Special Olympics
Be a fan.

Principles of Coaching Course
Coach Workbook

April 2010
The Principles of Coaching Course is a program that has been developed by Special Olympics in response to needs expressed by coaches, volunteers, and family members in the field. This Coach Workbook has been designed to be used as part of the Principles of Coaching Course educational program.

Special Olympics wishes to thank the Special Olympics Course Development Committee, the professionals who designed and authored the course and Course Workbook and the many coaches and volunteers who helped in the revisions of the course. Truly, they have helped fulfill the mission of Special Olympics to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people eight years of age and older with intellectual disability, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Introduction
- Principles of Coaching: Certification 4-7
- Special Olympics Coaches Certification Program 5
- Special Olympics Job Description 6

## Module 1
**Coaching in Special Olympics: Understanding Philosophy** 9-19
- Exercise #1: Defining the Mission of Special Olympics 9
- Exercise #2: Picturing a Special Olympics Athlete 10
- Exercise #3: Identifying Eligibility for Special Olympics 10
- Intellectual Disability 11
- Eligibility for Special Olympics 12
- Motor Activities Training Program 13
- Unified Sports® and Related Programs 14
- Exercise #4: Defining Winning 15
- Exercise #5: Identifying Your Coaching Philosophy 15
- Exercise #6: Identifying Philosophical Similarities and Differences in Your Sports Program 16
- Exercise #7: Developing a Picture of Your Coaching Style 17-18
- Summary Questions 19

## Module 2
**Sports Planning for the Coach: Using the Sport Management Team Approach** 21-31
- Exercise #8: Developing Your Staff 21-22
- Exercise #9: Determining the Value of Your Program 23
- Family Orientation Program and Agenda 24
- Families 25-26
- Family Home Training Program Sample 27
- Assistant Coach Orientation Program and Agenda 28
- Exercise #10: Managing the Group 29
- Exercise #11: Developing a Training Session Plan 30
- Summary Questions 31
Module 3
Coaching Sport Skills and Developing Sport Confidence

- Exercise #12: Selecting Sports
- Exercise #13: Identifying Sources of Motivation
- Exercise #14: Developing Sport Confidence
- Exercise #15: Setting Realistic Goals
- Motivation Through Goal Setting
- Training Through Skill Progression
- Communicating with Athletes with Intellectual Disability
- Exercise #16: Communicating with Athletes
- Exercise #17: Providing Positive Reinforcement to Athletes
- Exercise #18: Managing Athlete Behavioral Challenges
- Summary Questions

Module 4
Sport-Specific Performance Training and Nutrition for Special Olympics Athletes

- Methods; Program Design; The Simplicity Method; Principles of Training
- Warm-up and Flexibility Exercises – Four Phases
- Cardiovascular Exercise
- Resistance Training for Increased Performance
- Progressions – Increasing Levels of Demand (Visual)
- Sports Mapping
- Identification Charts for Pre-Season and In-Season Training (Ambulatory & Non-ambulatory)
- Enhanced Agility Movement Program – Two Phases
- Healthy Diet Chart; Sports Nutrition
- Exercise #19: Developing a Sport-Specific Performance Training Program for your Sport
- Summary Questions

Module 5
Sport Safety and Risk Management

- Sport Safety and Risk Management
- Special Considerations for Special Olympics Athletes
- Atlantoaxial Instability in Down Syndrome
- Safety Checklist
- Selection and Conduct of the Activity
- Sport Safety and Risk Management Responsibilities
- Exercise #20: Developing an Emergency Action Plan
- Supervisory Planning Guide
- Summary Questions
- Notes
Since the introduction of the Special Olympics training school for coaches in 1980, more than 260,000 volunteer coaches have been trained in seminars or courses conducted around the world. We have begun to see the impact of coaches training in the performance of Special Olympics athletes.

As Special Olympics has expanded and evolved over the years, it has become clearly evident that the key to offering quality training for Special Olympics athletes is the local coach. If coaches are educated in coaching methods and techniques, then the mission of Special Olympics in offering quality sports training and athletic competition is enhanced.

The Principles of Coaching Course builds upon the foundation established in the Special Olympics training school. It explores in greater detail many of the topics discussed in the original course. In addition, new areas in the Principles of Coaching Course will give the coach a better understanding of his or her role in fulfilling the mission of the program.

While it would be helpful for a coach to have already become certified through an initial Sport-Specific Skills Course, it is not a requirement. It is recommended that coaches who attend the Principles of Coaching Course should have either Special Olympics Sport-Specific Skills certification or a coaching or competition background of three or more years at the high school or college level.

The objectives of the Principles of Coaching Course are:

- To develop an understanding of Special Olympics and to identify a coaching philosophy for each participant,
- To apply the sport management team approach in recruiting athletes, volunteers, and family members and in developing training plans for conducting sport-specific training programs for Special Olympics athletes,
- To identify practical methods for enhancing athlete performance by developing sport confidence through effective coaching techniques,
- To apply the principles of strength, endurance, coordination, agility and flexibility training and nutrition to enhance sport-specific performance as they apply to the Special Olympics athlete, and
- To provide the safest environment for Special Olympics athletes during training and competition.
PRINCIPLES OF COACHING

Certification

What constitutes Special Olympics Principles of Coaching certification?

The Special Olympics Principles of Coaching Course is a coaching education program designed to instruct professionals, volunteers, and family members in the basic strategies of being a Special Olympics coach. This six-hour course is not sport-specific, but instead covers the general principles of coaching athletes with intellectual disabilities. The course is conducted in a classroom setting and is presented using PowerPoint, discussion and small group exercises. Certification includes four major components:

1. **Special Olympics General Orientation** [one time only] *(90-120 minutes)*
   - History and Overview of Special Olympics
   - Organizational Structure
   - Participants and Eligibility
   - Sports Training and Competition

   **Protective Behaviors** [needs to be taken every three years] *(60 minutes)*

2. **Principles of Coaching Course** *(6 hours)*
   - Module 1—Coaching in Special Olympics: Understanding Philosophy
   - Module 2—Sports Planning for the Coach: Using the Sport Management Team Approach
   - Module 3—Coaching Sport Skills and Developing Sport Confidence
   - Module 4—Sport-Specific Performance Training and Nutrition for Special Olympics Athletes
   - Module 5—Sport Safety and Risk Management

3. **Practicum requirement of working with Special Olympics athletes** *(10 hours, only needed for entry-level certification only)*

4. **Completed, submitted and processed certification application through National or U.S. Program office**
COACH CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Building blocks toward becoming a skilled coach

Ongoing Coaching Education

Comprehensive Mentoring
Sport Mentoring and assistance
- Working with Experienced Coach-Mentors
- Comprehensive Standards

Tactics Course
Sport-Specific
- Advanced Training Principles
- In-Depth Skill Development
- Competition Tactics and Strategies
- Sport-Specific Performance Training

Principles of Coaching Course
General
- Application of Coaching Philosophy
- Planning and Administration
- Sports Psychology
- Physical Preparation and Nutrition

Sport-Specific Skills Course;
Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course;
Motor Activities Training Program;
Unified Sports® Course
- Practice Plans
- Fundamental Skills Development
- Rules
- Competition/Game Understanding

General Orientation and Protective Behaviors
General
- Special Olympics Mission and Philosophy
- Organizational History and Structure
- Intellectual Disability
- Sports Rules
- Protective Behaviors

Working with Athletes
Comprehensive Mentoring
Working with Athletes
Training Seminar
Working with Athletes
Training Seminar
10-hour Practicum with Athletes
Training Seminar
Foundation of Special Olympics
Position: Coach

Description: The Special Olympics coach is responsible for providing athletes with comprehensive sports training and preparation for local, area, state, provincial, national, and regional level competition.

Responsibilities:

1. To select, assess and train Special Olympics athletes.

   **Athlete selection:** The Special Olympics coach will recruit athletes and properly complete and submit all required medical and registration materials by established deadlines.

   **Assessment:** The Special Olympics coach will assess each athlete to determine the individual and/or team skill level for training and competition in selected sports.

   **Training:** The Special Olympics coach will develop individualized training programs for each athlete. The program shall include instruction in fundamental skills, conditioning, competition, and rules. The training program should be a minimum of eight weeks.

2. To know, understand and abide by the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

3. To know and understand the sport being coached.

4. To execute the legal duties of a coach:

   - Provide proper planning for each step of training and competition.
   - Provide and maintain a safe and secure physical environment.
   - Use acceptable and safe equipment.
   - Ensure appropriate sport skills instruction and safe competition.
   - Match athletes according to strength, size, and ability.
   - Continually assess each athlete for participation in appropriate activities within, not challenged beyond, his or her abilities and capabilities.
   - Inform athletes of inherent risks associated with a specific sport.
   - Ensure acceptable supervision and maintain an adequate 4:1 volunteer-to-athlete ratio.
   - Establish an emergency action plan that includes procedures for emergency medical support, postponements or cancellations, crisis communication, and incident and accident reporting.
   - Provide appropriate medical support at all times.
   - Maintain accurate records.
Module 1

Coaching in Special Olympics: Understanding Philosophy

Objective: To develop an understanding of Special Olympics and to identify a coaching philosophy for each participant.

Exercise #1  Defining the Mission of Special Olympics

Write a sentence that describes the mission of Special Olympics.

Select the key concepts from the official mission statement of Special Olympics and rewrite it in your own words.
Exercise #2 Picturing a Special Olympics Athlete

Picture a Special Olympics athlete. List some of his or her characteristics.

Age _______
Male or female _______
Sport(s) participate in __________________________________________________________________________
Any other characteristics _______________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Exercise #3 Identifying Eligibility for Special Olympics

Who is eligible to compete in Special Olympics?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
What is intellectual disability?

According to the most widely accepted definition by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disability (AAIDD, formerly, AAMR), an individual is considered to have intellectual disability based on the following criteria: significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skill areas, and the condition is present from childhood (defined as 18 years or younger).

Adaptive skill areas are those daily living skills needed to live, work, and play in the community. The new definition includes 10 adaptive skills: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, leisure, health and safety, self-direction, functional academics, community use, and work.

Adaptive skills are assessed in the person's typical environment across all aspects of an individual's life. A person with limits in intellectual functioning who does not have limits in adaptive skills may not be diagnosed as having intellectual disability.

Children with intellectual disability grow into adults with intellectual disability; they do not remain “eternal children.”

How prevalent is intellectual disability?

The following numbers are estimates based on information from the Population Reference Bureau, The ARC (formerly the Association of Retarded Citizens), the World Health Organization and various associations for people with disabilities.

In the world

According to the World Health Organization (1994), an estimated 156 million people, or three percent of the world's population have intellectual disability.

Prevalence by continent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>20,310,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>15,390,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>525,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>13,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>97,710,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>8,610,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the United States

There are an estimated 7.5 million people with intellectual disability. This is approximately two and a half to three percent of the U.S. population.

Intellectual disability is:

- 15 times more prevalent than cerebral palsy
- 36 times more prevalent than total blindness
- 15 times more prevalent than total deafness
- 30 times more prevalent than neural tube defects such as spina bifida

(These estimates are based on figures from The ARC, the Cerebral Palsy Association, and the 1990 National Health Interview Survey.)

The effect of intellectual disability

About 87 percent of people with intellectual disability have mild intellectual disability. The remaining 13 percent of people, those with IQs under 50, have serious limitations in functioning. Intellectual disability cuts across lines of race, education, social, and economic backgrounds. It can occur to anyone. Heredity components are known to account for only a fraction of the cases. There are well over 350 causes of intellectual disability; in three-fourths of the cases the specific cause is unknown. The largest percentage of all people with intellectual disability have mild intellectual disability and in many respects are indistinguishable from people who do not have intellectual disability.
ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Under the “Eligibility” section of the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules, it states that people are eligible for Special Olympics provided they meet the following criteria:

1. People age eight and above who are considered to have intellectual disability* as determined by their localities.

2. People with closely related developmental disabilities** such as those who have functional limitations, both in general learning and in adaptive skills, such as recreation, work, independent living, self-direction, or self-care.

Note: People with functional limitations based solely on a physical, behavioral, emotional, specific learning disability, or sensory disability are not eligible.

* Any person eight (8) years of age or older who is identified as having intellectual disability by an agency or a professional in any given local area is considered eligible for Special Olympics. Other terms that may be used synonymously with intellectual disability include: cognitive disabilities, mental handicaps, or mentally challenged.

** When the term “intellectual disability” or other similar description is not used to identify the person in a local area, eligibility should be determined by whether or not the person has functional limitations in both general learning and adaptive skills. “Developmental disability” is the term most often used to describe persons with both limitations. Other terms that may be used synonymously with developmental disabilities are developmental handicap, developmentally delayed, or severe disabilities.

General learning limitations refers to substantial deficits in conceptual, practical, and social intelligence that will result in performance problems in academic learning and/or general life functioning. Learning limitations may be assessed by standardized tests (such as intelligence or achievement tests) or through criterion-referenced measures (such as teacher/parent observations or actual performance samples).

Adaptive skills limitations refers to on-going performance deficits in skill areas considered essential to successful life functioning. These adaptive skills areas include: communication, self-care, home-living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, recreation/leisure, and work. Adaptive skills limitations may be measured by standardized tests (such as adaptive behavior scales or checklists) or through criterion-referenced measures (such as teacher/parent observations or actual performance samples).

If a person is identified as having a developmental disability with functional limitations in both general learning and adaptive skills, it must still be determined by an agency or a professional whether or not the functional limitations are solely due to intellectual disability or a closely related developmental disability. If the functional limitations are solely due to physical disabilities, emotional disturbance, behavior disorders, specific learning disabilities, visual impairments, or sensory disabilities, this person is not eligible for Special Olympics.

The Motor Activities Training Program (MATP) provides comprehensive motor activity and recreation training for people with severe intellectual disability or multiple disabilities. The emphasis is on training and participation rather than competition. MATP is part of the commitment by Special Olympics to offer sports training opportunities to individuals with intellectual disability of all ability levels.

MATP was launched in 1989 after five years of consultation with educators, physical therapists and recreation specialists and after field testing in the United States and several other countries. A comprehensive Motor Activities Training Program Guide has been developed to assist trainers.

How it works
MATP trains athletes in motor-based recreation activities and enables them to take part in a program which is appropriate to the age and ability of each individual. After a training period of at least eight weeks, participants may take part in a Special Olympics Challenge Day. Each participant is given an opportunity to demonstrate his or her personal best in an activity and to be recognized for this accomplishment. The skills learned through MATP also enable people with severe disabilities to participate in community recreational activities with their non-disabled peers.

While the goal of MATP is not necessarily to prepare persons with severe disabilities to participate in sports, many MATP participants will gain the skills required to compete in certain Special Olympics sports.

MATP trains participants in seven basic motor activities designed to relate to specific sports. The skills also complement training by educators and therapists in daily living skills.

**MATP**
- Dexterity - athletics
- Mobility - gymnastics
- Kicking - football (soccer)
- Striking - softball
- Swimming - aquatics
- Manual wheelchair - athletics
- Electric wheelchair - athletics

MATP can be implemented through schools, group homes, residential facilities and other community-based settings. Training for volunteers is available through Special Olympics Motor Activities Training seminars or courses conducted by local Special Olympics Programs.
Unified Sports®
Unified Sports® is a program that provides individuals with intellectual disability (athletes) and individuals without intellectual disability (partners) the opportunity to train and compete together as a team. The purpose of the program is to provide an environment in which all participants can improve sports skills through training and competition. Unified Sports® is most successful when all participants are matched according to ability and age. Teams are constructed in such a way as to provide training and competition opportunities that meaningfully challenge all participants and often lead to improved self-esteem, equal status with peers, and new friendships.

Unified Sports® has become an important addition to the overall Special Olympics movement and has helped further reach its mission by providing an additional choice and opportunity for athletes. Unified Sports® is a program that has been extremely successful in helping reach new athletes and retain those looking for new opportunities. The Unified Sports® model has also been seen by schools, parks and recreation departments and other sports organizations as an excellent way to meet public policy and philosophical mandates and provide more inclusive programming. Finally, it provides a valuable sports opportunity for those in communities where there are not enough Special Olympics athletes to conduct team sports.

Special Olympics, Inc. (SOI) provides Unified Sports® Handbooks to help a school organize, establish this program, and provide a training curriculum and certification for Unified Sports® coaches. Unified Sports® events have been structured in every Special Olympics sport.

Partners Clubs®
Special Olympics Partners Clubs® are in existence in hundreds of schools across the United States and are beginning all over the world. Student groups volunteer their time as one-on-one peer coaching assistants and teammates. In addition, club members often conduct fund-raising events, plan social events and extend friendships beyond the sports program.

Sports Partnerships
Special Olympics Sport Partnerships involve schools' varsity and/or junior varsity teams. This concept makes Special Olympics teams part of the school's existing sports program or league. Special Olympics athletes are given the opportunity to train and compete alongside their peers. They wear the same uniforms, ride the same team bus to competitions, compete against other schools' Special Olympics athletes, qualify to earn athletic letters, and represent their school in local, area, sectional, and state or provincial Special Olympics competitions. Varsity or junior varsity athletes serve as mentors, peer coaches, scrimmage teammates, and boosters during competitions.
Exercise #4  Defining Winning

What does winning mean to you? Identify several key words or phrases that describe your philosophy of winning.

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Exercise #5  Identifying Your Coaching Philosophy

Identify your motivation for coaching and what you hope to achieve with your athletes.

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
Exercise #6  Identifying Philosophical Similarities and Differences in Your Sports Program

Review the four sport philosophies listed across the top of the graph.

Select the philosophy which best represents each of six groups of people associated with your sports organization:

- your athletes,
- you as coach and the other coaches,
- your athletes’ families,
- your athletes’ schools, agencies, and/or Area,
- your National or U.S. Program, and
- Special Olympics International.

Blacken the circle at the point where each philosophy intersects with the respective level of your sports organization. If your interpretation of a philosophy falls between two of the philosophies, select the philosophy which best identifies the one most commonly practiced.

Draw a line to connect the blackened circles.
## Exercise #7  Developing a Picture of Your Coaching Style

### Part I

There are 15 rows of four words (across). On each row (across) select the two words out of four which best describe the way you see yourself. If all four words sound like you, only select the two that are most like you. If none of the four sound like you, select the two that are closest to the way you are.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All-business</td>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>Personable</td>
<td>Deliberate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Telling</td>
<td>Courteous</td>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrious</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Companionable</td>
<td>Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-nonsense</td>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>Talkative</td>
<td>Reflective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious</td>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>Careful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To-the-point</td>
<td>Risk-taker</td>
<td>Amiable (Easy Going)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>Empathetic</td>
<td>Non-assertive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-controlled</td>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>Show emotions</td>
<td>Thorough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal-directed</td>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodical</td>
<td>Unhesitating</td>
<td>Sincere</td>
<td>Prudent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business-like</td>
<td>Definite</td>
<td>Sociable</td>
<td>Precise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diligent</td>
<td>Firm</td>
<td>Demonstrative</td>
<td>Particular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic</td>
<td>Strong-minded</td>
<td>Sense of humor</td>
<td>Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>Hesititative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persevering</td>
<td>Forceful</td>
<td>Trusting</td>
<td>Restained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Special Olympics Principles of Coaching Course  ▼  Coach Workbook  17
Exercise #7  Developing a Picture of Your Coaching Style

Part II

On the previous page, total the number of words circled under each respective column. Plot those numbers on their respective axes of the grid below. For example, if you circled six words in column A, mark the A axis next to the 6. Complete the same procedure for columns B, C, and D. Then extend the marks into each respective quadrant to create a rectangle.
Summary Questions

1. What is the mission of Special Olympics?

2. Who is eligible to compete in Special Olympics?

3. Describe the concept of Unified Sports®.
## Objective
To apply the sport management team approach in recruiting athletes, volunteers, and family members and in developing training plans for conducting sport-specific training programs for Special Olympics Athletes.

### Exercise #8  Developing Your Staff

#### Part I
Select a Special Olympics sport that you coach or in which you are familiar. Identify the different responsibilities that a head coach must ensure that is covered. Name a position that describes that responsibility. Write a brief job description next to that position. For example, one position might be equipment manager; the job description would reflect what that would entail.

**Sport**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Job Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Exercise #8   Developing Your Staff

Part II

Within the chart below, identify each position noted on the previous page. Also list the individuals in your community or program who are assigned or could be assigned to each position.

**Sport Management Team:**
Head Coach and Staff

- Head Coach

Diagram with positions labeled, but specific individuals are not listed.
Exercise #9  Determining the Value of Your Program

**Expense Budget**

Select a Special Olympics sport and determine its total expense budget.

Sport ________________________________

**Training and competition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniforms</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recognition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Coaches</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletes</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Administrative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>$</td>
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<td>Telephone</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL $ ______________________**
# Family Orientation Program

## Family Orientation Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Olympics Mission and Philosophy</td>
<td>10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Philosophy</td>
<td>10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration, Slides or Film</td>
<td>20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Specifics</td>
<td>20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Involvement</td>
<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions &amp; Answers</td>
<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 min</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Introductions**

Family includes immediate and extended family members. The beginning of any family orientation program should begin with introductions. Go around the room and allow each family member to introduce themselves and mention a little bit about their involvement with Special Olympics. You and your assistant coaches should also take part in introducing yourselves and briefly discussing your background.

**Special Olympics Mission and Philosophy**

Discuss the Special Olympics mission and philosophy. Handouts are usually very helpful.

**Coaching Philosophy**

Present your coaching philosophy. Make clear your position on winning vs. participation, achieving personal goals, etc.

**Demonstration, Slides or Video Presentation**

Show slides of last year's training program or conduct an athlete demonstration. Be sure to include athletes participating with high and low ability levels.

**Program Specifics**

Present training schedules, sites and times, competition dates, the overall structure of your training program, and home training program.

**Family Involvement**

Who is going to do what? Prepare a list of jobs along with the responsibilities and expectations. Will parents or providers have to transport athletes? Will they need to buy training equipment and/or apparel for the athletes? Do you need help with registration, fund raising, public relations, etc.?

**Question & Answer Session**

Allow time for questions and answers. Do not be afraid to let your assistant coaches establish their presence by answering questions and providing direction to families.
A family includes immediate and extended family members who provide support, assistance, and care to other family members. Families with children who have disabilities are like other families. However, having a child or caring for a child with special needs often thrusts them into situations that may make their everyday lives more challenging. Special Olympics allows families opportunities to be a part of a year-round sports training and competition program. Opportunities for sports, social interaction, and fun are provided to the entire family.

**Special Olympics is an opportunity...**
- for families to share in the accomplishments of their children,
- to share the Special Olympics joy with other families, and
- to allow the extended family the opportunity to be part of a year-round sports training and competition program.

Families are the most powerful resource for Special Olympics. Families help coach, transport, officiate, chaperone, and fund raise for athletes and train other volunteers. Families are the most highly motivated and enthusiastic goodwill ambassadors for Special Olympics. The Special Olympics Families Program provides educational and legal information, support, and compassion to families of children with intellectual disability.

**The Special Olympics families program offers support through...**
- newsletters, reaching more than 500,000 family members,
- brochures for family members and support groups,
- family seminars and sports camps,
- family days and family committees,
- family receptions at Games and special events,
- family hospitality rooms at Games,
- the family awards and recognition program,
- referral systems for families seeking professional assistance, and
- family home training programs which assist in sports training and physical conditioning.

Special Olympics Families Programs continue to grow. In 1968, at the first International Special Olympics Games in Chicago, fewer than 200 family members were present. In 1995 at the ninth Special Olympics Summer World Games in New Haven, Connecticut, more than 10,000 family members attended the Games, representing 58 percent of the athletes participating in the Games.

Family involvement worldwide has grown to more than 450,000 family members. Since 1968, family programs have been established in over 140 countries around the world and in all 50 United States and the District of Columbia.

**Special Olympics family statistics...**
- Married 75%
- Average number of children per family 3.2
- Average number of Special Olympic athletes per family 1

**Family participation:**
- Spectator at Games 84%
- Family activities at Games 78%
- Fund raising 53%
- Chaperone at events 51%
- Transportation providers 51%
- Volunteer coach 48%
- Family committees 46%
- Percentage of certified coaches 27%
- Coaches training 22%
- Family home training 22%
- Family dinners and picnics 20%
- Games Management Team members 11%
- Family camps 9%
- Speech presentations for outreach 8%
- Booster clubs 6%

**Athlete and family growth:**
- Families reporting improvement of their child's self-image 97%
- Families reporting a new dimension of happiness for the family through Special Olympics 91%
- Families reporting that Special Olympics is a good support group for the family 100%
- Families sharing in the accomplishments of their child in Special Olympics 99%

*(The above statistics were gathered using a 1995 Special Olympics families' survey.)*

Special Olympics family networks work closely with other professional organizations to provide educational, legal, and parenting information in support of families with special needs children.

**Support organizations working with Special Olympics...**
- National Parent Teachers Association (PTA)
- Parent to Parent Network
- *Exceptional Parent* Magazine
- National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHY)
- National Association of State Directors of Special Education
- President’s Committee on Employment of Individuals with Disability
- Administration on Developmental Disabilities
- Family Resource Coalition
- National Parent Network on Disabilities
- The ARC
- Beach Center on Families and Disability

Special Olympics can provide family members with a sense of pride in their athletes who participate, a sense of accomplishment through sports, and the hopes of an exciting, bright future for the individual as an athlete and citizen in any community.
# ATHLETE ACTION!

(A Special Olympics athlete’s home training program)

Name _____________________________________

Week of ______________

Coaches comments *(Briefly describe today’s training session; each training session is worth 3 points.)*

---

## Game Plan

### Athletes

Record your daily point score by adding each action you complete. Remember, each action is worth one point (maximum of three points per day). Each Special Olympics training session attended with your team is worth three points.

### Coaches

It is fun to compile a team score each week. You can set a weekly score for your team to beat as an incentive to practice at home and score points for the team. (An example of an incentive program is: 100 points = patch; 200 points = T-shirt.) Encourage Partners Club® members to assist with home training sessions.

### Families

It is beneficial to join in the home training session. Encourage brothers, sisters, friends, and neighbors to assist. Make these training sessions part of your leisure time.

---

## ACTION!

### Warm-Up and Stretching (1 point)

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<tr>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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### Skill Work (1 point)

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### Strength and Conditioning (1 point)

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<th>5</th>
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**Athlete's Scorecard**

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<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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Special Olympics Principles of Coaching Course  ▼  Coach Workbook  27
Assistant Coach Orientation Agenda

Introductions 5 minutes
Allow all coaches in attendance to introduce themselves and give a brief background of their involvement in sport, coaching, and Special Olympics.

Special Olympics Mission and Philosophy 15 minutes
Discuss the Special Olympics mission and philosophy. Handouts are usually very helpful.

Your Coaching Philosophy 10 minutes
Present your coaching philosophy. Make clear your position on winning vs. participation, achieving personal goals, etc. A brief questionnaire that includes the statement of their coaching philosophies may be helpful. Prepare for discussion.

Program Specifics 20 minutes
Present training schedules, sites and times, competition dates, and the overall structure of your program.

Coaching Responsibilities 15 minutes
Discuss specific assignments for the season. Who is coaching what sport? Who is assisting whom? Who will be responsible for first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)? Who will be responsible for charting, medicals, etc.?

Division of Responsibilities 20 minutes
Handouts are a must and should include Sports Skills Program Guides and any additional materials that will make each volunteer a better coach.
You arrive at your softball training session and find 20 athletes scattered around the softball field. How would you get the attention of the whole group and organize them so that you can begin the practice session? Indicate several suggestions below.
Exercise #11  Developing a Training Session Plan

Sport __________________________  Date _____________  Athletes (#) ___  Coaches (#) ___

Goal for training session _______________________________________________________________________

Facility safety check:  ☐ Equipment  ☐ Playing surface  ☐ Layout  ☐ Supervision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Specific Objectives</th>
<th>Drills/Activities</th>
<th>Layout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Warm-up exercises</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stretching exercises</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Skills instruction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Competition experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Scrimmage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cool-down</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Team talk</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Summary Questions

1. What is the purpose of a sport management team?

2. Why is it important to have a Family Orientation and an Assistant Coach Orientation?

3. Why is it important to have daily training plans?
Objective: To identify practical methods for enhancing athlete performance by developing sport confidence through effective coaching techniques.

Exercise #12 Selecting Sports

How are sports selected? List the factors to consider when selecting appropriate sports for your Special Olympics athletes.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
# Exercise #13 Identifying Sources of Motivation

Motivation is often defined as *intrinsic*, where the athlete competes for the thrill and joy of sports, or *extrinsic*, where the athlete competes for an external reward. List several examples of each type of motivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrinsic</th>
<th>Extrinsic</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Exercise #14  Developing Sport Confidence

Physical preparation plus mental preparation equals sport confidence. Choose a sport. List four elements within the sport that would need to be considered to physically and mentally prepare your athletes for competition and sport confidence. Identify strategies for how each element can be taught. For example, in the sport of volleyball, one element is court lines. Strategies for teach players what the court lines are, where they are located, and what each player’s position is in relation to them would be:

- Find the white (court marking) lines.
- “Follow the leader” and actually walk the lines.
- During training, check their knowledge by asking the players to find the nearest court line.

Sport _______________________________

Element 1 __________________________________________

Strategies for teaching

• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________

Element 2 __________________________________________

Strategies for teaching

• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________

Element 3 __________________________________________

Strategies for teaching

• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________

Element 4 __________________________________________

Strategies for teaching

• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________
• __________________________________________
Exercise #15  Setting Realistic Goals

Setting realistic goals and achieving those goals are important to the motivation of athletes in training and competition.

What are the long-term goals you have set with your athletes?

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

What are the short-term goals you have set with your athletes?

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________
Goal setting has proved to be one of the most effective motivational devices developed for sport within the past three decades. While the concept is not new, the techniques for effective goal setting have been refined and clarified to the point where goal setting is perhaps the simplest and yet most effective motivational technique available today.

Goals give direction; they tell us what needs to be accomplished. They increase effort, persistence, and the quality of performance. Establishing goals also requires that the athlete and coach determine techniques for how to achieve those goals once they have been set.

**Guidelines for effective goal setting**

**Performance vs. outcome**

*Effective goals focus on performance, not outcome.* Performance is what the athlete controls. Outcomes are frequently controlled by others. An athlete may have an outstanding performance but not win a contest because other athletes have performed even better. Conversely, he may perform poorly yet still win if all other athletes perform at even a lower level than his weak performance. If his goal were to make a hit or bat .300, those goals are more under his control than winning. Even this goal is partially controlled by the skills of the defensive players. If his goal shifted to making solid contact with a pitched ball, his control over the performance is further increased. Even here, part of the performance is controlled by the skills of the pitcher. Finally, if his goal is focused on maintaining a correct stance and swinging the bat level, he has more control over his performance.

Coaches and athletes must realize that goals can be set which have varying degrees of personal control. Coaches and athletes must make practical judgments concerning how much control is necessary for the athlete to feel in control of his or her actions and in control of his or her success. For example, if the batter is at a similar skill level as the pitcher, making solid contact with the ball might be the most appropriate goal for maximally enhancing the batter's motivation.

**Measurable and specific**

*Effective goals are very specific and measurable.* Goals stated in the form of "I want to be the best that I can be!" or "I want to improve my performance!" are vague and difficult to measure. They are positive sounding but difficult, if not impossible, to assess whether they have been reached. Measurable goals must establish a baseline of performance recorded during the past one or two weeks in order to be realistic.

**Difficult but realistic**

*Effective goals are perceived as challenging, not threatening.* A challenging goal is one perceived as difficult but attainable within a reasonable amount of time, effort, or ability. A threatening goal is one perceived as being beyond one's current capacity. Realistic implies that judgment is involved. Goals based upon a baseline of performance recorded during the past one or two weeks are likely to be realistic.

**Long vs. short-term goals**

*Both long and short-term goals provide direction,* but short-term goals appear to have the greatest motivational effects. Short-term goals are more readily attainable and are stepping stones to more distant long-term goals. Unrealistic short-term goals are easier to recognize than unrealistic long-term goals. Unrealistic goals can then be modified before valuable practice time has been lost.
Positive vs. negative goal setting

Positive goals direct what to do, rather than what not to do. Negative goals direct our attention to the errors we wish to avoid or eliminate. Positive goals also require coaches and athletes to decide how they will reach those specific goals. Once the goal is decided, the athlete and coach must come up with the specific strategies and techniques which allow that goal to be successfully attained.

Set priorities

Effective goals are important to the individual and are few in number. Setting a limited number of goals requires that athletes and coaches decide what is important and fundamental for continued development. Establishing a few, carefully selected goals also allow athletes and coaches to keep more accurate records without becoming overwhelmed with record keeping.

Mutual goal setting

Goal setting becomes an effective motivational device when athletes are committed to achieving those goals. When goals are imposed or established without significant input from the athletes, motivation is unlikely to be enhanced.

Set specific time lines

Target dates provide an urgency to an athlete's efforts. Specific target dates tend to eliminate wishful thinking and clarify what goals are realistic and which are not. Time lines are especially valuable in high risk sports where fear often promotes procrastination in learning new skills.

Formal vs. informal goal setting

Some coaches and athletes think that goals must be set in formal meetings outside of practice and require long periods of thoughtful evaluation before they are decided upon. Goals are literally progressions which coaches have been using for years but are now expressed in measurable, performance terms rather than as vague, generalized outcomes.

Team vs. individual goals

While team goals appear to have great importance for team sports, the reality is that most team goals can be broken down into individual roles or responsibilities. Each player must achieve these individual roles or responsibilities for the team to function effectively.

Goal setting domains

When asked to set goals, athletes typically focus on the learning of new skills or performances in competitions. A major role of the coach is to broaden the athlete's perception of those areas in which goal setting can be an effective tool. Goals can be set to enhance fitness, to improve attendance, to increase intensity, to promote sportsmanship, to develop team spirit, to find more free time, or to establish consistency.

Summary

Goal setting is a very structured and effective contribution by sports psychology towards improved sports performance and enhanced motivation on the part of both athletes and coaches. As with any coaching strategy, its benefits are most obvious when used in the context of mutual involvement and mutual respect between athletes and coaches. While no technique can guarantee success, goal setting increases the likelihood that coaches and athletes are working toward the same objectives. In addition, goal setting clarifies more precisely the dimensions of success.
## TRAINING THROUGH SKILL PROGRESSION

**Task:**
Is the execution of an assignment or instruction which serves in the development of a predetermined skill.

**Skill:**
Is the ability that comes from the successful achievement of tasks, knowledge, practice, and aptitude.

**Application:**
Is the act of putting to a special use or purpose within a given structural activity.

**Competition:**
Is the actual event in which skill is performed in a contest involving rules.

### Goal Setting Through Progressions

#### Individual sport training sequence

**Example:** running

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Proper leg lift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport Skill</td>
<td>Running with proper leg action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Distance running</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>1500 meters competition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Team sports training sequence

**Example:** football (soccer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Kicking the ball</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport Skill</td>
<td>Passing the ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Football skills (pass)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Team competition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are many components in effectively teaching athletes with intellectual disability sports skills. One area that is commonly overlooked is the level of instruction to which the athlete responds.

How Do You Communicate?
How do you present instruction? Does the athlete comprehend verbal instruction? Is demonstration of the task required, or do you have to physically prompt or assist the athlete? These are important questions.

Even though some athletes generally respond to one form of presentation, you as coach and teacher must utilize all levels of instruction.

Level 1 - VERBAL INSTRUCTION is the most common form of instruction and should be used first when presenting new skills. Be conscious of presenting the task in one-, two-, or three-part directions. All language should be clear and consistent throughout the lesson. Using simple key words is essential. For example, a lay-up should always be a lay-up and not a toss or a shot. Language should be clear, concise, consistent, and command oriented.

Level 2 - DEMONSTRATION is the universal language and can be used by the coach to assist with the verbal instruction of a task. When a task becomes too difficult for the athlete to verbally comprehend, demonstration should be used. When a new skill is presented, it is usually more effective to link demonstration and verbal instruction.

Level 3 - PHYSICAL PROMPTING should be used when verbal and demonstration instruction yield unsatisfactory results. Guidance by touch to prompt the athlete into proper position is an example of a physical prompt. Demonstration and verbal instruction should also be used when using this level of instruction.

Level 4 - PHYSICAL ASSISTANCE is used when all other levels of instruction are exhausted. This level requires the coach to physically move the athlete into position and to physically assist the athlete to complete a task. This procedure should be used with extreme caution, especially if the athlete functions on a lower level and/or does not like to be touched.

Remember, a coach must use one or more levels of instruction to teach any task. By identifying the athlete’s level of instruction and the difficulty of the task, a coach will more accurately apply the proper form of instruction at the appropriate times.

While a coach has to understand and utilize the levels of instruction as part of teaching and coaching strategies, he or she must also take into consideration the delivery of instruction. Remember, the message that one is trying to convey may be interpreted many different ways. This interpretation depends upon the clarity of one's presentation, one's emotions, one's non-verbal communication, and, of course, the comprehension level of each athlete.

Clarity of presentation
- Utilize consistent vocabulary.
- Use one- or two-part directions that are command oriented.
- Utilize a clear and concise presentation style and observe athletes in order to determine if the instruction is being understood.
- Remember to task analyze the skill. Individual tasks should build toward skill development.
Emotions
- A coach’s emotional state during practice and competition is critical in the reinforcement process.
- A conscious awareness of one's emotional state must be maintained, if instructional and reinforcement strategies are to be utilized.

Non-verbal communication
- A coach’s communication goes beyond verbal instruction. Facial expressions and body positions communicate messages as well.

Comprehension level of athletes
- Athletes will have a variety of comprehension levels and individual needs.
- One single presentation strategy may not meet the needs of all athletes.

Note: A coach can have complete command of the information to be presented. However, without a clear and concise delivery, the athlete may experience difficulty with comprehension. In conclusion, coaches need to remember that the utilization of sound instructional strategies and an awareness of the type of delivery system will play a major part in the success of the coach-athlete relationship.
Exercise #16    Communicating with Athletes

Effective coaches are able to communicate their message to their athletes in a simple, easy-to-follow manner.

Part I

Do you have effective communication techniques? Evaluate yourself on the list below.

- Do you keep your message simple? □ □ □
- Do you use examples? □ □ □
- Do you maintain eye contact with athletes? □ □ □
- Do you relax when communicating? □ □ □
- Do you ensure that verbal and nonverbal messages are not conflicting? □ □ □
- Do you have a positive approach? □ □ □
- Do you repeat the information in a variety of ways? □ □ □
- Do you spend time talking to each athlete individually at each training session? □ □ □
- Do you remain calm when athletes make mistakes? □ □ □
- Do you break down skills into small tasks? □ □ □

Part II

What are some useful techniques for effective listening? Make a list like Part I and then evaluate yourself for your listening techniques.

- □ □ □
- □ □ □
- □ □ □
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Exercise #17  Providing Positive Reinforcement to Athletes

Positive reinforcement by coaches, family members, and volunteers contributes to the development of sport confidence in athletes. List several examples of positive reinforcement that a coach can use with his or her athletes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Positive Reinforcement</th>
<th>Non-Verbal Positive Reinforcement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>
Exercise #18  Managing Athlete Behavioral Challenges

The goal is for coaches to meet each athlete where he/she is and treat him/her accordingly. However, a coach may often have certain expectations of an athlete that may not be realistic … not because the coach does not care, but because the coach does not understand or appreciate the differences that may exist.

When an athlete exhibits what is generally perceived as inappropriate behavior, the inappropriate behavior may not be defiance, acting out or silliness. These behaviors may simply be a reflection or part of the person and/or what is operating in the moment.

On the next two pages, use the matrix “Athlete Behavior Characteristics and Strategies to Improve Learning”.

- Identify the sport and the behavior that is preventing or limiting the athlete from learning a skill.
- Then identify a progression of 3 specific strategies to positively affect learning.

The purpose of the exercise is to confront the behavior and identify what can be done to get the athlete back on track.

For example, a particular athlete is a swimmer and has a short attention span. The following three strategies can be employed to assist that athlete’s attention and learning:

1. Dwell on a stroke or activity for shorter periods of time (8-10 minutes); provide numerous activities focusing on same task.
2. Provide different opportunities for repetition and review, which is the key to gaining new skill.
3. Work one-on-one to gain full attention.

Sport: _________________________

Behavior challenge 1: ____________________________________________________

Three strategies to enhance learning:

1. ___________________________________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________________________________

Sport: _________________________

Behavior challenge 2: ____________________________________________________

Three strategies to enhance learning:

1. ___________________________________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________________________________
3. ___________________________________________________________________
Athlete Behavior Characteristics & Strategies to Improve Learning

The goal of the chart below is to provide coaches with information (not labels) and strategies regarding different functional and learning behavioral characteristics (not labels) of athletes. The goal is for coaches to teach and coach Special Olympics athletes more effectively. However, a coach may have certain expectations of an athlete that may not be realistic … not because the coach does not care, but because the coach does not understand or appreciate the differences that may exist.

When an athlete exhibits what is generally perceived as inappropriate behavior(s), the inappropriate behavior(s) may not be defiance, acting out or silliness. These behaviors may simply be a reflection or part of the person and/or what is operating at the moment.

When possible, talk with parents, providers, teachers, former coaches, etc. about an athlete’s characteristics and the successful strategies used to affect learning. Use the characteristics as a checklist. Ensure that one or more of the strategies opposite the respective characteristics are employed in each practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athlete Behavior</th>
<th>Strategies to Improve Learning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Learning occurs at a slower rate</td>
<td>1) Provide structure &amp; train more frequently.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Provide repetition and review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Break skills down into smaller parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Short attention span</td>
<td>1) Train for short periods of time; provide numerous activities focusing on same task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Provide repetition &amp; review (key to gaining new skill).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Work one-on-one (gain full attention).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Resistance to change; stubborn</td>
<td>1) Structure training with clear rules, consistent routines, smooth transitions and signals for changing activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Establish routines (provide flexibility within routine);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Identify motivating factors; build on successes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Behavior problems – acting out; mood swings</td>
<td>1) Set clear rules, expectations and limits; specify location for individual to regain self control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Speak calmly, enforce rules but provide conditions for coming back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Reinforce acceptable behaviors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Verbal expression difficulties</td>
<td>1) Allow for additional time to express thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Use picture boards/other assistive devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Ask him or her to demonstrate or show what he/she means.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Verbal interpretation difficulties</td>
<td>1) Provide the appropriate level of instruction beginning with demonstration followed by physical prompt and physical assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Keep verbal instructions to a minimum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Use key words/cues, sign language or pictures to communicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Prone to seizures</td>
<td>1) Know signs and symptoms of different types of seizures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Control atmosphere/triggers (heat, sun, sugar, loud noise, etc.) of seizures; respond appropriately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Prepare teammates to respond appropriately should a seizure occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Poor muscle tone</td>
<td>1) Provide specific exercise and strengthening programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) Stretch within normal range of motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) Uneven surfaces increase risk of injury.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athlete Behavior</td>
<td>Strategies to Improve Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Lower pain threshold; sensitive to touch | 1) Establish eye contact when talking, unless individual is autistic.  
2) Use softer/adaptive equipment; minimize loud noises like whistles.  
3) Forewarn if any touch is necessary; respect wishes. |
| Failure to form social bonds             | 1) Work in small groups.  
2) Have each child work in pairs (same 2 people for several weeks).  
3) Provide highly structured and least distracting environment; expose to individual or dual sports. |
| Easily over-stimulated                   | 1) Remove or lessen distracting stimuli (dim lights; soften sounds; remove unnecessary objects).  
2) Train in separate room or smaller group; gradually add people.  
3) Train with athletes who tend to be nonverbal. |
| Difficulty with balance or stability     | 1) Provide physical support, as needed, via partner or other assistive device.  
2) Broden base of support such as sitting down or leaning against wall; minimize uneven surfaces.  
3) Allow for extra time to complete a task. |
| Compulsive eating                        | 1) Remove food from practice/competition sites.  
2) Do not use food as reward (especially for individuals with Prader Willi).  
3) Provide structure and routine for eating. |
| Poor coordination                        | 1) Break skills down into sequential tasks; substitute easier movement patterns such as walking instead of running.  
2) Progress from athlete’s current level of performance.  
3) Allow additional time with one-on-one support. |
| Physical limitations or impairments      | 1) Utilize those skills or parts of skills athlete can perform.  
2) For those skills or parts of skills athlete is unable to perform, allow athlete to substitute other skills, have partner execute those skills or use assistive device.  
3) Focus on activities that develop mobility and stability. |
| Visual impairments                       | 1) Use verbal cues, physical prompt and physical assistance.  
2) Utilize sound or physical devices such as beep balls, guide rope along lane line, tether when running with partner, etc.  
3) Provide precise and action-specific and feedback. |
| Hearing impairments                      | 1) Establish eye contact when talking.  
2) Use signs, pictures or sign language; keep cochlear implants dry.  
3) Demonstrate what is desired. |
| Autism spectrum disorders                | 1) Minimize verbal; emphasize visual (Board Maker) because of difficulty in processing sensory stimuli (overarousal); provide only one item per picture.  
2) Individualize schedule with known start & known finish (predictability); use clear, consistent cues & prompts; cue transition from one activity to next.  
3) Reduce sensory overload like whistles (some athletes are hypersensitive to noise). |
| Hyperactivity                            | 1) Use three or more sensory channels – tactile; kinesthetic; visual; auditory.  
2) Set clear rules, consistent routines and smooth transitions with signals for changing activities with motivating reinforcement.  
3) Keep directions simple; minimize information. |
| Lethargy (due to disability or medication) | 1) Provide frequent rest intervals.  
2) Expose to sports that provide natural rest periods such as bocce, bowling, golf, etc.  
3) Slowly progress to longer periods of activity. |
| Lack of motivation to push self          | 1) Be aware that the greater the intellectual disability, the less motivated to continue activity once individual feels uncomfortable.  
2) Add positive consequence/reward to continue activity such as peddling on stationary bike to drive power to TV or music player; transition to sport.  
3) Reward even small improvements in performance. |
Summary Questions

1. State a definition for sport confidence.

2. Identify four (4) characteristics of a good verbal cue or command.

3. Provide four (4) examples of positive reinforcement that will enhance sport confidence.
MODULE 4

SPORT-SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE TRAINING & NUTRITION FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES

Objective: To perform sport-specific exercise programs and apply principles of good nutrition to enhance physical performance related to the athlete's sport, physical demands and intellectual abilities.

These sport-specific performance training and nutritional programs will create a fun and challenging training environment with the goal of increasing the functionality of sport-specific skills. Since many practices are one to one and one-half hours in length, the initial goal will be to utilize sport performance training as a home training program to provide athletes with additional training opportunities related to their sport.

Methods

- Develop progressive resistance programs to build strength.
- Develop exercises in order to promote and enhance balance and coordination.
- Develop interactive sport-specific training programs to enhance flexibility, power, speed, agility, visual acuity and sport-specific movement.
- Develop appropriate nutrition choices to enhance performance and fitness.

Program Design

- General Warm-Up
- Active Muscle (Dynamic) Stretching
- Sport-Specific Warm-Up
- Cardiovascular Exercise
- Resistance Exercise for Increased Performance
- Sports Mapping
- Sport-Specific Coordination, Strength, Power, Speed and Agility Programs
- Enhanced Agility Movement Program
- Nutrition
The “Simplicity Method” of Training

Sport performance training has become increasingly more popular. Athletes at all levels try to enhance their physical condition to be the best they can be. However, often overlooked is the fact that in order to excel, the basics of training need to be addressed. Advertising for the many “cool” tools on the market designed to enhance performance do not educate the consumer that a conditioning base is required before using them.

Four basic components are needed to build a successful sport performance program:

1. Structure and discipline
2. Desire to improve performance
3. Develop goals (short term and long term)
4. Proper program implementation

The information in this section will help you design a sport-specific program for your athletes. Keep in mind the physical and intellectual level of each athlete; not all exercises will accommodate the needs of each athlete. The bottom line is the “Simplicity Method.” The exercise program that you design for each athlete needs to be kept simple in order for each athlete to accomplish the goals each is interested in achieving.

Utilizing the “Simplicity Method” will increase involvement of each athlete, produce greater performance outcomes, and facilitate more efficient athlete development. Enjoy these programs! You are all champions!!

Principles of Training: Four key principles of training will be emphasized.

- **Specificity:** *Fitness activities should be specific to the sport or area of the body.*
  - If cardiovascular endurance is the goal, then aerobic activities over a 20-minute period should be conducted.
  - If muscular strength is the goal, weight training activities with heavy resistance and low repetitions should be used.

- **Progressive overload:** *Refers to systematically increasing the demand of the exercise as the body increases its capacity for exercise.*
  - If athletes perform the same workout over time, fitness levels will peak and then remain at that same level.
  - Overload implies that the workout becomes more difficult through an increase in F.I.T.
    - Frequency—*how often* activity is performed.
    - Intensity—*how much* effort is expended.
    - Time—*how long* the activity continues.
  - All increases should be through gradual progression: no more than a 10% increase each week.

- **Long-term adaptation:** *Refers to gains occurring after a longer-period of time the body is challenged.*
  - A regularly scheduled, progressive program over time produces fitness gains.
  - Fitness training should become a lifetime habit.

- **Reversibility:** *Refers to use it or lose it.*
  - The opposite principle of progressive overload is reversibility. Fitness gains are lost faster than gained. **Cardiovascular endurance is lost about three times as fast as gained.**
  - Off-season exercise programs can prevent athletes from losing the conditioning level attained during the season.

**IMPORTANT**

*Know your athlete’s medical history!*

It is important that you know the medical history of each athlete on your team. You do not want to perform a training program that may cause harm. If the athlete has a medical condition, he/she should be cleared to participate by a physician before training begins. The physician may provide recommendations for alternative exercises based on the medical condition of the athlete.

Look “outside the box” when it comes to developing sport-specific programs. Coaches, support staff and athletes need to be flexible. If performing an exercise does not work, the coach needs to be able to adjust to the situation in a timely manner so the level of interest of each athlete is not lost.
Warm-Up and Flexibility Exercises

The warm-up to any practice or game should be performed so that the athlete begins sweating. Sweating indicates that body temperature and blood flow to the brain and muscles have increased. This process indicates that the athlete’s body is prepared for strenuous activity.

While performing all of the warm-up and flexibility exercises, concentrate on breathing. Slowly breathe in through the nose and exhale slowly out the mouth.

There are three phases of warm-up programs that need to be performed before practice and athletic competition. The phase four stretching program is to be performed 30-60 minutes after practice and athletic competition.

**Phase 1 ~ General Warm-Up**
*Perform for 10 minutes.*
Running, jogging, walking, jumping rope, hopping, skipping and arm and upper body movements are great exercises to get one sweating and preparing the large muscle groups for Phase 2, the Active Muscle Stretch.

**Phase 2 ~ Active Muscle (Dynamic) Stretching**
*Perform for 6 minutes.*
This method of stretching stimulates the nervous system and prepares the muscles for strenuous activity of the athlete’s sport and transition to Phase 3, the Sport-Specific Warm-Up. These stretching exercises need to be performed immediately prior to physical activity and done with fast and controlled movements. Active Muscle Stretching (also called Dynamic Stretching) will help increase speed and agility. Most importantly, it will reduce the rate of injury to muscles and joints.

**Phase 3 ~ Sport-Specific Warm-Up**
*Perform for 10 minutes.*
This warm-up phase involves performing specific movements prior to the sport being practiced or played. Phase 3 is the final component to the warm-up and flexibility program. After doing these sport-specific exercises, the athlete is prepared to practice or compete.

**Phase 4 ~ Post-Practice & Post-Competition Stretching**
*Perform for 15 minutes.*
This phase of stretching is excellent for increasing flexibility, muscle relaxation and recovery from competition as the athlete prepares for strenuous activity the day after. These stretches need to be done 30-60 minutes after practice and competition and when the muscles have cooled down. Post-practice and post-competition stretching while the muscles are still warm can cause increased muscle soreness and decreased flexibility.

The following pages have the exercises in written and visual forms.
Phase 1 ~ General Warm-Up

Choose two exercises and perform each for five (5) minutes.

Phase 2 ~ Active Muscle (Dynamic) Stretching

Choose three exercises and perform each for two (2) minutes.

Phase 3 ~ Sport-Specific Warm-Up

Perform progressive, sport-specific exercises that pertain to your sport for a total of ten (10) minutes.

Examples:
Baseball/Softball: Play catch
Progression: Easy short toss > easy long toss > hard short toss > hard long toss.

Track: Run event
Progression: Run medium speed half the distance > run medium speed full distance > run full speed half the distance > run full speed full distance.

Gymnastics: Perform routine
Progression: Perform routine half speed to full speed.

Powerlifting: Perform lifts
Progression: Lift lighter weight to heavier weight.
**Phase 4 ~ Post-Practice and Post-Competition Stretching**

Perform these stretches two (2) times each, 30-60 minutes after practice and competition. Important: these are **held** stretches; no bouncing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stretch</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Chest Stretch** | Sit or stand with good posture.  
Place your finger tips on the top of the shoulder.  
Squeeze your shoulder blades together.  
Reach back as far as you can with your elbows.  
Hold this position for 30 seconds. |
| **Shoulder Stretch** | Sit or stand with good posture.  
Reach across your chest with one arm.  
Use the opposite arm to help hold the stretched arm up.  
Hold this position for 30 seconds. Do this stretch with each arm.  
Do this stretch with each arm. |
| **Shoulder and Upper Back Stretch** | Sit or stand with good posture.  
Try to scratch your back in between the shoulder blades  
Grab your elbow with the opposite hand.  
Hold this position for 30 seconds. Do this stretch with each arm.  
Do this stretch with each arm. |
| **Hamstring / Hip Flexor and Calf Stretch** | Step in to a sprinters position.  
Lean your chest over your front knee.  
As you place your fingers on the floor, straighten your back leg.  
Push your hips forward.  
Hold this position for 30 seconds. Do this stretch on each leg. |
| **Groin and Lower Back Stretch** | Sit on the floor with your legs spread past shoulder width.  
Bend your knees and grab your ankles.  
Do not lift your feet off the floor.  
Pull yourself forward keeping your back straight.  
Hold this position for 30 seconds. |
| **Hip Stretch** | Stand by a wall.  
The distance between you and the wall is your arm length.  
Cross the outside foot over the inside foot towards the wall.  
Do not move your feet or shoulders during this stretch.  
Push your hips only towards the wall.  
Hold this position for 30 seconds. Do this stretch on each leg. |
| **Combination Stretch (hamstrings, low back, shoulders, arms)** | Stand tall then lean over to support your body on a chair.  
Grab the chair with your hands.  
Keep your legs straight.  
While holding the chair, twist your upper back.  
Keep your head down.  
Hold this position for 30 seconds. Do this stretch each way. |
Cardiovascular exercise is important for increasing blood flow to the body. Oxygen is carried in the blood to the muscles. Oxygen is the fuel that triggers cellular production of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the primary source of energy for human movement. In order to produce energy and enhance athletic performance, it is recommended performing at least thirty (30) minutes of cardiovascular exercise a day.

Not only is cardiovascular exercise good for athletic performance, it also helps with managing high blood pressure, cholesterol levels, etc. It creates good fitness levels and enhances a person’s quality of life.

How to test for cardiovascular exercise intensity?

Workout intensity is scientifically gauged by comparing your resting heart rate to your heart rate during exercise. A method used for quick analysis of exercise intensity is called the “Talk Test”. The “Talk Test” has been determined to be an appropriate method for measuring exercise intensity (Medicine & Science in Sport and Exercise, September 2004).

Talk-Test protocol:

1. **Normal Talk Test result:**
   During a bout of exercise, the participant should be able to speak comfortably.
   Recite the Athlete’s Oath.

2. **Under-exertion Talk Test results:**
   Able to speak words or sentences slowly; able to sing a song.

3. **Over-exertion Talk Test results:**
   Not able to speak a sentence comfortably.

Caution: Certain medications and medical conditions can alter a person’s heart rate during physical activity. Be sure that the athletes have their physician’s approval to perform strenuous activity.
Progressive resistance exercise increases muscular strength and endurance, improves balance and coordination, and improves human movement and sense of well-being. Progressive overload of the muscles is what causes the neurological, anatomical, and physiological changes in the human body. To achieve this overload, the athlete must gently and carefully stress muscles beyond normal limits. This can be done by performing exercises with increasing levels of demand and application of an external resistance such as weights or elastic bands. Proper technique is vital to the success of any resistance training program.

All athletes should be able to perform all these exercises with proper technique and with body weight resistance before adding any external resistance (such as weights or bands). As each athlete has own strengths and weaknesses, the coach needs to find an exercise that will accommodate the physical and/or intellectual level of each athlete. It is the responsibility of the coach to adjust to the athlete’s personality, training environment, and specific goals of the program. Also, the coach needs to be creative in maintaining the athlete’s level of involvement and interest in the program.

Each sport has certain exercises that will help improve an athlete’s performance. In order to achieve sport-specific skills, the athlete needs a foundation of exercises from which to build. The following criteria should be included as you build a resistance program.

1. **Choice of exercise.**
   If an athlete is not functionally able to perform an exercise, be creative and find another that will accommodate the athlete. Also, find exercises that pertain to your sport.

2. **Frequency of exercise.**
   In order to achieve optimum results, the strength program should be performed three times a week. This also applies to the in-season programs.

3. **Duration of an exercise program.**
   Each session should be at least thirty (30) minutes long and no longer than sixty (60) minutes.

4. **Tempo of exercise.**
   Tempo is the speed of the exercise. Slow exercise speed builds strength; fast exercise speed builds power.

5. **Sets of an exercise.**
   Sets of an exercise refer to grouping exercises in segments by body part in order to accomplish the goal of strength gain, power production, and speed production. Always remember, lower the reps = higher sets and higher the reps = lower sets. (Ex. 2-4 reps = 6 sets, 4-8 reps = 4 sets, 9-12 reps = 3 sets, 13+ reps = 2 sets)

6. **Repetitions of exercise.**
   Repetitions (reps) refer to the number of times the athlete performs the exercise in a set. Reps are a critical component to training. An athlete needs a certain amount of stress on the muscle in order to achieve the goals of a program. (Ex. 2-4 reps = power and explosive strength, 4-8 reps = muscular strength, 9-12 reps = increase in muscular size, 13+ reps = muscular endurance)

7. **Rest between sets.**
   Make sure the athlete is getting at least 30-45 seconds of rest between sets. In addition to training, a good night’s sleep is beneficial for muscular growth. Remember, with proper nutrition and plenty of rest between exercise sessions, the athlete will be able to perform more efficiently with enhanced mental focus.
The general rule for resistance training is:

The established workload should be at a level where muscular fatigue sets in at the completion of the exercise. Once the fatigue level is gone, the resistance needs to be adjusted. For example: if the reps are 6-8, the idea is to be able to achieve 6 reps easily with reps 7 and 8 being difficult to perform.

Remember, whether using dumbbell weights or resistance bands, be able to perform the exercise without the resistance first using proper technique and body control. When adding heavier weight or higher resistance bands, maintain proper technique and body control throughout the exercise.

Use of dumbbell weights (free weights):
If the athlete is using dumbbells, the weight in each hand should be equal. This needs to be done even if using the dumbbell on the dominant side is easy. The purpose is to create equal muscular balance. Reduction of injury and enhanced performance is developed utilizing the appropriate methods of resistance training.

Use of resistance bands:
Elastic resistance bands can be used in place of weights. This tool can be used in multiple environments and situations while accomplishing the same goals as if using weights. The elastic resistance bands come in a variety of colors. The colors represent different resistances. In addition, ensure the bands are latex free since some athletes are allergic to latex. Choose the color of band that best accommodates the athlete’s needs. Understand that elastic resistance training bands differ between production companies. Look for a chart of resistance bands and color coding from the company. For example, if using Therabands, yellow is easier to stretch than red which is easier than green which is easier than blue.

On the following page, there is a progressive exercise menu of increasing levels of demand based on the athlete’s goals ...
### Progressions ~ Increasing Levels of Demand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Lower Body</th>
<th>Upper Body</th>
<th>Core</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Wall Squats</td>
<td>Modified Push Up</td>
<td>Crunch n' Touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Regular Squats</td>
<td>Regular Push Up</td>
<td>Crunch n' Twist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Lunge Squats</td>
<td>Shoulder Press-Up</td>
<td>Trunk Roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Single Leg Step-Ups</td>
<td>Shoulder Pull</td>
<td>Lower Ab Crunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Hamstring Press</td>
<td>Shoulder Push Up</td>
<td>Back Extension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Special Olympics International Sports Committee developed the sports mapping charts as a guideline of relative importance regarding the physical demands of each sport. These ratings provide a direction for the coaches to choose the most optimal training program for each athlete. In the event that coaches conduct performance assessments, the results can be compared with these ratings, and a more specific training program can be developed for the purpose of improving athletic performance.

**Rankings based on the various skills of each sport.**

Number 1 is the highest ranking of needed skill development for the athlete’s sport. Number 7 is the lowest ranking of needed skill development for the athlete’s sport.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Aquatics</th>
<th>Athletics</th>
<th>Badminton</th>
<th>Basketball</th>
<th>Bowls</th>
<th>Bowing</th>
<th>Cycling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed &amp; Agility</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Strength</td>
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<td>Coordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
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<td>Flexibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aerobic Endurance</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Athletics:**  
S = Sprints  D = Distance  F = Field Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Equestrian</th>
<th>Football</th>
<th>Golf</th>
<th>Artistic Gymnastics</th>
<th>Rhythmic Gymnastics</th>
<th>Judo</th>
<th>Powerlifting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed &amp; Agility</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Sailing</th>
<th>Softball</th>
<th>Table Tennis</th>
<th>Team Handball</th>
<th>Tennis</th>
<th>Volleyball</th>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobic Endurance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Snowshoeing</th>
<th>Cross Country Skiing</th>
<th>Snowboarding</th>
<th>Alpine Skiing</th>
<th>Speed Skating</th>
<th>Figure Skating</th>
<th>Floor Hockey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed &amp; Agility</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobic Endurance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the sports mapping model, choose one of the following three programs that best accommodates each athlete’s needs. If any of these programs do not accommodate your athlete’s needs, refer back to the program design and exercise menu section and design a personalized program utilizing the documented information. Consider recruiting a physical therapist or athletic trainer to assist you and be your Sport Performance Training Specialist.

The three program designs are:

1. Coordination and Strength Program
2. Coordination and Power Program
3. Speed and Agility Program

The following program provides additional agility and quick-feet exercises that can be used with any of the three pre-designed training programs. See Appendix E.

4. Enhanced Agility Movement Program (Phase 1 and 2), which are used in addition to the other programs.

Identification Charts for Pre-Season and In-Season Training

As you observe the three programs, you will see that the pre-season program and in-season program are indicated on the right side of the page. In the center of the page is the exercise description, and to the left is the name and animated picture of the exercise.

Pre-Season Program:
This exercise training program is designed to prepare the athlete for competition. The coach needs to begin this pre-season, sport-specific training program immediately upon contact with the athletes in preparation for the sport being played. This will increase physical performance and injury reduction of the athlete.

In-Season Program:
This exercise training program is designed to maintain the physical gains of the pre-season program. The in-season program is to be performed during the season in order maintain a higher level of fitness and to decrease the incidence of injury.
### Coordination and Strength Program

Perform warm-up and stretching program from Phase 1 through 3 before participating in this program.

#### Single-Leg Lunge Squats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Pre-Season Training</th>
<th>In-Season Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Do not move feet.  
2. Stand straight up with both legs straight.  
3. Kneel down touching back knee to the floor. | Sets: 4  
Reps: 8  
Exercise Movement: Slow | Sets: 2  
Reps: 10  
Exercise Movement: Medium |

#### Pull-Up with Band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Pre-Season Training</th>
<th>In-Season Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Start with legs and arms straight.  
2. Grip band in fists.  
3. Pull hands up past waist toward stomach.  
4. Point elbows towards the ceiling. | Sets: 4  
Reps: 8  
Exercise Movement: Slow | Sets: 2  
Reps: 10  
Exercise Movement: Medium |

#### Side-to-Side Walk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Pre-Season Program</th>
<th>In-Season Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Bend knees / head up  
2. Squeeze stomach and keep rear-end tight.  
3. Take a **BIG Step** out sideways, shoulder width apart.  
4. Keep knees over toes. | Sets: 4  
Reps: 6 steps each way  
Exercise Movement: Slow | Sets: 2  
Reps: 8 steps each way  
Exercise Movement: Fast |

#### Push-Ups with Wide Grip

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Pre-Season Program</th>
<th>In-Season Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Perform regular push-ups or push-ups on knees.  
2. Wide hand placement.  
3. Touch chin to ground.  
4. Keep stomach muscles tight. | Sets: 4  
Reps: 6  
Exercise Movement: Slow | Sets: 2  
Reps: 10  
Exercise Movement: Fast |
**Coordination and Strength Program for Athletes Using Wheelchairs or Exercising while Seated**

Perform warm-up and stretching program from Phase 1 through 3 before participating in this program.

**Shoulder Press with Band**

- **Pre-Season Training**
  - Sets: 4
  - Reps: 6
  - Exercise Movement: Slow

- **In-Season Training**
  - Sets: 2
  - Reps: 6
  - Exercise Movement: Fast

**Shoulder-Chest Ball Squeezes**

- **Pre-Season Training**
  - Sets: 4
  - Reps: 3-25 second squeezes
  - Exercise Movement: Slow

- **In-Season Training**
  - Sets: 2
  - Reps: 12 quick squeezes
  - Exercise Movement: Fast

**Tricep Push-Ups**

- **Pre-Season Program**
  - Sets: 4
  - Reps: 6 presses
  - Exercise Movement: Slow

- **In-Season Program**
  - Sets: 2
  - Reps: 10 presses
  - Exercise Movement: Fast

**Abdominal Crunch**

- **Pre-Season Program**
  - Sets: 4
  - Reps: 15 each side
  - Exercise Movement: Slow

- **In-Season Program**
  - Sets: 2
  - Reps: 20 each side
  - Exercise Movement: Medium

---

**Description**

1. Secure elastic band under arm rests.
2. Grip elastic band in fists.
3. Lift arms straight up so that the wrists are above head.

**Description**

1. Sit up straight and tighten stomach.
2. Put arms straight out and hold ball between wrists.
3. Squeeze ball as hard as can.

**Description**

1. Place hands on arm rests.
2. Push hard down into the arm rests lifting rear end out of chair.
3. Straighten arms.

**Description**

1. Sit up straight and cross hands across chest.
2. Twist to one side and bend over arm of chair then sit up and perform to other side.
Perform warm-up and stretching program from Phase 1 through 3 before participating in this program.

**Hamstring Leg Press**

**Pre-Season Training**
Sets: 6
Reps: 4
Exercise Movement: Up Fast

**In-Season Training**
Sets: 2
Reps: 6
Exercise Movement: Up Fast

**Description**
1. Lay flat on back with arms out to the side.
2. Heels only on the floor.
3. Press hips up as high as can while pushing heels into floor.

**Step-Ups on Bench**

**Pre-Season Training**
Sets: 6
Reps: 4 each leg
Exercise Movement: Up Fast

**In-Season Training**
Sets: 3
Reps: 6 each leg
Exercise Movement: Up Fast

**Description**
1. Start up on the bench with both feet.
2. Step back off the bench slowly with one leg.
3. Touch floor with foot and step back up as fast as you can.

**Vertical Jumps**

**Pre-Season Program**
Sets: 6
Reps: 4 (jump/pause/jump)
Exercise Movement: Up Fast

**In-Season Program**
Sets: 3
Reps: 6 (jump/pause/jump)
Exercise Movement: Up Fast

**Description**
1. Start with legs shoulder width apart and knees bent.
2. Hands by ears.
3. Jump straight up; reach arms as high as can.

**Abdominal Twist**

**Pre-Season Program**
Sets: 4
Reps: 8 each side
Exercise Movement: Medium

**In-Season Program**
Sets: 2
Reps: 15 each side
Exercise Movement: Up Fast

**Description**
1. Lay flat on back.
2. Knees and ankles up in the air.
3. Drop both knees slowly; touch the floor then lift them back up.
Perform warm-up and stretching program from Phase 1 through 3 before participating in this program.

**Shoulder Pulls**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Sit up straight while squeezing your abs.  
2. Arms straight, gripping the band in fists.  
3. Pull the bands up with straight arms to shoulder height. |

**Pre-Season Training**
- Sets: 4  
- Reps: 6  
- Exercise Movement: Up Fast

**In-Season Training**
- Sets: 2  
- Reps: 8  
- Exercise Movement: Up Fast

**Abdominal Twists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Wrap the band around back of the chair and place over elbows.  
2. Cross wrist.  
3. Sit tall and twist to one side as far as can. |

**Pre-Season Training**
- Sets: 4  
- Reps: 6 each way  
- Exercise Movement: Fast

**In-Season Training**
- Sets: 6  
- Reps: 3 each way  
- Exercise Movement: Fast

**Ball Squeeze with Thighs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Place a ball between knees.  
2. Squeeze the ball as hard as can.  
3. Hold on to the arm rests firmly. |

**Pre-Season Program**
- Sets: 6  
- Reps: 4 (squeeze/rest/squeeze)  
- Exercise Movement: Fast

**In-Season Program**
- Sets: 4  
- Reps: 6 (squeeze/rest/squeeze)  
- Exercise Movement: Fast

**Chest-Shoulder Ball Squeeze**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Lift elbows and wrists up to chest.  
2. Grip ball with palms of hands.  
3. Squeeze the ball as hard as can. |

**Pre-Season Program**
- Sets: 6  
- Reps: 4 (squeeze/rest/squeeze)  
- Exercise Movement: Fast

**In-Season Program**
- Sets: 2  
- Reps: 10 squeezes  
- Exercise Movement: Fast
# Speed and Agility Program

Perform warm-up and stretching program from Phase 1 through 3 before participating in this program.

## Runner’s Lunge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lean in to wall standing on toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Keep stomach tight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lift one knee up towards chest and pull the toes up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre-Season Training**
- Sets: 6
- Reps: 4 (pull up/hold 5sec.)
- Exercise Movement: Fast

**In-Season Training**
- Sets: 2
- Reps: 8 (pull up and down)
- Exercise Movement: Fast

## Forward Step-Ups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Start with both feet on the floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Step up with one foot on the bench.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Stand up on the bench until both legs are straight.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre-Season Training**
- Sets: 4
- Reps: 12 each leg
- Exercise Movement: Medium

**In-Season Training**
- Sets: 6
- Reps: 3 each leg
- Exercise Movement: Fast

## Triceps Kickback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Stand with feet shoulder width apart and slightly bent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hold band with one hand and grasp with the other hand in fist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Straighten arm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre-Season Program**
- Sets: 6
- Reps: 4 each side
- Exercise Movement: Medium

**In-Season Program**
- Sets: 4
- Reps: 6
- Exercise Movement: Fast

## Side Bends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lean sideways to wall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Foot on the outside is resting on inside foot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Drop hips only towards the wall while keeping arm-to-wall straight.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre-Season Program**
- Sets: 6
- Reps: 4 each way
- Exercise Movement: Medium

**In-Season Program**
- Sets: 2
- Reps: 10 each way
- Exercise Movement: Fast
Perform warm-up and stretching program from Phase 1 through 3 before participating in this program.

**Upper Body Speed Drill**

**Description**
1. Firmly grasp tennis ball in each hand.
2. Pull one arm back as far as can as other arm is out in front.
3. Alternate arm position.

**Pre-Season Training**
- Sets: 4 (alternating arms)
- Reps: 12 reps total
- Exercise Movement: Fast

**In-Season Training**
- Sets: 2 (alternating arms)
- Reps: 16 reps total
- Exercise Movement: Fast

**Shoulder-Grip Squeeze**

**Description**
1. Raise arms straight overhead with tennis ball in each hand.
2. Squeeze both tennis ball as hard as can.

**Pre-Season Training**
- Sets: 4
- Reps: 8 each arm
- Exercise Movement: Medium

**In-Season Training**
- Sets: 6
- Reps: 4 each
- Exercise Movement: Fast

**Upper Body Endurance**

**Description**
1. Hold arms up off arm rests.
2. Squeeze a tennis ball in each hand.
3. Alternate punching each hand towards target.

**Pre-Season Program**
- Sets: 5 (alternating punch)
- Reps: 12 total reps
- Exercise Movement: Medium

**In-Season Program**
- Sets: 3 (alternating punch)
- Reps: 8 total reps
- Exercise Movement: Fast

**Side Bends**

**Description**
1. Sit up straight; cross hands in front of chest and below chin.
2. Twist to one side and bend over arm of chair then sit up and perform to other side.

**Pre-Season Program**
- Sets: 4
- Reps: 8 each way
- Exercise Movement: Medium

**In-Season Program**
- Sets: 2
- Reps: 10 each way
- Exercise Movement: Fast
Enhanced Agility Movement Program

This program can be used in addition to any one of the three previous programs.

Phase 1

Phase 1 involves quick-feet drills to improve movement of the athlete’s feet for better balance during athletic competition.

For athletes using wheelchairs or exercising while seated
If one can work outside of the chair:
  Get into a push-up position.
  Perform the following agility exercises with the upper body (using arms).

- Perform each drill only once for 20 seconds each.
- Rest for 40 second between drills.
- Go as fast as you can!

DOT Drill:
Make a 4 foot by 5 foot box with tape, and place circles in a box as seen here. Follow the number scheme in order to optimize the drill. The concept of developing quickness is to do the exercise with both feet as quickly as possible and with good body control.

LINE Drill:
Make a 4 foot by 5 foot box with tape, and place lines in a box as seen here. Follow the number scheme in order to optimize the drill. The concept of developing quickness is to do the exercise with both feet as quickly as possible and with good body control.
Phase 2

Phase 2 involves agility drills that can be used as “finishing drills” during practice to develop quicker movement of the athlete and conditioning level when competing.

- Perform the following agility exercises as quickly as possible while maintaining balance.
- Also perform them going each direction.
- These exercises are also very effective for athletes who compete in wheelchairs.

### Agility Exercises

1. **Slalom**

2. **Tight Slalom**

3. **Box Drill**

4. **Running 3 Lines**

5. **Running 4 Lines**

Other exercises for agility and quickness:
- Jumping rope
- Skipping
- Jumping jacks
- Hop-Scotch
- Obstacle course
- Directional running: alternate forward, backward, sideways
## Sport Performance Home Training

**Athlete Name** _______________________________    **Week of:** ______________________________

### CARDIOVASCULAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity – choose 1 per session</th>
<th>Time (number of minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### AGILITY / SPEED / BALANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity – Choose 1 per session</th>
<th>Time or Reps per session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jump rope</td>
<td>Try for ___ jumps in a row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box drill: run forward, run backward, shuffle, skip with a one-foot hold at each corner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MUSCLE STRENGTHENING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity – Choose at least 1 per category in blue</th>
<th>Number of repetitions (reps) per session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ABDOMINALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crunches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverse crunches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold plank (push up position)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOWER BODY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Squats (sumo style)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternating Lunges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UPPER BODY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push ups (modified as needed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair or bench dips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### COOL DOWN & STRETCHING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stretching Exercises</th>
<th>Hold for a count of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modified Hurdler’s Stretch</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groin Stretch (Butterfly)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamstring Stretch – both legs straight</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triceps Stretch</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoulder Stretch</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Healthy Athlete Diet

Fuel your body right! Use the following information as a guide to make healthy food choices for each meal or snack. Consult your healthcare professional for more detailed advice. In no way does this information replace the advice of your healthcare professional. (The following chart was adapted from Jillian Michaels’ book, Master Your Metabolism.)

**BREAKFAST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start with one of these:</th>
<th>Then add one of these:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 eggs</td>
<td>1 slice whole-wheat bread (any variety)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 egg whites</td>
<td>½ multigrain bagel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup skim milk</td>
<td>1 cup cereal (size of fist), at least 5g fiber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 slices turkey bacon</td>
<td>1 cup fruit (size of fist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup yogurt</td>
<td>1 cup mixed berries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup low-fat cottage cheese</td>
<td>1 peach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 oz. grilled chicken (size of deck of cards)</td>
<td>1 corn tortilla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LUNCH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start with one of these:</th>
<th>Then add one of these:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 oz. chicken (size of deck of cards)</td>
<td>Unlimited leafy salad with 2 Tbsp. dressing (ping pong ball size)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 oz. halibut (size of checkbook)</td>
<td>½ cup brown rice (size of cupcake wrapper filled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 oz. canned Tuna</td>
<td>6 Ritz crackers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 oz. tilapia</td>
<td>1 baked sweet potato (size of fist)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 oz. sirloin</td>
<td>1 ear of corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tbsp. peanut butter</td>
<td>1 apple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Afternoon Snack**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start with one of these:</th>
<th>Then add one of these:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 oz. almonds (size of one handful)</td>
<td>Unlimited carrot sticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 low-fat mozzarella stick of cheese</td>
<td>6 low-salt crackers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tbsp. Peanut butter</td>
<td>Unlimited celery sticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 slices turkey</td>
<td>1 slice whole-grain bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup black bean dip (size of cupcake wrapper)</td>
<td>20 baked corn chips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup yogurt</td>
<td>Unlimited blueberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup low-fat cottage cheese</td>
<td>1 cup pineapple (size of fist)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DINNER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start with one of these:</th>
<th>Then add one of these:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 oz. salmon</td>
<td>Unlimited steamed broccoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 oz. chicken breast</td>
<td>Unlimited leafy salad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 large shrimp</td>
<td>1 ½ cup cooked carrots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 oz. broiled pork chop</td>
<td>Unlimited roasted cauliflower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 oz. turkey breast</td>
<td>Unlimited green beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 oz. scallops</td>
<td>Unlimited brussel sprouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 oz. mahi-mahi</td>
<td>1 cup spaghetti squash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unlimited grilled mixed veggies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BEVERAGES**

- Drink a glass of water with each meal.
- Drink at least 1 cup milk or lactose-free milk a day.
- Limit soda pop consumption; avoid altogether if possible.
- Replace juice/lemonade with crystal light.
Quick Tips for Eating During the Season

Athletes should focus on nutrition throughout the entire competitive season, from pre-season workouts to championship events. Fuel your body right to enhance your performance!

Follow these tips to fuel YOUR fitness…

- Eat breakfast every morning.
- Eat three to six meals or snacks per day.
- Eat a variety of carbohydrates, choosing whole grains when possible. Select foods from the list below to help compose your meals:
  - **Breakfast**: pancakes, toast, bagel, cereal, yogurt, milk
  - **Lunch/Dinner**: pasta, rice, bread/tortillas, potato, fruit, salad, vegetables, yogurt, milk
  - **Snacks**: granola bars, pretzels, light popcorn, cereal, fruit, dried fruits, fig bars, crackers/animal crackers
- **REMEMBER** to eat carbohydrates within 1 hour after exercise.

Eating Before and After Competition

If you are preparing for an athletic event, start the night before by eating a balanced meal with adequate carbohydrates, a complete source of protein and a moderate amount of fat.

- **Before Events**: eat a small meal or snack high in carbohydrates two hours before exercise, such as: a banana, granola bar, carrot sticks, graham crackers, toast, or juice. Avoid foods high in fat, protein and fiber, which take longer to digest.
- **After Events**: eat carbohydrate-rich foods to replenish energy stores, such as: 16oz fruit juice, a banana and graham crackers, cereal mixed with peanuts and raisins, an energy bar, a bagel with peanut butter and yogurt, or 1.5cups pasta & tomato sauce.

Remember to eat a complete source of protein to repair tissues and build muscles.

- **For long-term events or endurance workouts**, drink sports drinks to get a little added energy and replenish fluid.
- Eat foods that you know will not bother your stomach. Test what you eat during training sessions to make sure you will feel fine during competition.

Hydration:

Get the fluids your body needs for exercise!

*Drink one to two glasses of water when you wake up and sip on water throughout the day.*

- **Before Exercise**: Drink 17-20oz. 2-3 hours before activity and drink 7-10oz. 10-20 min. before exercise
- **During Exercise**: Drink 7-10oz. every 10-20 min.
- **After Exercise**: DRINK AGAIN! ~2.5cups for every pound lost

Locker and Backpack Snack Ideas:

- Granola and cereal bars
- Energy bars
- Dried fruit such as raisins, apricots, apples, peaches
- Dry cereal
- Pretzels
- Graham crackers and peanut butter
- Oatmeal cookies
- Fig bars
- Animal crackers
- Juice boxes
- Sports drinks
- Carrot sticks
- Fresh fruit such as Apple or banana, or fruit cups
Exercise #19  Developing a Sport-Specific Performance Training Program for Your Sport

Module 4 provided information regarding sport-specific performance training. Within each of the following categories, identify and list particular exercises, sets, reps and exercise movement.

**Warm-Up and Flexibility Exercises**

Phase 1 ~ General Warm-Up (10 minutes): ________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Phase 2 ~ Active Muscle Stretching (6 minutes): ____________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Phase 3 ~ Sport-Specific Warm-Up (10 minutes): ___________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Phase 4 ~ Post-Practice and Post-Competition Stretching (15 minutes): ________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

**Cardiovascular Exercise** (30 minutes): _________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

**Resistance Exercise** (30 minutes)

Exercise: ___________________________________________ Three times per week: ________________

Goal – Strength, power or speed: ____________________________

Tempo (Slow builds strength; fast builds power): _____________________________________________________

Sets and reps: ____________________________ Free weights or resistance bands: _______________________

**Coordination & Strength** (Identify one exercise and list number of sets, reps and movement; more than one is optional.)

Exercise 1: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________

Exercise 2: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________

Exercise 3: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________

Exercise 4: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________

**Coordination & Power** (Identify one exercise and list number of sets, reps and movement; more than one is optional.)

Exercise 1: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________

Exercise 2: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________

Exercise 3: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________

Exercise 4: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________

**Speed & Agility** (Identify one exercise and list number of sets, reps and movement; more than one is optional.)

Exercise 1: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________

Exercise 2: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________

Exercise 3: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________

Exercise 4: ____________________________ Sets / reps / movement: ____________________________
Summary Questions

1. What are the benefits of sport-specific warm-up activities?

2. Explain what a progression is.

3. Identify four (4) foods that are nutritious foods to eat during practice or before competition.
Objective: To provide the safest environment for Special Olympics athletes during training and competition.

In Special Olympics sports programs, risk management is the identification of risks and potential risks and then the reduction of these risks and potential risks to an acceptable level. Anyone involved with the sport program is responsible for sport safety and risk management. This includes officials, program leaders, parents, providers, as well as coaches. A simple process for risk management includes:

- **Identification** of all risks and potential risks within their programs,
- **Review** of possible solutions to reduce the risks and potential risks,
- **Selection and implementation** of a solution, and
- **Evaluation** of the risk management policies and procedures on a regular basis.

Special Olympics International requires coaches in US Programs to complete the Protective Behaviors course online every three years. It also recommends that every athlete training program qualify a coach in the area of first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). All coaches should have some first-aid training. If one assistant coach assumes full responsibility for first aid and safety, medical forms, medication records, etc., other coaches can concentrate their efforts in other areas of athlete training. Nonetheless, all coaches play a role in sport safety and risk management.

There are three major areas that need to be addressed when discussing the topic of sport safety and risk management: environment, equipment, and the athlete's training program.

**Environment**
Safe environmental conditions are both a starting point for safety as well as an on-going evaluative process. There are two general areas of concern when we talk about environmental safety.

- **Playing field or court surfaces**: The condition of the field or court must be checked prior to the start of training and/or competition. An indoor court must be clear of any obstructions surrounding the out-of-bounds areas, and the actual surface of the floor must be clear and safe. Any indoor facility must also have proper ventilation, especially in warmer weather.

Outdoor facilities need to be checked for unsafe playing surfaces such as holes, unevenness of grade, moisture, etc. Additionally, climate plays an important role when we look at outdoor playing surfaces in winter sports (snow, ice surface, etc.) as well as summer sports (heated pavement, dust, etc.).

Special considerations must be given to areas for players not taking part in the activity, spectators, and additional equipment needed for the activity.

- **Weather conditions**: Any activity can be affected by weather conditions. Heat illness, sickness due to sun-sensitive medications, and sunburn are potential problems with outdoor activities in warm weather. Frostbite, windburn, sunburn, and hypothermia are problems to consider with outdoor winter activities. Under either set of conditions, rain, electrical storms, and exposure to the elements need to be considered when conducting training and/or competitions outdoors.
Equipment
Athletes should be outfitted with the proper equipment for each sport in which they participate. There are five major points to address when outfitting athletes.

- **Proper fit of equipment**: Athletes involved in all sports must have equipment which is properly fitted for them. Helmets, protective pads, running shoes, etc. all must be individually fitted to the athlete.

- **Proper size of equipment**: General team sports equipment should adhere to the standard specifications designated by each sport. Proper size goals, bats and balls, skis, etc. should meet standards that assure safety for athletes’ participation.

- **Well-maintained equipment**: Coaches and athletes play a role in maintaining equipment. All equipment should be checked prior to the start of practice or competition. Whether the piece of equipment is only occasionally used, like a high bar, or regularly used, like a bicycle, all equipment should be regularly maintained and checked before each use.

- **Proper use of equipment**: Sports equipment is manufactured for a specific use. Coaches are encouraged to use the proper equipment for the sport being taught. If athletes are being taught how to cross country ski, they need cross country skis and poles. Alpine skis will not do. Athletes learning the sport of soccer should use soccer balls, not playground balls or volleyballs. All sports equipment is designed to meet the competition, training, and safety needs of athletes in that given sport.

- **Adequate amount of equipment**: Coaches must plan to have an adequate amount of equipment at training and competitions. Having enough equipment allows athletes a proper warm-up entering into activity and allows the safe and organized staging of training drills.

Athlete’s program
The sports training program must be designed to meet the individual needs of each athlete. There are six major factors to consider when preparing a comprehensive training program for your athletes.

- **Readiness level and athlete skill assessment**: Coaches need to determine a starting point for athletes to begin training in a sport. Each athlete’s interest in participating in a given sport, his or her desire to train, and his or her skill level in that sport all need to be considered by the coach before entering into training.

- **Seasonal sport plan**: Coaches and athletes should work together in selecting sports and in developing seasonal plans. By developing seasonal plans, athletes and coaches develop comprehensive training plans designed to meet individual goals.

- **Training plans**: Planned trainings result in safe training opportunities for all athletes in the program. Good training plans enable coaches to better utilize time with their athletes. The issue of safety needs to be addressed in every training plan.

- **Supervision**: Athlete training sessions need to be properly supervised. It is also extremely important that volunteers who assume supervisory roles are well qualified. Special Olympics coaches certifications, National Governing Body (NGB) coaching credentials, safety and first-aid qualifications, and general knowledge of Special Olympics athletes are recommended. Athlete-to-coach ratios also need to be considered.

- **Individual training program**: Each athlete should have an individual training program designed to meet his or her needs. This program should be designed to address individual training needs in both sport-specific and general conditioning areas.

- **Records**: Accurate records include training plans, attendance records, individualized progress charts, accidents, injuries, etc. All should be maintained and kept on file.
Atlantoaxial Instability in Athletes with Down Syndrome: A Need For Awareness

Definition
Atlantoaxial instability can be defined for the layman as an abnormal increase of mobility of the two upper cervical vertebrae (C1 and C2) located at the top of the neck (Cooke, 1964). The stability of the atlantoaxial joint is determined by the integrity of the cranovertebrae ligaments and other factors (Aung, 1973). A displacement of the Cl vertebrae in relation to the C2 vertebrae results in atlantoaxial dislocation (Shriver, 1983). According to Aung (1973), this dislocation, which only rarely affects individuals with Down syndrome, “...occurs spontaneously or can be induced by minor injury.” (p. 197) The results of this dislocation is generally an excessive anterior movement of the upper spine and has quite serious health implications (Giblin & Micheli, 1979).

Prior to the mid 1960s, atlantoaxial instability was not associated with Down syndrome (Nordt & Stauffer, 1961). Atlantoaxial instability (not dislocation) has been reported to occur between 9.5% and 10% of patients with Down syndrome examined (Coria et. al., 1983; Nordt & Stauffer, 1981; Pueschel et. al., 1981; Semine et. al., 1978). At this time the actual incidence (Aung, 1973), epidemiology, and natural history of atlantoaxial dislocation, again, much more serious, is not known; however, several cases have been reported (Pueschel, 1983).

Impact on Special Olympics
Special Olympics International, Inc. has an outstanding safety record and was the first organization serving disabled populations to react to the concerns of the medical community. As best as can be determined, no individual with Down syndrome participating in the Special Olympics program has been injured due to atlantoaxial instability (Cooke, 1984; Shriver, 1983). In March, 1983, Special Olympics outlined the following procedures in response to the situation.

There is evidence from medical research that up to 10% of individuals with Down syndrome suffer from a malalignment of the cervical vertebrae C-1 and C-2 in the neck. This condition exposes Down syndrome individuals to the possibility of injury if they participate in activities that hyper-extend or radically flex the neck or upper spine.

Restriction of individuals with Down syndrome to participate in certain activities applies:

- National and U.S. Programs may allow all individuals with Down syndrome to continue in most Special Olympics sports training and competition activities. However, such individuals shall be temporarily restricted from participating in sports training and competition activities which, by nature, result in hyper-extension, radical flexion, or direct pressure on the neck or upper spine, unless the requirements below are satisfied. Such sports training and competition activities include: butterfly stroke and diving starts in swimming, diving, pentathlon, high jump, equestrian sports, artistic gymnastics, football (soccer), alpine skiing, and any warm-up exercise placing undue stress on the head and neck;
• Restriction from participation in the above-listed activities shall continue until an individual with Down syndrome has been examined (including x-ray views of full extension and flexion of the neck) by a physician who has been briefed on the nature of the atlantoaxial instability condition, and the results of such an examination demonstrate that the individual does not have the atlantoaxial instability condition;

OR

• For any individual diagnosed as having the atlantoaxial instability condition, the examining physician shall notify the athlete’s parents or guardians of the nature and extent of the individual’s condition, and such athlete shall be allowed to participate in the activities listed above only if the athlete submits written certifications from two physicians, on forms prescribed by SOI, combined with an acknowledgement of risks signed by the adult athlete or his or her parent or guardian if the athlete is a minor.

Conclusion

Awareness of the effects Down syndrome has on the stability of the cervical spine is essential information for professionals in the field and parents whose children have this disability. Early recognition of atlantoaxial instability and dislocation enhances the likelihood of medical remediation. Current medical and surgical care can greatly assist individuals with Down syndrome who have instability and rare dislocations.
SAFETY CHECKLIST

The following checklist is offered as a shorthand method of assessing an activity plan and bringing the most critical components into focus.

1. Have enough supervisors been provided? ____
2. Do all personnel possess the necessary skills? ______
   • Certification % yes
   • Outside training % yes
   • In-house training % yes
3. Have the responsibilities of all supervisory personnel been clearly defined and articulated? _____
4. Has the location of personnel been planned to guarantee effective coverage? _____
5. Do supervisors have clear line of sight over their areas of responsibility? _____
6. Are there areas that are being under or over supervised? _____
7. Is there immediate access to trained first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)? _____
8. Are there carefully developed plans for medical emergencies to include telephone access, notifications to be made, etc.? _____
9. Are all supervisory personnel familiar with the emergency action plan(s) and procedures? _____
10. Is there an effective means of crisis communication among supervisory personnel? _____
11. Have the participants been made aware of the maximum reasonable degree of their responsibilities and obligations? _____
12. Have provisions been made to provide follow-up and reminders regarding participant responsibilities and obligations? _____
13. Does the supervisor have all necessary medical information on each participant, including special medical problems, names and telephone numbers of persons to be notified, and list of current medications? _____
14. Does all activity planning include specific considerations for safety? _____
15. Have rules of conduct been established, explained, and rigidly enforced? ______
16. Has there been careful consideration of the matter of participant readiness, to include assessing, ability grouping, etc.? _____
17. Do the participants and their parents understand insofar as is reasonable, the risks inherent in the activity and the safety procedures? _____
18. Within the reasonable limits of their individual capabilities, do the participants recognize and accept responsibility for their own safety? _____
19. Has careful consideration been given to possible activity adaptations to increase safety? _____
20. Has consideration been given to the question of appropriate footwear, clothing, equipment, and safety equipment? _____
21. Are there regularly scheduled inspection and maintenance procedures for all equipment and facilities? _____
22. Are the results of inspections and completed maintenance procedures recorded and maintained? _____
23. Has careful attention been given to the following environmental conditions:
   • Appropriate playing surface? _____
   • Sufficient buffer zones around playing areas? _____
   • Elimination of potholes? _____
   • Removal of obstructions? _____
   • Slippery surface conditions? _____
   • Sufficient quantity of equipment? _____
24. Does all equipment meet or exceed appropriate safety standards? _____
25. Has consideration been given to spectator safety and pedestrian traffic near the event? _____
26. Have equipment and field modifications been considered in light of participant needs (such as scaled down, reduced flight, or lighter weight equipment, shorter fields, thicker mats, etc.)? _____
The activities associated with Special Olympics have been carefully selected to ensure the fact that they are safe in and of themselves. If, however, they are improperly conducted, they can pose an unnecessary threat to the safety of the participants, and, therefore, constitute a source of potential liability. Similarly, the activities have been examined and modified to guarantee their appropriateness for disabled individuals as a group. However, they are not all necessarily appropriate for each potential participant. The readiness of the participant for the specific activity in which he or she suffers an injury is another issue which will be closely examined in the event of an injury related lawsuit. It is, therefore, essential that coaches and other individuals involved in the planning and delivery of sports and recreational activities have a thorough understanding of the particular sport or activity with which they are working. Coaches must make any appropriate and necessary modifications to best meet the needs of the individual athlete.

The following guidelines should be considered in the selection and development of instructional programs, contests, and activities. The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules provide excellent guidance in this regard for the program in general, as well as for individual sports and activities.

1. Obtain a medical clearance for all participants.
2. Remember that readiness for any given activity is an individual matter. Pre-testing and screening participants as well as careful record-keeping with regard to skill development and achievement are very important.
3. Never allow anyone to participate in an activity for which he or she is not physically and emotionally prepared and properly attired. Remember that proper attire is a matter of function and safety, not style and color.
4. Establish procedures for determining when an individual may safely resume participation after an injury or an illness.
5. Comprehensive written planning is indispensable. Individual plans are reflective of the choice and organization of the activities on a given day. When collectively viewed in sequence, plans provide written documentation of the nature of previous instruction and student experiences.
6. Be prepared to provide a sound justification, consistent with the objectives of the Special Olympics program and individualized educational programs for the activities conducted. Injuries occurring in activities conducted merely because the athletes love them are very difficult to justify in court.
7. All plans for outdoor activities should include alternative activities and locations to be utilized in the event of inclement weather. It is very difficult to justify an injury that occurred as a result of a spur-of-the-moment substitute for a planned activity.
8. Be sure that all instruction is consistent with the most accepted information and practices in the field.
9. Any dangers involved in the activity should be brought to the attention of the participants and their parents. The risks as well as the rules and procedures by which they are to be minimized should be understood by all, and frequently reinforced. Parent orientations and parental consent forms are valuable tools in the establishment of a strong cooperative relationship as well as a firm legal foundation for the involvement of any given participant in a risk-bearing program.
10. Where possible and appropriate, reinforce verbal warnings and safety procedures with written waivers, posters, etc.
11. Take whatever steps may be necessary in order to avoid mismatch situations in activities where physical contact is likely (such as football/soccer, team handball, basketball). Participants should be matched according to size and ability. The significance of this factor is tempered somewhat at the higher levels of competition due to the selection process involved in reaching that level.
The number one priority of all coaches is to provide athletes a safe and healthy environment. The number two priority is to provide an appropriate response when an emergency occurs.

**Preparation**
Each step from training through competition is properly planned.

**Instruction and Competition**
Proper sport skills instruction takes place and safe competition occurs.

**Environment**
A safe and secure physical environment is provided and maintained.

**Equipment**
Acceptable and safe equipment is used. Protective equipment, such as shin guards in football (soccer) and helmets in downhill skiing, is also provided as required by the rules.

**Athlete Group Composition**
Athletes are matched according to strength, size, and ability during training and competitions.

**Athlete Assessment**
Each athlete is continually assessed. Each athlete participates in an appropriate activity and is not challenged beyond his or her ability.

**Supervision**
Volunteers and athletes work together to ensure acceptable supervision. An adequate volunteer-to-athlete ratio is maintained. (Refer to pages 77-78 for sample Supervisory Planning Guide.)

**Inherent Dangers**
Athletes are warned of inherent risks within a sport.

**Emergency Action Plan**
An emergency action plan is established. The plan includes procedures for emergency medical support, postponements or cancellations, crisis communication, and reporting accidents and injuries.

**Medical Assistance**
Appropriate medical support is provided at all times. The greater the risk within an activity, the higher the level of medical support.

**Records**
Accurate records including training plans, attendance records, individualized progress charts, etc. They should be maintained and kept on file.
Exercise #20  Developing an Emergency Action Plan

Having an emergency action plan enables a more efficient and effective way of responding to an emergency. Three major items of an emergency action plan are identified below. After each item, list three key specifics that need to be addressed.

1. Emergency Medical Support

   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________

2. Emergency Response to Inclement Weather

   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________

3. Crisis Communication

   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
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   _______________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________
Individuals entrusted to our care must, by definition, be supervised. Moreover, the specific quality and quantity of supervision needed to assure safety is dependent on each individual's ability to understand the nature and risks of the activity and the consequences of his or her own actions. The exact number and type of supervisory personnel who would be most appropriate for an activity, therefore, can only be determined by the specific needs of the situation. The following planning guide has been designed to help identify the important supervisory components and to accomplish them in an orderly manner. The form should be developed at the lower supervisory level and compiled and coordinated at each succeeding higher level. A plan could be developed for each sport at a given school or agency. Separate plans from participating schools or agencies could be used in developing the supervisory plans for a regional event, etc. Where more than one site will be used, a separate plan should be developed for each site. The individual plans can then be coordinated and combined as appropriate at succeeding higher administrative levels.

1. Activity ________________________________________________________________

2. Location ______________________________________________________________

3. Estimated number of participants _____

4. Supervisor-to-participant ratio of _____ to _____

5. Supervisory positions needed (list below):

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<th>Number Needed</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Minimal Qualifications</th>
<th>Identification</th>
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Resources such as the *Official Special Olympics Sports Rules*, the *Risk Management Manual*, and other appropriate standards and recommendations should be considered in arriving at this listing of positions and qualifications.
6. Additional on-site coordinators and/or supervisors:

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7. Location of supervisors and coordinators *(include sketch and show areas of responsibility)*

8. Rotation plan for supervisory personnel __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

9. Identify adjustments to the overall supervision plan when someone goes to lunch or for a break. Who fills in? Are additional personnel needed?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
1. Give four examples of safety considerations for the environment, for equipment, and for the athlete’s program.

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<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Athlete’s Program</th>
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2. Describe the atlantoaxial instability condition.

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3. It is a responsibility of the coach to make sure that athletes are matched appropriately. Describe what it means to match athletes.

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The Better the Coach ...

The Better the Experiences ...

The Better the Athlete!

Special Olympics, Inc.
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Website: www.specialolympics.org