



National Firefighter Selection Test Training Programme





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So you're considering becoming a firefighter?

Anyone hoping to become a firefighter has to pass a fitness test to prove they're up to the physical demands of the job.

Regardless of your gender, age or lifestyle, the test is the same for everyone. Forget the stereotypes of what a firefighter looks like.

We believe that with the right training and dedication most people can pass the physical test to become a modern day firefighter.

We've designed this booklet to give you the knowledge and confidence you need to help you pass your physical assessment.

We'll describe what the National Firefighter Selection Tests involve and provide workouts to help you train to be fit enough to be a firefighter.

With the right level of personal commitment to these plans, you'll see genuine progress, but if you have any further questions then drop us an email at service.fitness@essex-fire.gov.uk

Good luck with your training!

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Fitness Team

What's the difference between an on-call firefighter and a wholetime firefighter?

Wholetime firefighters' primary employment is with the fire service - they work a 42 hour week, which is typically spread over two day shifts followed by two night shifts, and they are based at the fire station during these hours.

On-call firefighters usually have another primary employer. They live or work within five minutes of an on-call fire station, going about their everyday lives, and immediately make their way to the station when they are called. They are paid for being available to respond as well as every time they attend an incident.

Both wholetime and on-call firefighters are professionally trained firefighters and need to pass the same tests to join the fire service.

Find out more by visiting join.essex-fire.gov.uk

The National Firefi

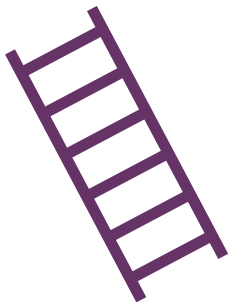
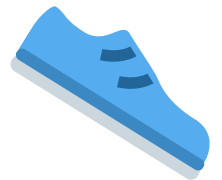
The National Firefighter Selection Tests form part of the recruitment process for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

In order to become a firefighter, you'll need to pass seven physical tests. By following this guide you should be able to complete them.

The seven tests include:

Bleep Test / Shuttle Run

You'll run between two lines, 20 metres apart. You'll hear a bleep, and before you hear it again you'll need to run back to the other line. The time between each bleep decreases for each level. You'll need to reach level 8.8 to pass.



Ladder Lift

This is a test of upper body strength. You will bicep curl the bar to chest height and then shoulder press the bar making sure it passes the 1.9m mark.

After a warm up lift of 20 kilograms, you'll need to lift an approximate weight of 30 kilograms.

Equipment Carry

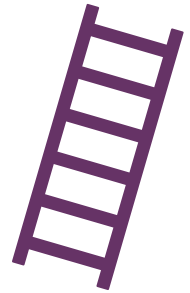
As the name suggests, you'll need to carry a range of equipment typically found on a fire engine within a certain amount of time. This test will include running within a set amount of time and tests your aerobic fitness, strength and endurance.



ghter Selection Tests

Ladder Climb

The Ladder Climb will build your confidence of working at height. To pass, you'll need to demonstrate a correct leg lock (which will be taught by instructors), which means leaning back from the ladder with arms outstretched before identifying a symbol shown on the ground below you.



Casualty Evacuation

Using both your upper and lower body strength, you'll need to walk backwards while dragging a 55 kilogram dummy around a 30 metre course in a set amount of time.

Confined Space Crawl

Testing your agility and ability to work in a small space, you will crawl around half of an enclosed route with clear vision, before wearing a breathing apparatus facemask / blackout mask to finish within a set time.



Manual Dexterity

Against the clock, you will assemble and disassemble a piece of firefighting equipment using pictorial and written instructions.

Training tools: RPE Scale

The Rate of Perceived Exertion Scale (RPE Scale) is a guide of how hard you are working during training and fitness tests.

During a cardio workout you will ideally be working between the points 7 (hard) and 8 (very hard) to ensure you are getting the most efficient results.

- 1 - Minimal effort
- 2 - Very light
- 3 - Fairly light
- 4 - Moderate
- 5 - Quite hard
- 6 - Moderately hard
- 7 - Hard
- 8 - Very hard
- 9 - Near maximum effort
- 10 - Maximum effort

Example training plan



This is just an example of a training week. We encourage you to tailor your training days to suit your working or personal life and make it personal to you.

When creating your own schedule:

- Include two strength workouts and two cardio workouts, including one interval style for cardio.
- Don't train for more than two days in a row – have that rest day you've earned!
- If you can only include three training sessions a week, alternate them so that you do two strength and one cardio and then vice versa the following week.

Finding your starting point

You're almost set to start your training.

As you begin, set your starting points to track your progress.

Don't worry if you don't meet the final target on your first try - this is to give you a baseline, to show how you're improving throughout your schedule and help you get a feel for what you can do initially, so you don't over-exert yourself too quickly.

The most important thing here is to ensure you warm up properly and don't rush into the exercises too quickly.

For example, before you start a strength workout do a set of 15 reps on the bicep curl and shoulder press using light weights.

Aerobic test

Complete 2.4 kilometres as fast as you can and record your time.



Target: 12
minutes

Strength tests

Choose a weight and perform two bicep curl and shoulder press reps.

If you were able to lift the weight rest for one minute, then increase the weight and attempt two reps again. Continue until you reach a weight you cannot lift for two reps.



Target: 30
kilograms

Repeat these tests every three weeks to track your improvement!

Warming up

Before beginning your warm up, make sure it is specific to the type of training session you are about to do.

Going running?

Start with a brisk walk, then increase to a light jog and then your normal running speed.

Lifting weights?

If you're weight training then perform the light bodyweight circuit below to help increase blood flow to the muscles in preparation for your actual training session.

The first sets on the first few exercises also have a warm up set included to help further prepare your muscles and joints for the heavier weights.

Your warm up circuit

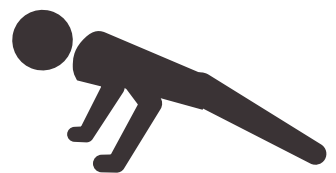
This warm up circuit will help raise your heart rate before you begin exercising. Spend 30 seconds on each exercise, rest for 30 seconds inbetween. Complete the circuit twice and you'll be good to go.



Jumping
Jacks



High Knees



Push Ups

Workout top tips

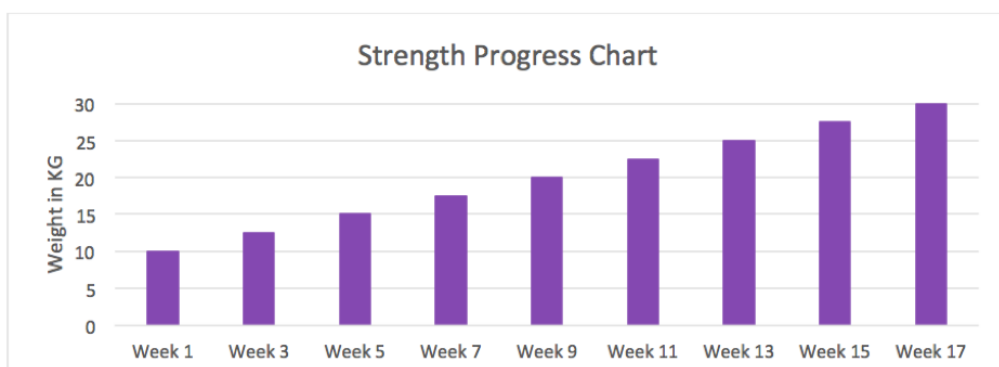
Cardio

- Completing 2.4km in 12 minutes will give you a good guideline to feel more confident about your speed and aerobic capacity for passing the bleep test.
- You should also use interval style training (bursts of sprinting and jogging) alongside traditional running to increase your fitness further.
- If you have access to a 20 metre bleep test or can mark one out yourself, give it a go – but remember that it is a test, not a training method.
- By following this training schedule and using the different styles of cardio training, you will be able to increase your chances of passing the bleep test successfully.

Strength

Number of sets	Number of reps	Weight	Example
1 (warm up)	10	5 kilogram lighter than your final set	5 kg
3	5	2.5 kilogram lighter than your final set	7.5 kg
1	2	5 kilogram heavier than your final set	10 kg

Aim to increase the weight you lift by 2.5kg every 3 weeks as shown in the graph below. As an example, if your max bicep curl or shoulder press was 10kg and you increased that weight by 2.5kg every 3 weeks, then you would be more than likely to achieve the pass level in 17 weeks. So don't rush yourself or get frustrated if you start out with lighter weights!



Your workout plan:

Cardio

Workout one: continuous cardio

Warm up

Use light to moderate intensity on any cardio machine (for example a treadmill or stepper), go for a run for 10 minutes or use the warm up circuit provided.

Training

Run for 30 to 40 minutes at a steady pace, working at 7 (hard) on the RPE scale.

Workout two: interval cardio

Warm up

Again, use any cardio machine, go for a run at a light to moderate intensity for 10 minutes or use the warm up circuit provided.

Training

Jog for one minute (at 7 on the RPE scale), then sprint for 30 seconds (9 on the RPE scale). Repeat this 15 times.

Your sprint speed should be around 2-3 kilometres per hour faster than your jog.

Your jog speed can change at any point, provided you are still working at the correct RPE levels.



Top tip: Search '20m Bleep Test (Complete Test)' by Adam Howard on Spotify, mark out two lines which are 20 metres apart, and give it a go yourself!

Your workout plan:

Strength

Warm up

Use light to moderate intensity on any cardio machine (for example a treadmill or stepper) for 10 minutes or use the warm up circuit provided.

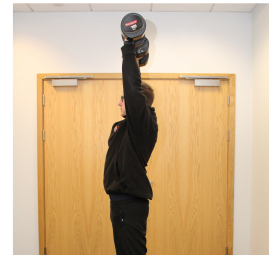
Dumbbell or barbell bicep curl (Final target = 30 kilograms)

1 set of 10 reps (warm up set)
3 sets of 5 reps
1 set of 2 reps



Dumbbell or barbell shoulder press (Final target = 30 kilograms)

1 set of 10 reps (warm up set)
3 sets of 5 reps
1 set of 2 reps



Dumbbell squat (target = 20 kilograms)

straight into Farmers walk
(target = 20 kilograms)

5 sets of 2 squats then 20 steps



Dumbbell deadlift (Target = 30 kilograms)

(Target = 30 kilograms)

5 sets of 5 reps



Rest for 60 - 90 seconds between each set on each exercise.

Exercise instructions

Dumbbell or barbell bicep curl

1. Start in a standing position with your feet apart and your knees relaxed.
2. Grasp the barbell / dumbbells with your hands also shoulder width apart.
3. Your grip should be underhand (palms facing upwards)
4. Stand upright and let the bar / dumbbells hang in front of your thighs.
5. Keep your elbows tucked into your side.
6. Bend at your elbows to curl the bar / dumbbells to shoulder level.
7. Pause shortly at this top position.
8. Slowly lower the bar / dumbbells back to your starting position.
9. Keep your back straight throughout the movement.



Dumbbell or barbell shoulder press

Dumbbells

1. Position the dumbbells to the sides of each of your shoulders, with your elbows below your wrists.
2. Press the dumbbells upwards until your arms are extended above your head.
3. Lower them back to the sides of your shoulders and repeat.

Barbell

1. Grasp the barbell with slightly wider than shoulder width overhand grip. Position the bar near your upper chest.
2. Press the bar upward until your arms are extended overhead.
3. Return them to your upper chest and repeat.



Dumbbell squat

1. Stand with the dumbbells grasped to your sides
2. Squat down by bending your hips back while allowing your knees to bend forward. Keep your back straight and your knees pointed in the same direction as feet.
3. Your knees should not pass your toes.



Farmers walk with dumbbells

1. Squat down between two dumbbells and grasp one in each hand
2. Lift the dumbbells from the floor using your legs. Stand holding the dumbbells with your arms straight down to your sides.
3. Walk for the required distance.

Dumbbell or Barbell Deadlift

1. With your feet flat beneath the bar / dumbbells, squat down and grasp it with shoulder width or slightly wider overhand grip.
2. Lift the bar / dumbbells by fully extending your hips and knees,
3. At the top of the lift, pull your shoulders back if you notice they're rounded.
4. Return the weights to the floor by bending your hips back while allowing your knees to bend forward.
5. Keep your back straight and knees pointed in the same direction as your feet. Repeat.



Training log: Strength

Stay focused on your targets by using this training log template to create your own plan and record your progress.

Set 5				
Set 4				
Set 3				
Set 2				
Set 1				
	Bicep curl	Shoulder press	Dumbbell squat and farmers walk	Deadlift

Glossary

Interval training - Training which consists of alternating high and low intensity – for example, repetitions of jogging and sprinting.

RPE scale - The Rate of Perceived Exertion Scale, known as the RPE Scale, is a guide of how hard you are working during training and fitness tests. It's based on how difficult something feels to you, so is different for each person.

Reps and sets - A rep (repetition) is a single time you perform an exercise, and a set is the number of cycles of reps that you complete.

For example, if you wanted to complete three reps of a bicep curl, you would lift the dumbbell three times.

If you then took a short break of 60 to 90 seconds and repeated the process again you would have done two sets of this exercise.



Barbell



Dumbbells

Notes

Disclaimer

Before beginning any strenuous exercise programme, consult your doctor. Essex County Fire and Rescue Service disclaim any liability personal or professional, resulting from the misapplication of any of the training procedures described in the programme. If at any time you feel short of breath, chest pain or significant discomfort stop and consult your doctor.

This programme offers general health and fitness advice. It is not a replacement for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

while we believe that for most people, following this programme will lead to their desired results, all exercise programmes depend on the individual. Results could be affected by the effort and commitment of the individual, however in some circumstances even where an individual follows our programme, they may not achieve the desired results.



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