

Silver City IHC Fitness

Physical work capacity and endurance has a direct correlation on decision making in the wildland fire environment. Diminished physical capacity, succumbing to smoke, heat and other environmental stressors, will cloud mental acuity and delay critical thinking skills. Operable situational awareness often means the difference between injury and success on a wildland fire. The fit hotshot is a fine-tuned athlete, able to work 20 hours straight while maintaining a head's up approach to each critical decision. On a 20 person crew it is critical that each and every part run at maximum efficiency in order to produce a safe and effective team.



Fire season is not the time to “become” fit. If you arrive to critical training out of shape, the demands will likely be too great for you to have a successful season.

Fitness in the fire operator’s environment can be thought of as first building a base of general fitness involving:

- Work capacity
- Endurance
- Strength
- Mobility

Then, more specific work hardening:

- Running a chainsaw
- Digging line
- Crew physical training hikes

Culminating in a prepared firefighter ready to take on the challenges presented to a Type 1 Interagency Hotshot Crew.

The days of endless running and sitting in a circle doing pushups and situps have been over for years for Silver City IHC. Through research and some trial and error we have lowered our rate of traumatic injury by performing a more specific work related fitness program. Though running is a part of our program we focus more on circuit based workouts, in full gear and in shorts, in order to work more efficiently the “chassis” of the firefighter. We accomplish this through rope drags, sandbags, sledge hits, kettlebell swinging, picking up and carrying heavy objects, farmer carry with cubees, tire flips, rope hits, sled drags, burpees, ball slams, and basic barbell and dumbbell lifts (deadlifts and presses). Perhaps followed by a cubee hike where we pass 5 gallons of water back and forth, or a short trail run at Ft Bayard, or squad relays carrying something heavy.

Our “cardio” training consists of interval sprints, hill sprints, Long Slow Development runs, and most definitely full gear hiking with extra weight (cubees, drip torches, chainsaws, tools). On some crew training hikes we carry a 12-20lb

sledgehammer in the place of a tool in order to build grip and shoulder strength as well as resiliency in the core.

We will perform leadership challenge workouts in full gear, consisting of competition between squads or small groups tasked with an obstacle that could take several hours to complete. These include things like orienteering cross country with lots of gear, performing medical scenarios under stress, and making squad level decisions under physical duress.



Sample Workouts:

These workouts are similar in nature to what we do though we are constantly changing them up. The only warmups we do together will be calisthenics, burpees, or a short run to get the blood moving and ten minutes are usually allotted for individual stretching/warmup.

1) Run 1 Mile

10 Exercise Circuit with partner

45 seconds of work : 15 seconds transition to next station

3-5 rounds depending on how hard everybody works

95# or 135# Deadlift

Sledge Tire Hits

Kettlebell Swings

Broad Jump Burpees

Knees to Elbows on a pullup bar

Box Jumps

Combat Rope Hits while partner does Medicine Ball slams

100 m sprint

Goblet squats with light kettlebell

Medicine Ball Throws

Run 1 Mile

10 minutes of group medicine ball throws with burpees

2) 200 Burpees

10 Burpees a minute for 20 minutes

3) In groups of 4 to 5

Pace setter for all other groups to rotate is the first exercise

(Pace Setter) 5 x Goblet Squat followed by 5 pushups working from

5#, 10#, 15#, 20#, 25#, 30#, 35#, 40#, 45#,

Other groups perform following groups of exercises until the Goblet Squat group is done and then we rotate

1. 1 person sled drag while 2 others do log presses as partner, last person does max medicine ball throws over the shoulder, constantly rotating

2. On pullup bars, 3 pullups, 4 box jumps, 5 Man Makers with 15# or 20# DBs, constantly rotating

3. Farmer Carry's as heavy as you can go till time is up

4) In crew gear

Squad on Squad

1. Cube or 5er carry for 300m relay
2. Tire flip in groups for 200m
3. Buddy carry 200 m
4. 1000 Sledge Hits per squad
5. 300 Push Press @ 65# per squad
6. Tire flip for 200m
7. Hike to top of Spaghetti Hill with two cubees per squad

5) Inverted Ladder: 30 Minutes

This is an individual workout and you will have 10 minutes to complete each couplet and then you will go immediately into the next set of couplets. Each station will be done from 10 to 1 and 1 back to 10, for a total of 100 reps per exercise.

1. Push-Ups: 10-1
Squats: 1-10
2. Sit-Ups: 10-1
Russian Twists: 1-10
3. Burpees: 10-1
Jumping Squats: 1-10

6) "Spot Fire" very tough 21 minutes

3 Groups rotating through each station with 1m rest between

1. 7 minutes max burpees
2. 7 minutes group rotation through sledge hits, sled drags, tire flips
3. 7 minutes max cube farmer carry or sprints

7) Circuit w/ partner

Tire flip group is the pace setter and all groups continue to constantly move through the exercises in their station until the flip group is complete

1. Tire flip 75 yards and roll tire back (Pace setter)
2. 3 Pullups and 5 weighted Dumbell stepups (40-50lbs) constantly moving
3. Farmer carry two cubees a piece. Everytime you drop it or set it down – penalty 3 burpees
4. Log press constantly moving shoulder to shoulder. We use a 14ft 4x6
5. Combat ropes
6. Man Makers with light dumbbells
7. Sled Drags/Sled pushes with sledge in hand on the drags
8. No weight Turkish Get Ups
9. Medicine Ball toss/squat with partner
10. Sledge Hits w/10-15lb sledges