

Managerial Perspectives in the Development of a Physical Fitness Program

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Law enforcement agencies around the country are comprised of men and women who are willing to subject themselves to injury and death, while protecting the rights of a free society. The number one killer of police officers is not a criminal's bullet, but heart disease. Heart disease is brought on by the stress of the job, shift work, improper diet (fast food), and little physical exercise. Although this fact is widely known, few agencies have initiated mandatory physical training requirements. This paper argues that mandatory physical training is essential in police work, helping officers stay alive on the streets, reducing absenteeism and lowering turnover rates. Studies revealed that many line officers are in such bad physical condition that they are a statistic waiting to happen. The paper also describes the physical fitness program of the Jacksonville Sheriffs Office, which uses reinforcement and motivational techniques to keep officers active.