FREE PREVIEW

PATROL REFERENCE PRESS

PATROL ESSENTIALS

Patrol Ready: A Practical Guide to Fitness, Nutrition, Recovery, and Officer Longevity

Occupational Conditioning, Shift-Aware Fueling, and Recovery for Day, Evening, and Mid Watch

A Pocket-Reference Guide for Patrol Officers

TRAIN AROUND YOUR CLOCK · FUEL AROUND YOUR WATCH

This free preview contains the complete Foreword, How to Use This Manual, and the full Chapter 1 (The Job Is the Standard) from the 92-page manual, plus an excerpt from Chapter 2.

First Edition — 2026

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Foreword

Somewhere around 0300, parked at the edge of your district, the job gets quiet. The radio goes low. The city sleeps. And you sit there running the math on your own body: when did I last eat? When did I actually sleep? When am I supposed to train — and how, on *this* schedule?

Every other manual in this series is about what you do on the street. This one is about the body you do it with.

Most tactical fitness books are written for people with 9-to-5 lives: morning workouts, lunchtime salad, eight hours of dark quiet sleep, training on a schedule that never gets flipped upside down. Generic advice fails the officer it must serve most — the swing-shift officer eating dinner at 0200, the mid-watch officer driving home into the sunrise with a day-sleep ahead, the 12-hour night-watch officer whose "weekend" is Tuesday and Wednesday. **That officer is the reason this manual exists.**

The evening/mid-shift emphasis is what makes this different from every other fitness book on the market: an integrated treatment of circadian disruption, day-sleep, strategic caffeine, meal timing around the clock, and strength work built around a schedule that never stays put.

This is not a fad book. No detoxes, no "ancient secrets," no 30-day transformations, no supplement pitches. The content is grounded in the same evidence base the professionals use: tactical strength-and-conditioning practice in the NSCA tradition, sports-nutrition position-stand science, and the growing body of shift-work and police-specific fatigue research. **Individual results vary, and anyone who promises you a guaranteed outcome is selling something.**

This manual is an educational reference — **not medical advice**. If you have a chronic condition, are under a doctor's care, or are considering a major dietary change, clear it with your physician first.

— **Patrol Reference Press** *First Edition, 2026*

How to Use This Manual

This manual is organized for the working patrol officer. Read it once, straight through, on a quiet night. Then use it the way it was meant to be used: the field cards get you the answer in thirty seconds; the chapters give you the reasoning; the appendices give you the tear-out tools.

Shift clocks used throughout. Departments run on three common watch lengths, and this manual covers **all three**:

Watch	8-Hour	10-Hour	12-Hour
Day	0600–1400	0600–1600	**0600–1800** *(worked example)*
Evening / swing	1400–2200	1500–0100	*(12-hour agencies run two watches — see night)*
Mid / graveyard	2200–0600	2100–0700	**1800–0600** *(worked example — the night watch)*

The **12-hour 0600–1800 day / 1800–0600 night pair is the worked example** used throughout: every planner, table, and template shows its numbers, then gives the 8-hour and 10-hour variants in the same place.

What this manual is — and is not. It is an educational reference on fitness, fueling, and shift-work recovery for patrol officers. It is **not** medical advice, a prescription for you personally, or a replacement for your physician, your department's wellness program, or your agency's policy on fitness, napping, or supplements. Where something in this manual conflicts with your agency's policy, policy governs.

Chapter 1: The Job Is the Standard

1.1 What Patrol Actually Demands

Strip the job to its physical core and you get a pattern that looks nothing like a gym workout. A patrol shift is **prolonged inactivity punctuated by sudden maximal exertion** — hours of sitting in a vehicle, then a sprint, a vault, a drag, a ground fight, or a combination of all four within sixty seconds, usually while carrying twenty to thirty pounds of gear.

The recurring physical tasks of street work are consistent across agencies:

- **Foot pursuits** — short sprints over varied terrain: alleys, fences, stairwells, back yards, freeway embankments, water.
- **Fence and obstacle clearance** — vaulting, climbing, dropping from height, and recovering balance on uneven ground.
- **Drags and carries** — lifting and moving people: an injured partner, a wounded subject, an unconscious driver from a wrecked vehicle. These are emergency dead-lifts performed at speed, in gear, often in the dark.
- **Ground fights and takedowns** — maximal isometric and explosive effort against a resisting subject while wearing a duty belt and vest.
- **Force applications** — striking, grappling, weapon retention, and the balance work that goes with all of it.

- **Vehicle extractions** — pulling people out of crash-damaged or rolled vehicles through broken glass and crushed metal.
- **Carries up and down** — stairs, fire escapes, and parking structures, with weight in your arms and a body to support.

What the job does *not* demand is a single long bout of sustained aerobic output. Pursuits are typically short — seconds to a couple of minutes. The problem is that they happen **cold**: after hours of vehicle sedentariness, your body is asked to go from zero to maximum effort, with gear, in an instant, and then be ready to fight or articulate at the end of it.

1.2 The Fitness–Performance–Injury Link (the honest version)

Physical fitness is associated with better performance on occupational tasks and lower injury risk — but the research is appropriately modest about cause and effect. Recruit and tactical-population studies report associations between higher levels of muscular fitness and aerobic capacity and better scores on job-task simulations and fewer training injuries. That is the evidence level this manual uses: **fit officers tend to perform better and get hurt less**, and training to the tasks improves the tasks.

What is more directly observable is that *task-untrained* fitness fails on the street. A bodybuilder's raw strength helps, but it does not prepare anyone for sprinting in boots and a vest, clearing a fence with gear, or fighting from the ground at 0300. **Patrol shape is task-capable shape** — the minimum set of physical qualities that makes the recurring tasks survivable and recoverable, sustained over a career.

1.3 The Occupational Task → Fitness Quality Map

Occupational task	Dominant fitness quality	What to train (Chapter 9–11)
Foot pursuit (short sprint)	Speed, acceleration, anaerobic power	Short intervals, sprint repeats, agility
Pursuit beyond 1–2 minutes	Aerobic base	Zone-2 work, longer intervals
Fence/obstacle clearance	Explosive power, agility, upper-body pull	Box jumps, pull-ups, hurdle/bound work
Drags & carries	Full-body strength, grip, torso stability	Deadlift patterns, farmer's carries, sled drags, grip work
Ground fight & takedown	Isometric strength, torso stability, work capacity	Carries, presses, planks, kettlebell/barbell patterns
Vehicle extraction	Grip, back/leg strength, technique	Deadlift/hex-bar, carries, grip work
Prolonged time on feet	Lower-body endurance, postural tolerance	Long walks, carries, single-leg work
Getting back up, in gear	Power-to-weight, mobility	Get-ups, squat patterns, hip mobility

> 💡 **OFFICER NOTE**
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> Fitness is occupational readiness, not vanity:** Nobody on the street cares what you look like in the locker room. They care whether you can clear that fence, drag your partner out of a crash, and stay on your feet long enough to go home. Train for the tasks in the table above. Aesthetic goals are fine if you have them — Chapter 8 covers them honestly — but they are a side effect, not the standard. The standard is the job.

1.4 The Shift Thesis: Same Job, Different Recovery Environment

Here is the framing that runs through the entire manual: **the physical demands of patrol are identical across all watches** — a mid-watch foot pursuit is the same sprint as a day-watch one. What changes across watches is the *recovery environment*: when you sleep, when you can eat, how much accumulated fatigue you carry, and when your body is willing to perform.

That single idea drives everything that follows. It is why the manual does not give you one training plan — it gives you three, built around the three watch families (Chapter 9, Appendix B). It is why the caffeine chapter is organized around cutoffs, not cups (Chapter 5). It is why the eating guidance is organized around a clock, not a menu (Chapter 7). **Fix the recovery environment first; it outweighs any single workout.**

QUICK-REFERENCE FIELD CARD **Occupational Task → Fitness Quality**

THE RECURRING JOBS: sprint · vault · drag · carry · fight · extract · get up and go again

THE SHAPE YOU NEED (and the chapter that trains it):

- **Short bursts** (sprint, vault, fight start) → speed + power → Ch. 9–10
- **1–2+ minute effort** (long pursuit) → aerobic base → Ch. 10
- **Drags, carries, extraction** → full-body strength + grip → Ch. 9
- **Ground fight** → torso stability + work capacity → Ch. 9–10
- **Belt/vest load tolerance** (all day) → postural + lower-body endurance → Ch. 10–11
- **Getting up, staying up, recovering** → mobility + sleep + fuel → Ch. 3–7, 11

THE SHIFT RULE: demands are identical on every watch — the recovery environment is not. Fix sleep, feeding, and training placement first; they outweigh any single workout.

Chapter 2: Baseline & Readiness — Assess, Log, Autoregulate

2.1 Why Self-Assessment Comes First

You cannot manage what you do not measure — and the only person who will do this consistently is you. Departments rarely mandate or even track officer fitness (a survey of state POST requirements found that most states set no mandatory fitness standard for certified officers; where standards exist they usually apply to recruits). The practical meaning is straightforward: **no one is coming to check. You are the accountable party — own it yourself.** This chapter gives you a field-expedient baseline and a daily readiness check that takes five minutes, no gym and no coach required.

The tools here are deliberately simple. The goal is not laboratory precision; it is an **honest, repeatable snapshot** you can track across weeks, months, and — for the long term — years (Chapter 11).

> 💡 **OFFICER NOTE**
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> Baseline is a snapshot, not a verdict:** This is not a pass/fail test, and no one is grading you. The baseline exists so future-you can answer "am I better than six months ago?" with data instead of vibes. If your numbers are lower than you would like, that is where you start — not a reason to quit.

Get the Full 92-Page Manual

Fitness, fueling, and recovery built around your watch — not around a 9-to-5 life

- **Chapter 3: Shift-Work Physiology** — the two alertness troughs, evening-vs-mid alertness curves, and what the science actually says about shift work and health.
- **Chapters 4–5: Sleep & Caffeine** — day-sleep setup, sleep banking, strategic napping, the drowsy-driving RED LINE, caffeine cutoffs and the no-stacking rule.
- **Chapters 6–7: Fueling & Chrononutrition** — protein targets, the patrol-bag food kit, hydration rules, and the eat-by-the-clock planners for mid and evening watches.
- **Chapters 8–9: Body Composition & Strength** — sustainable fat loss, supplement caution, and 2–4-session-per-week programming built around your shift.
- **Chapters 10–11: Work Capacity & Injury Prevention** — the sedentary-to-sprint problem, the 20-minute no-equipment session, and the post-shift mobility reset.
- **Appendix A:** 12 tear-out field cards including the one-page *Shift Survival Card* — print, laminate, carry.
- **Appendix B:** Weekly shift templates for day, evening, and mid watches (8-, 10-, and 12-hour variants).

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Patrol Reference Press — First Edition, 2026. This manual is an educational reference and training aid for law enforcement professionals. Consult your physician before beginning any new exercise program or major dietary change.