# Episode 2 - fitness Version 2\_v1.mp3

**Inspector John Pratt:** Hello and welcome to Tasmania Police's podcast, This is Tas police. I'm Inspector John Pratt and I'll be your host as we chat to a wide range of Tasmanian police officers about why they joined the job and why others should too. We're coming to you today from Lutruwita, Tasmania. And before we start our conversation, I'd like to respectfully acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land upon which we work, and pay our respects to elders, past and present. We recognise the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the continuing custodians of the rich cultural heritage of Lutruwita. Tasmania.

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** Hi, my name is Cormac Lawrence. I'm 25 years of age and I started at the Tasmanian Police Academy on the 15th of January, 2024. Prior to being in the Police Academy, I was working three different jobs. My full time job was a personal trainer running my own business. I also worked casually at the Museum of Old and New Art, which is more commonly known as Mona, and I also taught chess in after school chess clubs.

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** Hello, my name is Lana and I'm 19 years old and from Hobart. I've been at the Academy for about two months now and I'm loving every part of it. Previous to starting at the Academy, I worked on a lettuce farm, so it's been a big change, but also a really amazing one with so many opportunities. I'm really excited to take you guys through this week's PT schedule, because it's definitely one of my favourite parts of the day. Being able to get up early and have my body moving before a big day of classes.

**Inspector John Pratt:** As you've just heard, Trainee Constables Cormac Lawrence and Lana Alomes are two of our newest recruits at the Tasmania Police Academy. Cormac was a physical trainer and held a number of other part time jobs before joining Tasmania Police, and Lana was a casual labourer. We've talked in previous episodes of this podcast about the fitness requirements for anybody considering joining Tas police, and today Lana and Cormac are taking us through a week in the gym to give you an understanding of what the physical side of training is really like. Let's check in with Cormac and Lana as they prepare for their first physical training or PT session of the week.

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** So it's 6.15 on Monday morning. We're about to start PT. It's a bit of a sleep in this morning. I think today is the last week of our strength program before we move on to something new. So yeah, exciting.

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** Last week we were on the 5.25 roster, so it's kind of nice to have that bit of an hour sleep in. We're starting the week off with some strength. We have like a scheduled plan that our PT makes up for us, and tomorrow will be more cardio than strength again Wednesday, and Thursday is high intensity cardio, and Friday will be strength again.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Policing is a unique profession which demands a high degree of physical and mental fitness, and for that reason there is a strong focus on exercise. As part of the training program at the Academy, as Lana and Cormac just explained, there are daily PT sessions as part of the training that help ensure everyone is in peak condition when they graduate. I have one of our trainers, Sergeant Simon Clayton, with me today. Welcome, Simon, and thanks for joining us.

**Sergeant Simon Clayton:** Thanks, Inspector. I'm glad to be here.

**Inspector John Pratt:** We've heard a bit about the training program from Lana and Cormac, and now know that it covers a range of elements, including strength and cardio. Police officers encounter a large variety of incidents on the job, and it's important that they're fit and healthy. Can you tell us about why it's so important and how recruits fitness can assist them on the job.

**Sergeant Simon Clayton:** Thanks Inspector, the recruits, once they graduate and operational police officers might have to deal with a lot of different incidents where they've got to chase people on foot wearing a 8 to 10 kilo vest. They may have to grapple with offenders. They attend disturbances, family violence incidents, deaths, these sort of things. So it's really important that they are fit to be able to perform those duties and mitigate any likelihood of injuries. To have that base level of strength and physical fitness is important to be able to do their duties safely. When we're talking physical fitness, we should also incorporate mental fitness because the stress of the nature of the duties that we do, the working of shift works, day shift, afternoon shifts and night shift. Police officers can become tired. So what we try to instill down here with our fitness, both physical and mental, is to instill good habits into the trainees and good routines so that when they actually graduate, we're giving them the tools to be able to cope with what's about to come with that shift. Work with the rigors of working stressful jobs, family violence, those sorts of things so that they can actually perform their duties in a safe and and the manner that we're actually expecting them to perform when they graduate.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So, as you explained, there certainly is a fair bit of physical activity involved. But as you're aware, part of that also includes things like diet, looking after yourself, posture and all those. Are you able to tell us a little bit about that?

**Sergeant Simon Clayton:** Yeah, so we're not training athletes down here. And a lot of people think that we train athletes. We're not we're training police officers to be able to perform the role. So a lot of that is is diet. And particularly with, as I said, mentioned shift work, it's very easy on an afternoon shift or a night shift. You've worked eight hours, you've missed your meal break. It's quite easy to go to that fast food aspect. And if we we train them or teach them to get into those routines and good habits of eating healthy food, looking after their body, that will actually transpire into looking after a healthy mind as well, and they'll be able to then perform their duties a lot better, and they'll be able to cope with that tiredness. We're giving them good habits and good strategies and coping mechanisms to to be able to do those sort of things.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Can you tell us a bit about the facilities here at the Academy, and what sort of equipment is available for the recruits to use?

**Sergeant Simon Clayton:** Yeah, so the academy is on a on a large compound. So a large grass area. So we have the academy grounds that we can use outdoor, a lot of grassed areas. We have a full basketball court here where we conduct our entries to fitness standards as well. So we have that facilities. We have a weight and strength area that's fully functional with free weights as well as weight machines, and we have a cardio room as well that incorporates all the cardio equipment that you'd expect to find in a normal gym, which are your bikes, your rowers, your skiers, treadmills, ellipticals, those sort of things. So they use a combination of the cardio and weight bear training in their in their PT sessions.

**Inspector John Pratt:** And having the luxury of having a beach on the academy that's also used for swimming during the warmer or summer months.

**Sergeant Simon Clayton:** Yes, I have noticed they've gone out and swum in the in the water there at occasions.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Probably coming to an end shortly, I would imagine.

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** Alright, so we're halfway through Monday's workout. Currently doing some push ups. It's pretty comprehensive. Got lots of leg exercises, upper body exercises. Split into teams. Uh, as you can probably hear, there's a lot of music, which makes it kind of fun. I think it's really nice, this kind of training because it doesn't really matter your fitness level. We all do everything together so there to help each other. For example, when we do push ups today, someone helps and pushes the other one up. It's all about teamwork.

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** Okay, so Tess and I just finished our Monday session we are in the room getting ready for the day. It was good. How do you feel, Tess? Yeah, good. It was a good session. We did some weights, some dumbbell presses. Yeah,

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** And we broke off into partners. And it's good because you get to have a go at working with everyone and help each other out. Good morning. It's currently 5.59am and I'm just in my car about to leave for PT. It's Tuesday today, so that means we're doing more cardio kind of based workout which is good. So yeah keen for that.

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** Today is cardio. We've just all gone for a run as a team. We did about a ten minute warm up. So we're all nice and ready and we'll just be running the majority of today. Finished off Tuesday, which was good. We had two different runs. The first run was all together. Second run, they put us into two different teams, one fast, one a bit slower and we all ran same pace within our teams. We had about 15, maybe ten minutes worth of stretching at the end, which was nice to just cool down. And now we get to go have a hot breakfast. So looking forward to that and strength again tomorrow. Today is Wednesday morning at 6.18. We're all here gathered. We've got some strength going on today, except it looks like things are gonna be a little bit different. We're about to do our warm up and you're gonna come with me. I'm gonna walk you through what we're doing and, uh, get keen. Into the second part of our warm up. Now, as you can probably hear, we're all doing some skipping, followed by some push ups. And then as a group, we all do some mobility exercises on the floor. Takes about a total of about ten minutes, and then we get into training for the day.

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** So we're on our first first exercise this morning. Um I'm partnered here with Max. We're doing horizontal bar rows. We've got three sets of ten. Second exercise, we've got supine dead bugs. Um, if you're not familiar with those, essentially you just lay down your back and move your arms and legs like you're a dead bug upside down. They're pretty challenging, but really good and foundational. As a police officer, have a strong core. You're gonna carry a heavy vest every day. So just preparing us for all of that. So next up we've got bird dogs, which is similar to the one we just did, which was dead bugs just on all fours pushing out an arm and a leg, just bracing your core again, just keeping your whole body stabilized. Um, really good as a foundational exercise. Next up we've got, uh, goblet reverse lunges. Good to strengthen up the quads, glutes. Need to have strong legs as a police officer so we're doing lots of leg exercises. Onto the second last exercise. Now we've got fit ball dumbbell chest press I'm trying to strengthen up the triceps, chest and shoulders on a fit ball for stability keeping our core engaged. So that brings us to the end of Wednesday, our strength day. It's a pretty good workout. We're all a bit sweaty now. We get about ten minutes of stretching cooling down before we shower, coffee and breakfast. Yeah, buddy.

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** Good morning. It's currently 6 am and I'm just about to leave for PT. I'm sitting in my car. It's Thursday today, which means that we're doing more of a high intensity cardio workout and we do this one in pairs. So I'm really excited to get to the gym and break a sweat. So we're doing a circuit this morning. I'm with Tess. Say Hi Tess. Hi. We're on the bikes and we're doing a 11 station circuit. It's a pretty high intensity, but it's really good. We're back on the spin bike. This is more of the uphill like mountain bike situation. Yeah. So if I was to say slower reps as opposed to the other one which was sitting down a lot faster perhaps. We are up to our next station, it's casualty drag. So it's basically like a big heavy bag and you got to drag it around the obstacle. Um, it's got a bit of weight to it. So yeah, it's good.

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** The next station goes for two minutes as well. We're doing box slams now. Yeah they are alternating ones and it's pretty fun. So we just did some boxing and some balancing. We're throwing a basketball now Tessa on recovery again.

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** Yes. We're just going outside to get some air because it's so hot inside. And then we have one more ball run towels about to do hers. Hi guys. It's really hot. It is very hot. It is. But that's all right. We'll have a shower afterwards and some brekkie. So I just did my first wall run. Um, basically you run the length of the parade ground, touch the wall and come back and switch with your partner. Tess is running now and then I'll be due for my second go.

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** All finished up Thursday. Pretty tough circuit. I think we could all agree. Does everybody agree with that? Pretty hard circuit? Yes. Yes. Yeah, it was pretty tough. But we all get to go have a shower and have breakfast.

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** Good morning. Happy Friday. It is 6 am and I'm in my car just about to leave for the gym. We have just a bit of a light sort of weight session today and I'm looking forward to it. Good way to finish off the week. So we just finished our Friday session, which is a bit more of like the relaxed kind of strength side to it. I've got Tess here again. Um, we did some kind of more dead bugs and more kind of stretching type exercises and a bit of weights. It was good to end the week with that.

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** It was. And we get pancakes for breakfast. Yum. And fish and chips for lunch. Yeah. So yeah.

**Inspector John Pratt:** We've just heard from Lana and Cormac as they've taken us through their week in the gym at the Academy here in Rokeby. They both mentioned being paired up with fellow recruits for different activities. Simon, is this a strategy to help build team morale and relationships at this early stage in the course?

**Sergeant Simon Clayton:** Yeah, it is. And we find it's a fairly good strategy and what we tend to find early on in the course, the males will tend to to team up with males, and females will tend to team up with females. And what we try to get them to do is team up with members different to them, people that have different size. Because the nature of policing is that you are going to deal with all types of people. Males are going to have to deal with females, females, males, big, small, whatever size. So to build up their not only morale but their confidence in dealing with those type of people, we get them to team up with, with different people, also different people at different fitness levels. Everyone that come in are not going to come in at the same fitness levels. Depending on your age and that sort of stuff. So we actually get them to do that, and it builds that level of confidence that they actually can do this once they're once we've shown that, you know, we assist them there as much as we can. Prior to the course commencing we also recommend that they go and do some sort of defensive tactics judo, boxing, something like that. Again, to build up their confidence for what's coming when they start a course.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So the physical training program during a recruit training course is certainly challenging and for very good reason. As you've just described. Could you tell us how the programs actually get designed and who makes the decisions about what's included in those activities?

**Sergeant Simon Clayton:** Yeah, so the program's designed in consultation with the service provider, but we also look at what are the inherent requirements of a police officer as stipulated under the ANZPAA guidelines. So in consultation with TT provider yourself and commander of Education and Training, we come up as to what we're looking at, looking for as a police officer and as as we said, we're not training athletes. We're training police officers to be able to be police fit, to be able to do the duties that's expected of them. And that's what the focus is. And the focus of what we're moving towards is, is strength based. Because we have to use handcuffs, we have to use OC spray. On occasions, we may have to grapple with offenders. So it's really important that we move towards that strength while still having a cardio base, so that police officers can actually do the duty in the safest manner possible that they can do.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Thanks very much for joining us today, Simon, and explaining the importance of physical training in a recruit training course.

**Sergeant Simon Clayton:** Certainly been my pleasure. Thank you.

**Inspector John Pratt:** We have our recruits, trainee Constable Lawrence and trainee Constable Alomes here today. We've heard your week in the gym grabs and would like to talk about the training in a little bit more detail. Cormac, how intense is the fitness and PT component of the course?

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** Yeah thank you Inspector. Look, coming from a fitness background, I do have a lot of experience and built up fitness over the years. But with that I can give you a very good idea. Look, it is it is quite comprehensive, but it's comprehensive for a good reason. I think they're building us up into what we need to have as a foundational fitness level, going out into the field. So look, it is pretty challenging, but we all do it as a team, so we push each other along.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So with the sessions that we've just heard you undertake, typical for what you do each week in the gym, or does it change as the course goes along?

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** So we are about eight weeks in now. It has started to change as we're going through, and that does depend on what we're doing within our police work during the day as well. So if we have defense tactics or defense training, the training changes slightly in the personal training in the morning and it is as our fitness increases, it is changing and evolving to keep up with that as well.

**Inspector John Pratt:** And what do you enjoy most about the sessions that you've undertaken so far?

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** I'm really enjoying the teamwork, the camaraderie that comes along. The running is something that I'm not too used to. Running together in a team has actually been quite enjoyable for me. Getting out in the fresh air that has been quite nice and we just got music privileges, so that's been good fun.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Lana, how are you coping with the early starts? I imagine it's getting a little bit trickier now it's getting darker and a bit cooler in the mornings.

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** Yeah, so I'm actually kind of used to the early starts from my previous employment, but it's never easy getting up early, especially in winter. You just want to stay in bed, but it's good to get up, start your day early, get to PT and smash it out.

**Inspector John Pratt:** A good way to start the day then.

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** Yeah, I love an early morning.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So each Rrecruit needs to meet a certain fitness standard before they're offered a position with Tasmania Police. How do you prepare yourselves to pass the fitness test in the application process? Lana, can you tell us?

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** Yeah, so I started going for runs. I was never much of a runner. And when I read the requirements, it had like the beep testing on it. And so that's definitely something that I focused on - running. And I actually have found a bit of a love for it, I'm not going to lie. And my brother in law is actually a personal trainer, so he helped me with my push ups, especially because I was never really good at those. But he definitely helped me with like form and technique and breathing, which helped a lot. Excellent.

**Inspector John Pratt:** And Cormac, what about yourself? How did you prepare?

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** So while I was working as a personal trainer, I actually had a client come to me with this exact request. And so I took it upon myself to go through to look at the fitness components. That was the entry into Tas Police. And that applicant actually got through and he's now two years into the job. So I took the same approach that I did with him. I looked at all the online resources, made sure I knew what I was signing myself up for, and really tried to work on my weaknesses. So I knew what I could do and what I needed to work on.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So you've had a little bit of a benefit and a bit of an insight prior to embarking on the journey yourself. Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently to make it easier or better for yourself?

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** I probably wouldn't have been so harsh on myself. I knew that I needed to push the fitness, but I was, it was kind of all I was involved in when I could have been working on the stages leading up to the interviews. I was just kind of really maybe over pushing it, i think. The requirements are online. You know what they are. You just need to meet the minimum standards because your fitness will improve from then on. And I did attend one of the fitness sessions in the previous years, so I would absolutely recommend that.

**Inspector John Pratt:** And Lana, what about yourself? Looking back, anything you would have done differently to help you prepare?

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** Probably starting preparing a bit earlier. Building up your cardiovascular health is something that's very difficult to do, so starting running a bit early would have been something that I probably could have done. But other than that, not really. I did go to the gym, so I had the strength for a lot of the strength based side of things.

**Inspector John Pratt:** So knowing what you know now and getting to where you are, what advice would you give to anyone else that's thinking of applying in relation to their physical fitness?

**Trainee Constable Lana Alomes:** Probably just, if you don't go to the gym, start. Focus on your strength training as well as running and doing cardio. They work hand in hand and you really need a solid basis of both of those aspects to really be able to perform well during the PT sessions.

**Inspector John Pratt:** And Cormac, any advice that you would give to anyone that's thinking of applying?

**Trainee Constable Cormac Lawrence:** Yeah. Thank you Inspector. So I would self-critique where you're at with your fitness experience and your fitness level. Really, if you're short on time, look for the weaknesses that you can improve upon. And if you're not sure if you really don't have much of a fitness background and you're just really looking for somewhere to start, ask friends and family who are into sport or into fitness. Ask any police officers that you know, and there's heaps of references and online material as well.

**Inspector John Pratt:** Thanks very much for that. So as we've heard from Sergeant Clayton, physical fitness is essential to carry out the role of a police officer successfully. And that also interlinks with mental health, which is also very important to look after as a police officer. There are plenty of resources online. The recruiting website explains all the standards that you're required to achieve. And there's also public fitness sessions that are run from time to time as well. So it's well worth, as Cormac suggested, doing your research and then going from there.

**Inspector John Pratt:** That's it for this episode of This is Tas Police. I hope you enjoyed the conversation. Join us next time when we catch up with our recruits again in a few weeks time to hear about the academic side of the program. Stay up to date with all our episodes by subscribing on your favourite podcast app, and you can find all our previous episodes on the Tasmania Police recruitment website: recruitment.police.tas.gov.au/podcast.