-up (Figure 4).

NOTE: Both men and women are required to touch their sternum (breast bone) to the foam block. Push-ups where only breast tissue touches the block will not count.

Figure 3

Figure 4

- This is a timed test requiring the completion of twenty (20) push-ups — using proper form within sixty (60) seconds (Figure 5).
- If you must rest, do so in the "up position" only (Figure 6).

Figure 5

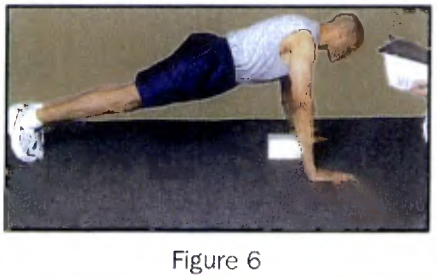

Figure 6

Special Instructions

- Start on the command "Go."
- The test will stop:
  - when the Test Administrator confirms the completion of twenty (20) proper form push-ups OR
  - when you hear "Time" OR
  - when you can not perform any more push-ups OR
  - when your knees touch the ground.

Push-ups performed incorrectly will not count.

- Sagging back (Figure 7).
- Raised buttocks (Figure 8).
- Feet spread wide (Figure 9).
- 1/2 push-ups, when you do not touch the foam block, or where you do not come all the way up to an elbows straight position (Figure 10).

Incorrect

Figure 7

Incorrect

Figure 8

Incorrect

Figure 9

Incorrect

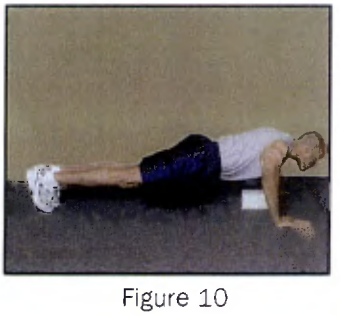

Figure 10

Touching your knees to the ground at any time will end the test!

Incorrect

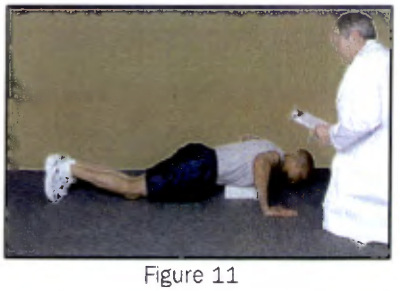

Figure 11

Requirement

- Twenty (20) proper form push-ups, done sequentially within sixty (60) seconds.
- Rest between push-ups, if needed, must be taken in the "up position".

Instructions for Sit-ups

This test measures the dynamic strength and endurance of the abdominal muscles. Strong abdominal muscles reduce the risk of lower back injury.

- Start with your back on the floor and knees at a 90-degree angle. There should be an 18" to 21" separation between your heels and buttocks. Place your hands behind your head, with the fingers straight and your palms cupping or touching your ears, to assume the required "down position" (Figure 1).
- To get into the required "up position," contract (tighten) your abdominal muscles to lift your head and upper body off the floor to the point where your elbows touch your knees or upper thighs (Figure 2). Let the weight of the head rest on your fingertips throughout the sit-up.
- Return to the starting position so that your shoulder blades touch the ground. This completes one repetition (Figure 3).

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

- To assist you, the Test Administrator will hold your feet down on the floor.
- The test administrator will count the number of sit-ups completed correctly and make sure you maintain proper positioning during the test. Sit-ups performed incorrectly will not count. If you stop before the test administrator counts 25 (twenty five) you will fail the test.
- This is a timed test requiring the completion of twenty five (25) sit-ups within sixty (60) seconds (Figure 4).

Figure 4

- Start on the command "Go" and stop when the Test Administrator confirms the completion of twenty five (25) sit-ups or you hear "Time."

NOTE: When performing this exercise place your hands behind the head with your fingers straight and your palms cupping or touching your ears. Let the weight of the head rest on your fingers. Do not pull or jerk with your hands to assist in the sit-up as it may cause neck strain or injury.

Special Instructions

- If you must rest, do so only in the "up position" (Figure 6). Staying down with your back flat on the floor for more than two seconds will terminate the test (Figure 7).

Figure 6

Incorrect

Figure 7

- If you get stuck in the "down position" immediately pull yourself to the "up position" with your hands. This sit-up will not count, nor will the return to the starting position following this assisted movement (Figures 8-11).

Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

- Place your hands behind the head with your fingers straight and let the weight of the head rest on your fingers. (Figure 12).

Figure 12

- If you raise your buttocks off the floor during a sit-up, it will not count. Return to the starting position and start over (Figure 14).

Incorrect

Figure 13

Requirement

- Twenty five (25) sit-ups in sixty (60) seconds.

Instructions For The Step Test

This test measures cardiovascular fitness.

Practice Stepping to Cadence

You will be allowed a practice trial of stepping on and off the bench (up, up, down, down) in cadence with the audio tape.

Your Test Administrator will stand next to you during the practice session and direct you to start stepping in cadence.

When it is time to step onto the bench, the Test Administrator will take a high step and move his or her hand in a upward motion to indicate the transition from marching to bench stepping. When you see the high step and upward hand movement, step onto the bench.

Once the practice session is over the Test Administrator will move to a position in front of you to observe the timed test.

Timed Step Test

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

- Stand in front of the bench (Figure 1).
- There will be a pause after the practice stepping. Instructions on the audio tape will then direct you to start the timed step test by marching.
- When directed step up with the left foot (Figure 2) then
- Step up with the right foot (Figure 3) then
- Step down with the left foot (Figure 4) then
- Step down with the right foot (Figure 5).
- Step to the up, up, down, down cadence.
- Continue stepping for 5 minutes. Stop only when instructed to do so on the audio tape or by the test administrator.

Reasons for Failing the Step Test

- Failure to step for the entire 5 minutes.
- Unable to maintain stepping cadence (up, up, down, down) in accordance with audio tape for more than 2 CONSECUTIVE SEQUENCES – with "up, up, down, down" being one sequence.
- Failure to maintain stepping cadence a total of 6 up, up, down, down CADENCE SEQUENCES during the entire 5 minute test.
- Pushing on legs to assist in stepping (Figure 6).

Incorrect

Figure 6

Bring with you to Preeemployment Fitness Test

Border Patrol Agent
Daily Fitness Training Log

Name: _____

Month: _____

Check box of Activity Performed
or Enter Activity Number*

Starting Weight _____

Ending Weight _____

DATE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
WARM-UP																															
AEROBIC EXERCISE																															
WEIGHT TRAINING																															
STRETCHING/FLEXIBILITY																															
TEST SIMULATION																															
PUSH-UP																															
SIT-UP																															
BENCH STEP																															
COOL DOWN																															

*Activity Number Key

Aerobic Exercise
1 Walk
2 Jog/Run
3 Bicycle
4 Swim
5 Cross Trainer

REGULAR WORKOUTS
ARE THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Weight Training
6 Free Weights
7 Machine Weights
8 Variable Resistance

COPY THIS LOG BEFORE FILLING OUT

Six Week Push-up Improvement Program

- Warm up for a few minutes by jogging in place for 2 minutes. Then do some light calisthenic exercises such as arm circles, arm crosses, shoulder rolls, and ½ jumping jacks (using arms only).
- Do specific push-up training for 10 to 15 minutes, 3 days a week, with a day off between training sessions. Example: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.
- Training must be progressive in nature with both the intensity and duration increasing each week of the program.
- During the six week program you will perform various exercises from 15 – 40 seconds, with rest intervals between exercises ranging from 15 – 60 seconds. (See chart).
- Cool down for about 5 minutes by walking in place and stretching the arms.

WEEK 1

Mon-Wed-Fri

	Type of Push-up	Time in seconds	Rest Interval in seconds
1	Regular with normal hand position	30	60
2	Regular with wide hands	30	60
3	Regular with close hands	30	60
4	Regular with normal hand position	20	60
5	Regular from knees	30	End

Total Time: 6 minutes 20 seconds

WEEK 2

Mon-Wed-Fri

	Type of Push-up	Time in seconds	Rest Interval in seconds
1	Elevated feet with normal hand position	30	45
2	Regular with wide hands	30	45
3	Regular with close hands	30	45
4	Regular with normal hand position	30	45
5	Regular with normal hand position	20	End

Total Time: 5 minutes 20 seconds

WEEK 3

Mon-Wed-Fri

	Type of Push-up	Time in seconds	Rest Interval in seconds
1	Elevated feet with normal hand position	30	30
2	Regular with close hands	30	30
3	Regular with wide hands	30	30
4	Regular with normal hand position	30	30
5	Regular with close hands	20	30
6	Regular from knees	20	End

Total Time: 5 minutes 10 seconds

WEEK 4

Mon-Wed-Fri

	Type of Push-up	Time in seconds	Rest Interval in seconds
1	Partner resisted with normal hand position	20	20
2	Partner resisted with wide hands	20	20
3	Partner resisted with close hands	20	20
4	Regular with normal hand position	30	20
5	Regular with normal hand position	25	20
6	Regular with normal hand position	20	End

Total Time: 3 minutes 55 seconds

WEEK 5

Mon-Wed-Fri

	Type of Push-up	Time in seconds	Rest Interval in seconds
1	Partner resisted with normal hand position	30	15
2	Elevated feet with wide hands	30	15
3	Elevated feet with regular hands	30	15
4	Regular with normal hand position	15	10
5	Regular with close hands	15	10
6	Regular from knees	15	End

Total Time: 3 minutes 20 seconds

WEEK 6

Mon-Wed-Fri

	Type of Push-up	Time in seconds	Rest Interval in seconds
1	Partner resisted with normal hand position	40	15
2	Regular with normal hand position	30	15
3	Regular with close hands	30	15
4	Regular with wide hands	30	15
5	Regular from knees	30	End

Total Time 3 minutes 40 seconds

Training Notes

- Participants should try to follow the program on a week – to – week basis. Do as much as possible for each set of push-ups. If unable to finish the work interval of 15 – 60 seconds for the designated exercise, try an easier type of exercise for the remainder of the work interval. It is imperative that you continue to perform the push-up movement (using easier exercises if necessary) throughout the entire work period to obtain maximum results.
- If you miss a workout, make it up as soon as possible before the next scheduled training session to ensure adequate rest and recovery
- Adapt the training program to your needs but, follow the recommended work and rest intervals for each week.
- If you have access to weight training equipment add one (1) set of 8–12 repetitions to muscle failure for each of the following muscle groups: triceps, pectorals, and anterior deltoid.

Figure 1. Standard Push-up

Figure 2. Push-up with wide hands

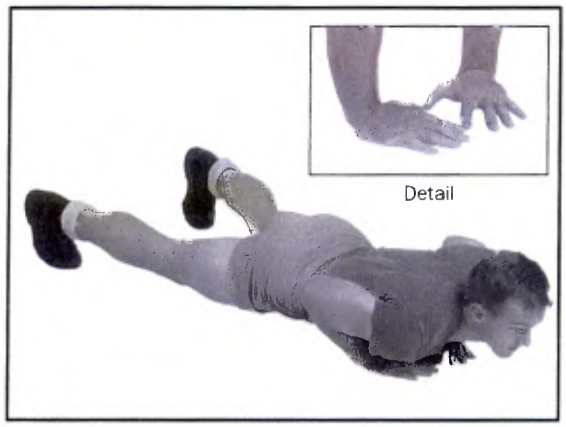

Figure 3. Push-up with close hands

Figure 4. Elevated feet Push-up using stability ball

Figure 5. Regular Push-up from knees

Note: This is a training exercise. All applicants (male and female) will be required to perform standard push-ups (figure 1) during the PFT.

Photo Credits: Figures 1-3 from The Complete Guide to Navy Seal Fitness. Published by Hatherleigh Press. *(www.hatherleighpress.com).*

Figure 4 from ACE Group Strength Training Second Edition 2004. American Council on Exercise, San Diego. *Reprinted with permission (www.aceftness.org).*

Figure 5 from ACE Personal Trainer Manual Third Edition 2005. American Council on Exercise, San Diego. *Reprinted with permission (www.aceftness.org).*

Sit-up Training Program

The **Specificity of Training** principle states that the more similar the fitness training is to the task to be performed, the greater its likelihood to produce a positive result. In other words, to do more sit-ups – do more sit-ups!

1. Start by performing as many proper form sit-ups as you can in 60 seconds. Make sure you follow the guidelines specified on pages 6 & 7.
2. When performing this exercise place your hands behind the head with your fingers straight and your palms cupping or touching your ears. Let the weight of the head rest on your fingers. Do not pull or jerk with your hands to assist in the sit-up as it may cause neck strain or injury.

Illustrations and training advice provided by Vladmir Artemov, Olymic and World Champion and USA Gymnastics.

3. Train at 60 to 80% of that level. For example if you did 10 sit-ups in 60 seconds, do repetitions of 6 to 8.
4. Perform 3 sets of sit-ups at 60 to 80% of your 60-second max, every other day (three times per week). Rest 2 minutes between sets. To increase abdominal strength during repetitive sets, go up fast and come down slow. Record your progress on the Daily Fitness Training Log on page 10.

   Training Tip: Contracting the abdominals during this exercise is the key to building abdominal strength. Exhale on exertion (the upward motion of the sit-up) and consciously contract the abdominals all the way up while continuing to blow out. Inhale on recovery (on the way down) and continue to hold tension in your abdominals.
5. Further gains can be achieved by stopping at two points on the down portion of the exercise and holding each position for 5 seconds.
6. Do "Reverse Sit –Ups" by starting in the up position with your elbows touching your knees and curl down until your shoulders are about 6" off the floor then return to the starting position without touching your back to the floor. Start with 5 at the end of your work-out and add 1 with each workout until you get to 20. (View the CD for proper recovery technique from the down position).

7. Once a week perform the 60-second max sit up test. Adjust the number of sit-ups done during repetitive sets accordingly.
8. Once you have accomplished 6 workouts (approximately 2 weeks) add an additional 3 sets of abdominal crunches following the completion of 3 sets of sit-ups. Do the same number of repetitions per set as sit-ups.

   Perform Abdominal Crunch progression #2 as found on the Internet at

   http://www.dietsite.com/dt/exerciseplanner/CrunchProgression2.asp

CAUTION: If back pain develops, discontinue these exercises and get medical assistance.

ATTENTION APPLICANT

THIS DOCUMENT LISTS THE PHYSICAL FITNESS REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BORDER PATROL AGENT POSITION.

- ## Preemployment Fitness Test (PFT)

1. **Push-Ups: 20 in 60 seconds (measures dynamic muscular strength and endurance of the muscles of the upper body). Relates to Bench Press.**

2. **Sit-Ups: 25 in 60 seconds (measures the dynamic strength and endurance of the abdominal muscles). Strong abdominal muscles reduce the risk of lower back injury.**

3. **Step Test: 14" bench @ 120 steps/minute for 5 minutes (measures cardiovascular or aerobic fitness)**

- ## Pre-employment Fitness Test -2 (PFT-2)

1. **Push-Ups: 20 in 60 seconds (measures dynamic muscular strength and endurance of the muscles of the upper body).**

2. **Sit-Ups: 25 in 60 seconds (measures the dynamic strength and endurance of the abdominal muscles). Strong abdominal muscles reduce the risk of lower back injury.**

3. **220 Yard Run in 46 seconds or less (measures anaerobic fitness)**

4. **1.5 Mile Run in 15 minutes or less**

- ## Border Patrol Academy

1. **Upon entry to the Border Patrol Academy selectees will perform the following fitness tests:**
   - **Push-Ups — as many as possible in 60 seconds**
   - **Sit-Ups — as many as possible in 60 seconds**
   - **Pull Ups — as many as possible (no time limit)**
   - **Run 1.5 miles as fast as possible**

2. **Physical Training (PT) at the US Border Patrol Academy is very intense, requiring 45 to 60 minutes of mat room work involving jumping jacks, push-ups, sit-ups, strengthening exercises and, on average, a three (3) mile run at a nine to ten minute per mile pace. Initially this training is 2-3 days per week, then increases to 5 days per week after the midterm.**

3. **Border Patrol Graduation Requirements:**
   - **1.5 mile run in 13 minutes or less**
   - **220 yard dash in 46 seconds or less**
   - **Complete Confidence Course in 2 min 30 seconds or less**

Increase Your Chances of Passing the Border Patrol Agent Preemployment Fitness Test (PFT)

- View the enclosed **Border Patrol Agent Applicant Fitness Test Information CD.**

- Listen to the **Narrated Border Patrol Agent Applicant Fitness Test** found at www.cbp.gov
  >Careers
  >Border Patrol Agent
  >Increase your chances of passing the PFT
  >Narrated Border Patrol Agent PFT

  Follow along using the illustrations in the **Border Patrol Agent Fact Sheet** to learn how the PFT is administered. This will give you a big advantage when you arrive for the PFT.

- You should make sure it is safe for you to exercise by checking with your physician or medical caregiver prior to beginning or changing your current level of exercise.

- Once your physician/caregiver clears you to participate in a fitness-training program, practice the PFT by following the instructions on the **Narrated Border Patrol Agent Fitness Test** posted on the Internet.

Following these steps will greatly increase your chances of passing the PFT.