

16 EASY POINTS BEFORE YOU EVEN GRADE

After witnessing many candidates unprepared for the fitness test section of their Black Belt Grading, I felt compelled to write an essay to guide students towards improving their fitness to the level required by this most challenging grading.

In this essay, you will find an introduction to training, nutrition, associated exercises and a sample training schedule.

The fitness test is easy to prepare for, the hard part is the commitment and determination that you need.

The Black Belt Techniques Handbook states.

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There is a run 2.4 km in length

Bag work consisting of three two minutes rounds

Front Plank with a duration of 4 minutes

Push ups 30 for females and 50 for males

Remember to keep a training diary so you can keep a check on your progress.

Working with a training partner will help you to sustain motivation in the lead up to your grading. If possible go to other clubs for extra training and if time allows at the end of the training session do your press ups and front plank to improve your endurance towards the fitness test at the end of your first full day of grading.

Most people do not realise that for every 30 seconds front plank that are completed a half point is gained. So, when the times are called out and you have gone 5 or 10 seconds into that next timed section there is no point in

stopping until those 30 seconds are completed, it is wasted energy. Push through the next 30 seconds and you have gained another ½ point.

If you have followed a training schedule you should be able to meet the requirements. But remember that every push up has to go down to the fist height of your partner or it is not counted by your partner. Remember to use your integrity here and only call out the number your partner has told you. It is easier to inhale when you go down and exhale when you come up.

Download the Master Paul McPhail Running Schedule (2.4 ks of sheer hell), it will make you the best runner that you can be. It is the last activity of day one so give it your all. More than likely you will come across one injury or another while training so take this into account in the run up to your grading and deal with it with a good Physiotherapist. Ask where the running route for the Grading is and run it a few times before the Grading to familiarise yourself with it.

With the bag work it is important that you have a good bag holder with a loud voice so this means you! Do not call out fancy kicks, keep to the basics to help your partner look good. Hold the bag firmly and push it into their kick.

Be physically prepared it is tiring. Keep your hands up, learn your rhythm to give solid kicks. The holder may call out the kicks in rapid succession but move to your own beat not theirs. Tell them which kicks are your favourite as they will look best for you. If you have injuries that will not allow you to do certain kicks then let them know. You want all your kicks to look and sound powerful. Breathe out with each kick it will improve your power.

Eating the correct foods will have a huge impact on your performance leading up to your grading and during. It has to start leading up to your grading or even before. Eating whole foods will sustain energy and help repair muscles. Eating a banana after each training session is very beneficial. Snacking on nuts during the day instead of cakes or biscuits. Spirulina smoothies, seeds and fresh fruit are great for the training body. Spirulina can be bought from Health Food shops. Extra vitamin C, multi vitamins and supplements are important as the body will be using up everything it has plus its reserves.

You will need on average 13 cups for men and 9 cups for women of water from beverages depending on size, age time of year and how much exercise you are doing. You will also need an extra 2-3 cups of fluid from high water content foods such as fruit, vegies, smoothies made, milk consumed and pure juices.

Your water can be flavoured with lemon and orange slices or mint and cucumber.

If you find it difficult consuming water then break it down into sections during the day where you have to have consumed a certain amount.

Associated exercises are also beneficial.

For the Plank you could try

Straight Arm – in the prone position keep the arms straight, vertical to your shoulders.

Alternating Leg Lifts with straight arms – in the prone position keep your arms straight, vertical to your shoulders then lift one leg off the floor for 15 seconds then the other. Do this at least 5 times for each leg.

Alternating leg and arm lifts – In the prone position keep your arms straight, vertical to your shoulders then lift one arm and the opposite leg off the ground for 5 seconds. Then repeat with the other arm and opposite leg.

For the push ups you could try

Explosive push ups – in the push up position with your chin close to the ground, push upwards explosively and try to clap your hands together before coming back to the push up position. Start these in sets of 3 and work your way up.

Wide grip push ups – Get into your normal push up position but move your hands one hand width outwards then continue with your push ups. Once you have mastered your push up in this way try to move your hands another hand width outwards.

Staggered push ups – in the normal push up position put one hand slightly forward and the other hand slightly back. Again, start these in sets of 3 and work your way up.

Close Grip push ups – get into your normal push up position but move your hands one hand width closer together then continue with your push ups. Once you have mastered your push ups in this way try to move your hands another hand width closer.

SAMPLE TRAINING SCHEDULE

Between each set of exercises have a one minute rest.

Week 1	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 3 sets of 5 Male 3 sets of 8	3 sets of 5 3 sets of 8	3 sets of 5 3 sets of 8	Rest day	Max Number
Front Plank	3 sets of 30 seconds	3 sets of 30 seconds	3 sets of 30 seconds	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow schedule	Follow schedule	Rest day	2.4k timed run

Week 2	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 3 sets of 7 Male 3 sets of 11	3 sets of 7 3 sets of 11	3 sets of 7 3 sets of 11	Rest day	Max Number
Front Plank	3 sets of 45 seconds	3 sets of 45 seconds	3 sets of 45 seconds	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Rest day	2.4k timed run

Week 3	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 3 sets of 9 Male 3 sets of 13	3 sets of 9	3 sets of 9	Rest day	Max Number
Front Plank	3 sets of 1 minute	3 sets of 1 minute	3 sets of 1 minute	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Rest Day	2.4k timed run

Week 4	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 3 sets of 11 Male 3 sets of 16	3 sets of 11	3 sets of 11	Rest day	Max Number
Front Plank	3 sets of 1 minute and 15 seconds	3 sets of 1 minute and 15 seconds	3 sets of 1 minute and 15 seconds	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Rest day	2.4k Timed Run

Week 5	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 3 sets of 13 Male 3 sets of 19	3 sets of 13 3 sets of 19	3 sets of 13 3 sets of 19	Rest day	Max Number
Front Plank	3 sets of 1 minute and 30 seconds	3 sets of 1 minute and 30 seconds	3 sets of 1 minute and 30 seconds	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Rest Day	2.4k timed run

Week 6	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 3 sets of 15 Male 3 sets of 22	3 sets of 15 3 sets of 22	3 sets of 15 3 sets of 22	Rest day	Max Number
Front Plank	3 sets of 1 minute and 45 seconds	3 sets of 1 minute and 45 seconds	3 sets of 1 minute and 45 seconds	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Rest Day	2.4k timed run

Week 7	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 3 sets of 17 Male 3 sets of 25	3 sets of 17 3 sets of 25	3 sets of 17 3 sets of 25	Rest day	Max Number

Front Plank	3 sets of 2 minute	3 sets of 2 minute	3 sets of 2 minute	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Rest Day	2.4k timed run

Week 8	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 3 sets of 19 Male 3 sets of 28	3 sets of 19 3 sets of 28	3 sets of 19 3 sets of 28	Rest day	Max Number
Front Plank	3 sets of 2 minute and 15 seconds	3 sets of 2 minute and 15 seconds	3 sets of 2 minute and 15 seconds	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Rest Day	2.4k timed run

Week 9	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 3 sets of 21 Male 3 sets of 31	3 sets of 21 3 sets of 31	3 sets of 21 3 sets of 31	Rest day	Max Number
Front Plank	3 sets of 2 minute and 30 seconds	3 sets of 2 minute and 30 seconds	3 sets of 2 minute and 30 seconds	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Rest Day	2.4k timed run

Week 10	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 2 sets of 25	2 sets of 25	2 sets of 25	Rest day	Max Number
	Male 2 sets of 33	2 sets of 33	2 sets of 33		
Front Plank	3 sets of 2 minute and 45 seconds	3 sets of 2 minute and 45 seconds	3 sets of 2 minute and 45 seconds	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Rest Day	2.4k timed run

Week 11	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 2 sets of 25	2 sets of 25	2 sets of 25	Rest day	Max Number
	Male 2 sets of 36	2 sets of 36	2 sets of 36		
Front Plank	2 sets of 3 minutes	2 sets of 3 minutes	2 sets of 3 minutes	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Rest Day	2.4k timed run

Week 12	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Push Ups	Female 2 sets of 25	2 sets of 25	2 sets of 25	Rest day	Max Number
	Male 2 sets of 39	2 sets of 39	2 sets of 39		

Front Plank	2 sets of 3 minutes	2 sets of 3 minutes	2 sets of 3 minutes	Rest day	Max duration
Run	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Follow Schedule	Rest Day	2.4k timed run