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# Police Recruitment Poor Standards: Physically Unfit Cops Are More Likely to Use Lethal Force

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The constant security of lives and property is a concern that permeates every fiber of our livelihood. As such respective law enforcement agencies are instituted to keep the peace within their respective jurisdiction, the police being one of the most well-known.

But while maintaining law and order is pivotal in any civilized human society. The operations of these

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# A relationship between the rising tide of police violence and lack of physical fitness

In recent times, police violence has become a recurrent theme, dominating our headlines and breaking news. The demise of Jacob Blake in 2020 is one of the never-ending controversies. The police officers involved have come down a heavy rain of criticism. One of the takeaways from this saga is that: The police should and must find safer alternatives to restrain suspects

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This is an area in our policing that needs to be addressed, from the grassroots.

## A steady decline in standards

Admission into the police academy works in a way that an applicant is required to pass the physical fitness assessment standards. They include reaching the appropriate cut-off score for a timed mile run for age, sit-ups for age, push-ups for age, etc in the police academy. Assuming that this rigorous process is followed to the last detail, it can go a long way to ensure the officers can handle some tense situations without resorting to the 'Glock'.

But on the contrary, a good number of police departments in an attempt to attract people to this low-pay, high-risk job, have loosened a lot of these age-long, military-style



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This approach is like a double-edged sword, it cuts both ways. While the police department has a higher influx of applicants, these applicants are lacking in physical fitness among other areas. As you would be expected, this new batch of officers are scared easily, and may not have sufficient mental and physical strength to undertake this demanding job.

Not only have these requirements been lacking but they also rarely apply to those who have graduated from the Academy and entered active service. Consequently, the cop can easily slack in physical fitness. This dip in form put the suspect at risk, as well as the officer in question, his colleagues, and the society

The importance of physical fitness in policing

The role of physical fitness cannot be overemphasized in policing a community. The work of police officers is physically demanding, as such it is important they are

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helping the officer withstand stress—mental and otherwise.

Furthermore, suspects subconsciously assess the officer physique they encounter. Reports from FBI cases in 10 years revealed that the suspects always size up the law enforcement officer before deciding to flee, attack or submit to arrest.

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But this is not the narrative in America, as a good number of cops represent the overweight donut-munching officer. An FBI study reveals that eight of every ten police officers are overweight. This doesn't come as a surprise, it is for all aims and purposes the status quo.

This sets the stage for a police officer to use his firearms even in unnecessary cases.

According to a report by the 'Mapping Police Violence', 2020 about 1000 people were killed by police officers last year, way more than in any civilized country. At press time, 657 persons have been killed this year alone by the police

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# HOW DOES AMERICA compare with other countries in policing

A survey of policing in 100 countries by the Institute for Criminal Justice Training Reform (ICJTR) showed that the US was among the lowest in terms of average hours of police training and academic requirement. In a good number of European countries, the police college is as long as three years with additional two years of community work but without guns and arrests.

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A 2013 US Bureau of Justice Statistics report stated that the police officers here spend more time in firearms training (71 hours against 21 hours) than in learning how to deescalate tense situations.

The cumulative result is more police gun violence.

## A simple solution

If we are going to turn the statistics in our favor, the standards of police training should be reviewed, and

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The average police academy time should be extended. Police officers should learn how to manage tense scenarios with and without firearms.

## Conclusion

Physical fitness is more than just push-ups, sit-ups, weight lifting, and the like, it includes taking necessary dietary modifications, time to mentally and spiritually recharge, etc.

The police departments across the US should take this prospect seriously, and raise recruitment standards as it could be the answer to the unnecessary deaths.

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[Mapping Police Violence](#)

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