

# How to look after yourself when wearing body armour

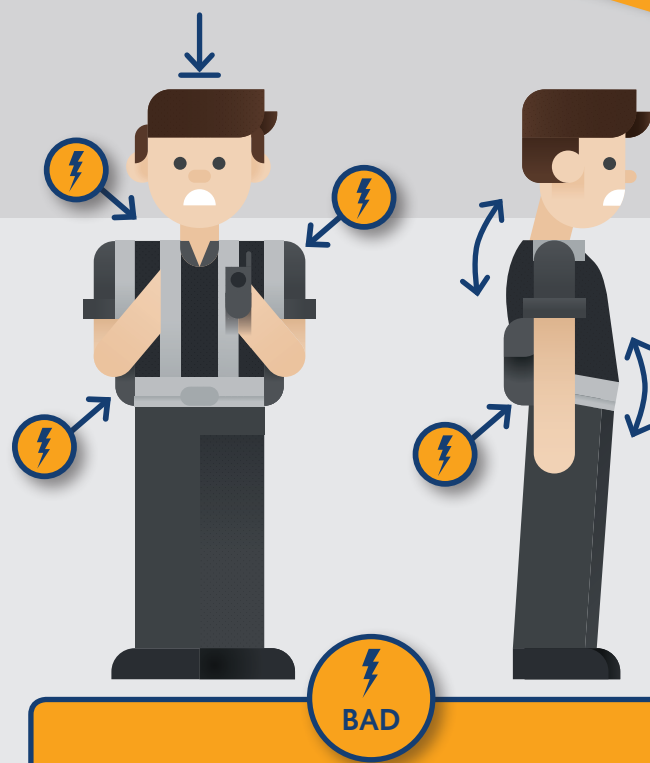


This leaflet has been created by the physiotherapists at the Police Treatment Centres to help you look after your body whilst wearing body armour. Body armour is often blamed for back or neck pain, but there are multiple factors that can play a role.

The Police Treatment Centres



- ✓ Thinking tall will lengthen your spine, enabling appropriate stacking of the whole body.
- ✓ Lengthen the back of the neck and gently nod the chin.
- ✓ Soften the lower back whilst staying upright, gently open your chest and ensure that your hips are level.
- ✓ Feel grounded and weight bear evenly through your feet.



- ⚡ Avoid stuffing your hands in the front of your body armour and/or slouching. This shifts your centre of gravity forward slightly, so you will have to compensate by poking your chin out, extending your neck, curving your mid back, tipping the pelvis and putting your weight onto your toes. This reduces the work of the gluteal (bottom) muscles, allowing your back, neck and shoulders to be less supported and compressed as a result.

## UNIFORM WEIGHT (without kit)



80kg

An Average Officer

+  
2-3kg  
3.75%

Routine Patrol Body Armour

+  
6-7kg  
8.75%

Firearms Body Armour

## Loading equally

- Try to ensure that you equally load your kit onto your body armour. This will help to prevent asymmetrical loading on your spine, shoulders and pelvis, and doing so will help to reduce the risk of developing abnormal wear and tear, arthritic changes and prolapsed discs.
- Regularly change your body position to avoid a build up of unwanted stresses on the body.
- Remove your body armour when it is safe to do so, during meal breaks etc. to give you regular rests from the armour.

## Poor fitting

Should you lose or gain weight, make sure you get your body armour refitted! If it isn't snug, you will have to work harder to move in it during your shift. If it feels restrictive, you may struggle to run and deal with frontline incidents with ease.

## Keep active

As a Police Officer you should try to keep yourself fit and healthy; consider maintaining a healthy weight, a healthy balanced diet, hydration and regular exercise. Classes such as Pilates, yoga and tai-chi are good ways to encourage strength, flexibility and improve body awareness and balance. Find examples of classes and exercises on our website.

## WEARING YOUR BODY ARMOUR IN VEHICLES



The Police Treatment Centres is a registered charity that provides treatment, support & recuperation. We specialise in intensive police-specific physiotherapy and rehabilitation for injured and ill police officers either during service or in retirement.

Support is offered to donating Serving officers & Retired Police Officers, PCSO's, Special Constables and Detention and Custody officers primarily in the northern forces of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, but also from British Transport

Police, the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and the Ministry of Defence Police. Serving officers currently make a donation from their pay of £1.80 per week (65p per week for retired).

If you are an officer from outside our constituent forces, please contact your Federation or Occupational Health Department for further support.

The advice provided here is for general information only and should not be treated as a substitute for professional supervision or advice. By following this advice you agree to do at your own risk. The Police Treatment Centres cannot be held responsible for any injuries which may occur as a result of this advice.

Kindly printed by the PFEW



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