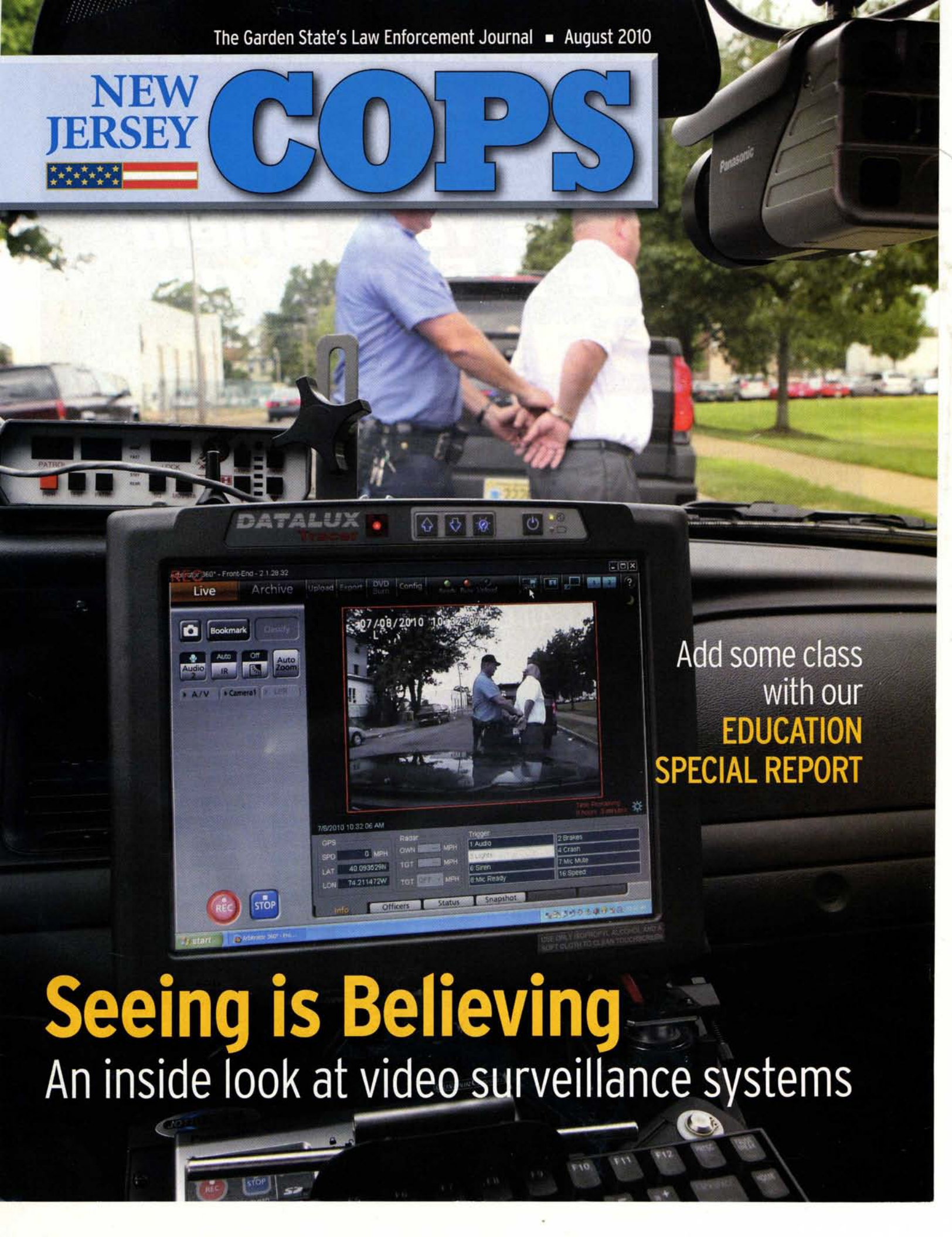


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Interval training can help on the run

It's safe to say that at some point in the performance of your job as a police officer, you'll have to run. But any running that you do in the line of duty is more likely to be an all-out sprint than a long-distance run. For instance, you may have to chase a suspect, run up several flights of stairs or dash off to an emergency down the block. A great way to improve your fitness and prepare for the job-specific demands of a police officer is interval training.



Matt Brzycki

WHAT IT IS

Essentially, interval training involves intense effort (the work interval) alternated with adequate relief (the recovery interval). In other words, you'd do an intense effort, recover, do another intense effort, recover and continue this pattern until the workout is complete.

The duration of the work interval dictates the duration of the recovery interval. If the work interval is less than about 30 seconds, the recovery interval should be at least three times as long; if the work interval is about 30 to 90 seconds, the recovery interval should be two to three times as long; and if the work interval is about 90 to 180 seconds, the recovery interval should be one to two times as long. To illustrate, a work interval that takes you 20 seconds to complete should be followed by a recovery interval of at least 60 seconds [20 sec x 3 = 60 sec].

Another way to determine the duration of the recovery intervals is based on your heart rate. In this way, you can personalize a recovery interval so that you're physiologically ready to begin a subsequent work interval. For example, you might start the next work interval when your heart rate drops to a predetermined level such as 60 percent of your age-predicted maximum. For a 30-year-old individual, this would mean waiting until your heart rate is about 114 beats per minute before hitting the next work interval.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Interval training is frequently used in running and swimming. Nevertheless, it can be easily adapted to just about any



type of physical activity. For instance, if your goal in a particular workout is to run four 400-meter sprints in 90 seconds per sprint, you could simply bike, row or do another activity with an intense effort for 90 seconds a total of four times.

An interval workout usually begins with longer efforts and tapers to shorter ones. So in a workout that consists of sprinting several repetitions of 400, 200 and 100 meters, you'd do all of the 400s then all of the 200s then all of the 100s.

Interval training involves a high level of intensity. Therefore, it shouldn't be done more than once or twice a week.

For work intervals that are about 1.5 minutes (90 seconds) or less, the total distance of your workout shouldn't exceed about 1.5 to 2 miles (or about 2,400 to 3,200 meters) of running; for work intervals that are about 1.5 minutes or more, the total distance of your workout shouldn't exceed about 2-2.5 miles (or about 3,200 to 4,000 meters) of running.

A prescription for interval training can be written in shorthand. In the language of interval training, for example, "2x800" means "two work intervals of 800 meters."

Here are six sample workouts for interval training to be used for running:

1. **Workout #1:** 2x800
2. **Workout #2:** 1x800, 2x400
3. **Workout #3:** 1x600, 2x400, 1x200
4. **Workout #4:** 1x600, 1x400, 3x200
5. **Workout #5:** 4x400
6. **Workout #6:** 2x400, 2x200, 4x100

Note that swimming distances equate to roughly 25 percent of running distances. So, swimming 100 meters (freestyle) is roughly the same as running 400 meters.

PROGRESSIVE DEMANDS

As your level of fitness improves, it's important for you to make your interval training more of a challenge. To do this, you can cover the same distances in shorter amounts of time; decrease the duration of the recovery intervals; or cover longer distances at the same pace.

Remember that for interval training to be effective, it must be done in an aggressive and enthusiastic fashion. Simply put, your level of intensity during interval training must be sky high.

Finally, it should be noted that before you initiate any interval training, you must first establish a solid base of support with aerobic training.

Interval training is an excellent way to enhance your fitness and ready you for the physical challenges that are specific to your role as a police officer. ♥

Matt Brzycki is the Assistant Director of Campus Recreation, Fitness at Princeton University. A former Marine Drill Instructor, he has authored, co-authored or edited 16 books on strength and fitness, including SWAT Fitness (which is available at www.optacinternational.com).