

DEA PHYSICAL TASK ASSESSMENT



GUIDE

February 16, 2023

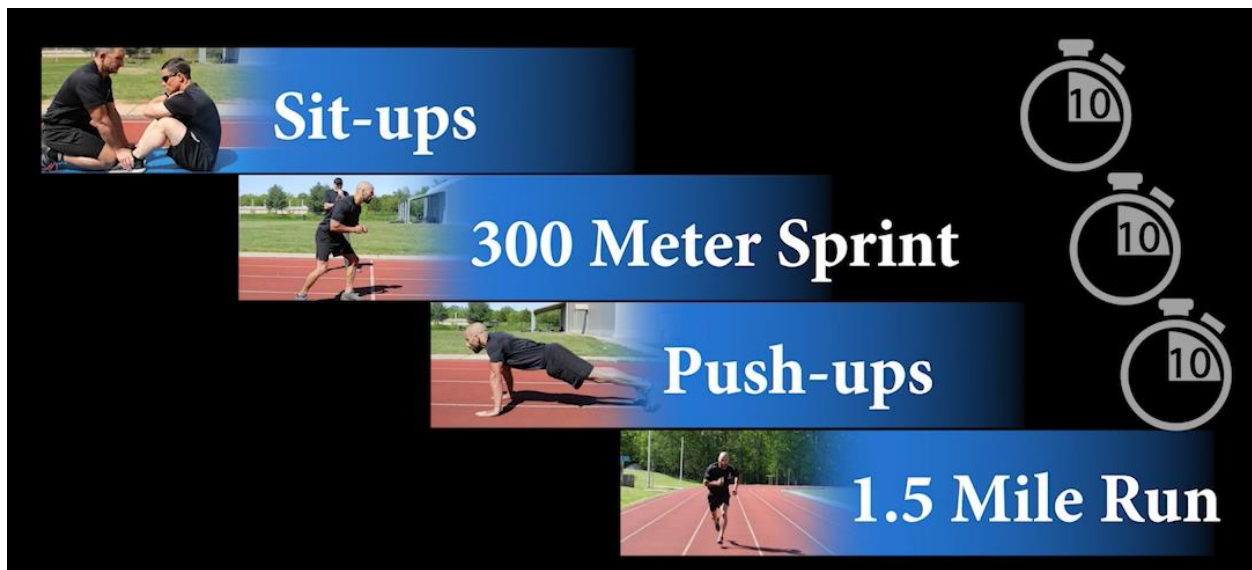
PHYSICAL TASK ASSESSMENT (PTA) OVERVIEW

DEA Agents must be both mentally and physically prepared for their work. The Physical Task Assessment (PTA) consists of a battery of fitness tests that serve to evaluate a candidate's ability to successfully complete a DEA initial training program and perform the essential tasks of a Special Agent. In the case of employment, the PTA assesses upper body, core, and aerobic strengths that help to select optimal applicants for the Basic Agent Course at the DEA Academy.

The PTA is also currently being utilized as a method to assess and select DEA Special Response Team (SRT) candidates and serves as the annual fitness requirement for active assignment to Division teams.

PTA COMPONENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

To pass the official PTA, applicants/Agents must achieve a minimum cumulative score of 12 points with at least one point in each of the four events. Each event is conducted in a specific order with no more than 10 minutes of rest in between each event:



EVENT #1: Sit-ups – 1 minute

EVENT #2: 300 Meter Sprint – Timed Event

EVENT #3: Push-up – Untimed Event/Continuous Motion

EVENT #4: 1.5 Mile run – Timed Event

The scoring of each event does not provide for differences in age; however, there are separate scoring matrixes for sex (male/female).

DEA PHYSICAL TASK ASSESSMENT (PTA) RATING SCALE

MALE		FEMALE	
Sit-Ups Completed	Points	Sit-Ups Completed	Points
31 and below	-2	29 and below	-2
32 - 37	0	30 - 34	0
38	1	35 - 36	1
39 - 42	2	37 - 40	2
43 - 44	3	41 - 42	3
45 - 47	4	43 - 46	4
48 - 49	5	47 - 48	5
50 - 51	6	49 - 50	6
52 - 53	7	51 - 52	7
54 - 55	8	53 - 54	8
56 - 57	9	55 - 56	9
58 and over	10	57 and over	10

* Maximum Sit-Ups in One (1) Minute

MALE		FEMALE	
Push-Ups Completed	Points	Push-Ups Completed	Points
19 and below	-2	4 and below	-2
20 - 29	0	5 - 13	0
30 - 32	1	14 - 18	1
33 - 39	2	19 - 21	2
40 - 43	3	22 - 26	3
44 - 49	4	27 - 29	4
50 - 53	5	30 - 32	5
54 - 56	6	33 - 35	6
57 - 60	7	36 - 38	7
61 - 64	8	39 - 41	8
65 - 70	9	42 - 44	9
71 and over	10	45 and over	10

MALE		FEMALE	
300 Meter Sprint Time	Points	300 Meter Sprint Time	Points
55.1 and over	-2	67.5 and over	-2
52.5 - 55.0	0	65.0 - 67.4	0
51.1 - 52.4	1	62.5 - 64.9	1
49.5 - 51.0	2	60.0 - 62.4	2
48.0 - 49.4	3	57.5 - 59.9	3
46.1 - 47.9	4	56.0 - 57.4	4
45.0 - 46.0	5	54.0 - 55.9	5
44.0 - 44.9	6	53.0 - 53.9	6
43.0 - 43.9	7	52.0 - 52.9	7
42.0 - 42.9	8	51.0 - 51.9	8
41.0 - 41.9	9	50.0 - 50.9	9
40.9 and below	10	49.9 and below	10

MALE		FEMALE	
1.5 Mile Run Time	Points	1.5 Mile Run Time	Points
13:30 and over	-2	15:00 and over	-2
12:25 - 13:29	0	14:00 - 14:59	0
12:15 - 12:24	1	13:35 - 13:59	1
11:35 - 12:14	2	13:00 - 13:34	2
11:10 - 11:34	3	12:30 - 12:59	3
10:35 - 11:09	4	11:57 - 12:29	4
10:15 - 10:34	5	11:35 - 11:56	5
9:55 - 10:14	6	11:15 - 11:34	6
9:35 - 9:54	7	11:06 - 11:14	7
9:20 - 9:34	8	10:45 - 11:05	8
9:00 - 9:19	9	10:35 - 10:44	9
8:59 and below	10	10:34 and below	10

* In order to successfully pass the PTA, the Special Agent Applicant/Basic Agent Trainee must score at least one (1) point in each event and twelve (12) points overall.

- In the field an applicant can receive a Conditional Offer of Employment and continue in the hiring process if they receive at least 9 points even if they have a zero in one category.
 - Note: If an applicant receives a score of less than zero in an event on the PTA Rating Scale (indicated as a -2 on the scale) that is an automatic fail of the PTA Test
- Prior to getting a Final Offer of Employment and coming to the academy the applicant must get a score of at least 12 in the field with at least a score of 1 in each category
- When they arrive at the academy on training day 2 that have PTA Test 1 and they must get at least a score of at least 12 with at least a score of 1 in each category

- If they fail PTA Test 1 they remain in training and at week 6 they have a re-test and must get at least a score of at least 12 with at least a score of 1 in each category – if they fail the retest they are dismissed from the academy
- On training day 60 they have PTA test 2 and they must get at least a score of at least 12 with at least a score of 1 in each category

Note: There is no longer a 3rd PTA test

ACADEMY CUMULATIVE SCORING

The PTA must be completed in its entirety in order to achieve a cumulative score. Once the PTA is complete, the assessor will calculate the total points achieved in each event and total the cumulative point score. A passing PTA must achieve a cumulative score of 12 points or more. Those candidates/applicants that do not achieve a cumulative score of 12 points or more have failed to pass the PTA regardless of individually scored events.

Although a candidate/applicant scores high in one or more specific events, the overall assessment is the determining factor. The following are examples of PASSING and FAILING assessments due to cumulative score:

Example #1: A male candidate achieved the following score, but has FAILED to achieve a passing cumulative score:

Assessment	Sit-ups	300M Sprint	Push-ups	1.5 Mile	Cumulative
Actual Count/Time	38	48 sec.	54	12:15	
Event Score	1	3	6	1	11

Example #2: A male candidate achieved the following score, and was SUCCESSFUL in achieving a passing cumulative score:

Assessment	Sit-ups	300M Sprint	Push-ups	1.5 Mile	Cumulative
Actual Count/Time	38	51.1	72	12:15	
Event Score	1	1	10	1	13

As you can see in the two examples, a candidate/applicant can successfully pass the PTA if an event is scored with a high number of points that dramatically contributes to the overall cumulative score.

The overall objective of the PTA is to identify candidates/applicants that achieve high scoring in all events and receive a high cumulative score. The highest score that can be achieved in any single event is 10. The highest cumulative score on the DEA PTA is 40 points (10 points each event x 4 events).

PREPARING FOR A PTA EVENT

Preparing to administer a PTA event requires a bit of pre-planning especially when conducting the 300M sprint and 1.5 mile run. It is important to keep in mind that the PTA **MUST** be administered in the fairest way possible and not deviate from the protocols that are provided later in this guide. The goal of the PTA is to provide standardized and reliable data to Human Resources in order to effectively categorize applicants – the PTA must be as objective as possible to meet this standard.

Prior to the PTA event, determine weather conditions for the scheduled day. In many cases, PTA events are conducted in an outdoor environment with all four events administered near or on a track. With varying seasons, events can be isolated to indoor/outdoor venues accordingly as long as the rest period is not disrupted by unnecessary travel between events. Outdoor events can be absolutely ruined by weather that was not considered during pre-planning.

Ensure a process by which candidates/applicants can access the venue if there are controlled access protocols in place (military installation, high school track, college stadium, etc). Nothing is worse than having a perfectly planned PTA where a large portion of time is wasted signing people into/onto controlled premises without pre-arranging a roster or other method.

Confirm that you have all necessary items and equipment to conduct all four PTA events and accurately score the candidates/applicants. The materials needed include:

1. Numbered pennies/Numbered placards
2. Clipboard, scoresheets, and writing instrument
3. Waivers and applicant documents
4. Stopwatches/smartphone timing devices
5. Electronic counters/manual counters
6. Hydration options and towels
7. First aid equipment and medical professional/EMT
8. Assistants and additional assessors
9. 2-way radios – OPTIONAL for 300M sprint

Double check with candidates/applicants of their availability one day prior to the scheduled PTA. In cases where there are only a few individuals being assessed, this would could the difference of rescheduling a PTA or investing resources to assess a single candidate/applicant that could be included in a larger available group.

Finally, conduct a site survey and evaluate the venue. Check for defects in the running surfaces and other planned event locations. During winter months, this includes checking for ice on the track; during spring and fall months, this could include checking for foliage, branches, and

standing water. If you find the surface to be a safety hazard or offer an unfair advantage/disadvantage in any way (slopes downward or upwards at a significant level), locate a different venue for that assessment. Identify restrooms and water sources ahead of time to ensure facilities and hydration are available before and after events.

The following is the protocol script and instructions to be used during the PTA:

PTA SCRIPT AND PROTOCOLS

**** READ TO ALL CANDIDATES/APPLICANTS ****

Introduction

The Physical Task Assessment (PTA) will consist of four events in the following order: sit-ups, 300-meter sprint, push-ups and the 1.5 mile run. You will have no more than 10 minutes of rest between each of the events. In order to pass the PTA, the participant has to score at least one point in each event and to reach a minimum of 12 points total.

**** MOVE TO SIT-UP TEST LOCATION AND READ/DEMONSTRATE ****

Event #1: The Sit-Up Protocol

The sit-up event is the first PTA event which measures the strength and endurance of the abdominal muscles and the muscles in the lower torso. This is a timed event.

Sit-ups require a partner to hold the participant's ankles, so that the PTA administrator can clearly view proper form. The participant's feet must be secured with downward pressure by one of the three ways:

- 1) The partner may secure the participant's feet by using their hands to apply downward pressure to the participant's ankles.
- 2) The partner may also secure the participant's feet by kneeling on them while using their hands to apply downward pressure to the participant's ankles.
- 3) The partner may also secure the participant's feet by sitting on them while splaying their legs. If the partner sits on the participant's feet, the partner is permitted to hold the back of the participant's lower legs.

The participant begins this event by lying flat on his or her back with the top of both shoulder blades in contact with the ground. This is the **starting position**. The feet must be flat on the ground and the knees bent at approximately a 90 degree angle. The hands are crossed on the participant's chest. The left hand is firmly placed on the upper right shoulder and the right hand is firmly placed on the upper left shoulder. The participant will lock their hands onto their upper shoulders, but will not grab their shirt. The hands **must** maintain full contact with the upper shoulders throughout the entire exercise. The partner must secure the participant's feet with downward pressure. The sit-up begins with the participant raising their head and torso to the vertical position. The participant **must** break an imaginary vertical plane with their elbows passing the tops of their knees. After breaking the imaginary vertical plane, the participant lowers their upper body to the ground, so that the **top of both shoulder blades** touch the ground returning to the starting position. This is one repetition and how a sit-up is properly

performed. There is to be no resting between sit-ups and all activity must be **continuous**. It should be noted that placing one's feet too close to their buttocks may prevent the participant from being able to break the vertical plane resulting in a sit-up protocol violation.

If at any time the protocol for sit-ups is not followed, the PTA administrator will articulate the problem to the participant and the repetition will not count.

The following is example of sit-up protocol violations:

- The participant does not maintain full contact with the upper shoulders.
- The participant grabs their shirt instead of firmly locking their hands on their upper shoulders.
- The participant elbows do not cross the plane at the knees.
- The participant does not go touch the ground with the top of both shoulder blades.
- Finally, the participant is not permitted to have his or her hips or buttocks raised off the ground during the event.

This is a timed event. The participant has one minute to do as many proper sit-ups as he or she can, providing there is continuous motion. The PTA administrator may also place a hand flat on the ground to ensure the top of both shoulder blades touch the ground.

**** CONDUCT THE ASSESSMENT OF SIT-UPS ****

**** ALLOW FOR REST PERIOD ****

**** RELOCATE TO 300M SPRINT TEST LOCATION AND READ/DEMONSTRATE ****

Event #2: The 300-Meter Sprint

The 300-meter sprint is the second PTA event which measures the anaerobic power of the cardiovascular system. This is a timed event. The 300-meter sprint is conducted on an oval track whose length must be known so the participant can be advised of the course he or she must sprint. The total lapsed time it takes the participant to sprint 300-meters is recorded in seconds and tenths of a second.

The PTA administrator will give the command for participant to assume the start position by stating "On your mark" and begin the sprint with a single whistle blast. The participant must start in a standing position and is **NOT** permitted to touch the ground with his or her hands. If the participant touches the ground while starting, this will result in a failure of the event.

The participant must remain in his or her assigned lane for the entirety of the sprint. If the participant steps into another lane, this will result in a failure of the event.

**** CONDUCT THE ASSESSMENT OF THE 300M SPRINT ****

**** ALLOW FOR REST PERIOD ****

**** RELOCATE TO PUSH-UP TEST LOCATION AND READ/DEMONSTRATE ****

Event #3: The Push-Up Event

The event begins as the participant assumes the front leaning rest position. The hands are placed just outside an imaginary line drawn straight down from each shoulder. The head, back, buttocks, and legs must maintain an imaginary **horizontal** line drawn from head to heels. The feet are not more than **eight inches** apart. The event begins by bending the elbows and lowering the entire body until the tops of the upper arms, shoulders and lower back are parallel to the ground. To return to the starting position, the participant locks the elbows. This is one repetition and how a push-up must be performed. There is to be no resting between push-ups and all activity must be continuous.

If at any time the push-up protocol is not followed, the PTA administrator will articulate the problem to the participant and that repetition will not be counted.

The following are examples of push-up protocol violations:

- The participant's body is not straight.
- The participant is not permitted to raise their buttocks in the air
- The participant's **knees, pelvis, stomach or thighs** are **not** permitted to touch the ground
- The participant fails to lock out their elbows in the up position or lower your body parallel to the ground.
- The participant adjusts their hands or feet during the event.
- The participant places their hands or feet in an improper position.
- Finally, the participant does not lower their body far enough where the tops of the upper arms, shoulders, and lower back are aligned and parallel to the ground.

The PTA administrator may place their fist on the ground in line with the participant's chest indicating a full range of motion when the participant's touches their chest to the fist of the PTA administrator.

The participant has unlimited time to do as many correct push-ups as possible, providing the motion is continuous.

**** CONDUCT THE ASSESSMENT OF PUSH-UPS ****

**** ALLOW FOR REST PERIOD ****

**** RELOCATE TO 1.5 MILE TEST LOCATION AND READ/DEMONSTRATE ****

Event #4: The 1.5 Mile Run

The 1.5 mile run is the 4th and last PTA event which measures the aerobic power of the cardiovascular system. This is a timed event.

The 1.5 mile run is conducted on a running track, whose length must be known, so the participant can be advised of how many times around he or she must run. The totally lapsed time it takes the subject to run one and a half miles is recorded in minutes and seconds.

**** CONCLUDE THE PTA ASSESSMENT ****

PT Changes per 9412 Effective July 28, 2022

Background: This paper is provided for information. Early in the hiring process and again prior to arrival at the DEA Academy, the SAA is required to demonstrate their preparedness to participate in DEA's rigorous BAT program by passing a PTA at their office of hire. This preparedness helps alleviate injury during the BAT program.

Problem #1: HR is losing otherwise good SAAs at the beginning of the hiring process, [before issuance of the Conditional Offer Letter (COL)] due to PTA failures. Since 2017, the initial PTA fail rate is 36%, which is higher than the written assessments fail rate (28%) and the interview fail rate (12%).

For Change: HR will lower the score SAAs need to receive a COL to continue in the hiring process (from 12 to 9). Prior to being issued a Final Offer Letter (FOL), the SAA must achieve a score of 12. This adjustment will increase the number of SAAs hired and also align DEA's onboarding procedures to be more similar to the FBI's, although the FBI provides an FOL with a score of 9. The PTA scoring requirements to graduate from Basic Agent Training (BAT) will remain at 12, which is the same as the FBI requirements.

Problem #2: TR is losing too many BATs at the Academy due to PTA failures. If they fail during PTA #1, in Week 1, they are required to take a re-test several days later. A second failure results in dismissal from the Academy.

1st Change: BATs who fail PTA #1 will be allowed to stay at TR, participating in 3 structured PT sessions per week and receiving remedial help, before being required to take a PTA #1 re-test in Week 6. This will give BATs an additional 5 weeks of training, nutritional help and fitness instruction in order to improve their performance. If they still fail the PTA #1 retest in Week 6, they would be dismissed.

2nd Change: Currently, BATs must pass 3 PTAs at the Academy in order to graduate. TR will eliminate PTA #3, requiring BATs to pass 2 PTAs at the Academy in order to graduate. Under the proposal, the PTAs would take place in Week 1 (PTA#1), a Week 6 PTA#1 retest (if necessary), and Week 12 (PTA#2). BATs would still continue to receive structured PT sessions after PTA#2 up and until graduation.

PHYSICAL TASK ASSESSMENT SCORESHEET

BASIC AGENT TRAINEES

PHYSICAL TRAINING UNIT TESTING

INSTRUCTORS INITIALS:

DATE:

COUNSELOR:_____

TEAM COLOR:

BA-XXX

GROUP XXX

NAME	SCORE	SIT-UPS	300 Meter Sprint	PUSH-UPS	LAPS	1.5 MILE RUN
					1 1 1 1 1 1	
					2 2 2 2 2 2	
					3 3 3 3 3 3	
					4 4 4 4 4 4	
					5 5 5 5 5 5	
					6 6 6 6 6 6	
					7 7 7 7 7 7	
					8 8 8 8 8 8	
					9 9 9 9 9 9	
					10 10 10 10 10 10	

I, _____, acknowledge that I am about to participate in the DEA Physical Task Test (PTT), which consists of sit-ups, a 300 meter sprint, push-ups, and a 1.5 mile run; and that I have no injuries or illness that will prevent me or hinder my performance in the DEA PTT.

Sign and Date