



Coaching Guide Athletics

**Special
Olympics**





Welcome to The Special Olympics Athletics Coaching Guide - 2017 edition.

In this guide, we aim to provide coaches, especially new coaches, with some key information to get you started in coaching Track and Field Athletics. Throughout the guide you will find some general information on coaching Athletics – from the clothing and equipment required, to some of the most important rules; from how to keep good training records to fostering sportsmanship in your team.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the Special Olympics Athletics Rules and Special Olympics Sports Rules Article 1.

Keep in mind, that this guide is just one resource which may be useful to you as you progress through your career as a coach. As you develop your own style of coaching, you will find other books, websites, magazines and coaches, who will help to shape your approach to coaching. Always be curious! Always be open to new ideas! Always keep your athletes at the heart of your coaching!

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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 8 years of age and older with intellectual disabilities, 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.

Special Olympics athletics welcomes your ideas and comments for future revisions of this guide. We apologize if, for any reason, an acknowledgement has been inadvertently omitted.

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Preparing for the Athletics Season

GOALS

Goal setting is an important part of any training Program. They help to give us focus and direction. In addition, they help us to monitor our progress and development. For more information about goal setting and SMART Goals, you should read our Sport Psychology guide which is available on our resources webpage resources.specialolympics.org

Here are some simple examples of SMART goals for athletes training in Athletics.

Event	Session Focus	Sample Goals
Shot Put	Correct Release of Shot	Extend the arm fully at release each put (90% of puts)
Sprints	Running Curves	Stay in lane for each repetition of the curve
Relays	Blind Baton Exchange	Smooth exchange (no fumbles) in 80% of exchanges
Middle Distance	Pacing for 3,000m	Hit agreed splits for each 800m
Standing Long Jump	Take Off	Both feet leave the ground simultaneously in 4/5 jumps

PLANNING A TRAINING SEASON

Prior to every season, it is an important part of your role as coach, to plan your training season. You should consider all of the key elements of a season – Pre-Season, (General Preparation & Specific Preparation), Competition Season and Off Season. For more information on planning a training season, please visit our short guide on this topic on our resources webpage on www.resources.specialolympics.org

In planning your athletics season, you should consider which capacities must be developed for the events in which your athletes are training. This means you may need to focus on different types of training across your group, particularly as the season progresses.

PRACTICING FOR COMPETITION

The more we practice competing well, the better we get at competing. Competition is a key part of an athlete's training. It also helps to motivate athletes to train harder. Competitive activities can be exciting and fun. They also give athletes great feedback about how they are progressing. It is vital to include competitive activities in your athletes' training Program. Remember! Competition activities are not always formal competitions! Here are some simple ways you can do this with your Track and Field team:

Invite other clubs/schools to attend your training session and run a mini competition.

Ask a local high school/secondary school to join your training session, or join theirs.

Partner with local running clubs or track and field clubs.

Host friendly meets each month within your club and invite your athletes get to try out different events.

Create a local league in your community.

Invite families to be “Fans in the Stands” every few weeks. They will create a competition atmosphere. This can help your athletes learn to cope with the excitement and stresses of competition.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT A TRAINING SESSION

Every competition and practice area should be examined for dangers. Here are some examples you might see.

Metal grating around a long Jump pit: if broken it could create a dangerous landing zone.

Throwing Areas: You must ensure that you remove the risk of athletes, coaches or spectators being struck by a throwing implement. You should also establish clear rules about when implements can be collected from a throwing sector.

As coach, you should check all equipment to ensure it is in good working condition and safe to use. This includes: Hurdles, High Jump pits, throwing cages and circles, stop boards and sand landing pits.

Our ultimate aim is to provide a safe and secure environment for all. This includes athletes, coaches, spectators and anyone in our training or competition venue. A safe venue allows everyone to concentrate on the business of training!

PLANNING A TRAINING SESSION

Good coaches plan the training and competition season. Good coaches also plan every training session. To learn about how to plan a training session, visit the guide on our resources page www.resources.specialolympics.org

A training session should have the following components:

- Warm-Up
- Review and practice of previously learned skills
- Introduction of new skills, techniques or tactics
- Competition Practice
- Cool-Down and Review of Session

Keep your sessions varied. Good coaches keep a balance between challenging athletes and giving them a chance to experience success. Above all, make sure your training sessions are fun!

UNIFIED SPORTS TEAM ATHLETICS

Unified Sports Team Athletics is a fully inclusive program. Special Olympics athletes and Unified partners train together and support each other as equal teammates. A team roster can be no more than 20 participants. There must be an equal number of athletes and partners. In a competition, each team member may compete in up to three events. There are five track, three field, and two relay events offered.

There are two elements which distinguish Unified Sports Team Athletics.

- 1) Each teammate scores points for their team based on their own competition performance. Every event division is scored. First place scores 5 points. Second place scores 3 points. Third place scores one point. The scores of all team members are added together. The team with the highest score at the end of the meet is the winner.
- 2) Athletes and partners compete against each other. Divisions are composed of competitors who all have similar times or distances. Athletes and partners are treated equally. They are not separated. This leads to an atmosphere of full inclusion.

Competition among everyone promotes equality and respect. It also removes labels. Participants are viewed simply by their talents, and attitudes become more enlightened.

Unified Sports Team Athletics engenders camaraderie and team spirit. Team members support and encourage their teammates in every event division. Each team member can contribute meaningfully to their team's performance. Each athlete's performance is important.

Lasting friendships emerge as teammates train together and become more involved in each other's lives.

A coach starting a Unified Athletics team has fewer restrictions than for Unified team sports. Athletes and partners do not need to be of similar ability levels. In fact, the coach can recruit teammates who have very different abilities. In competition they are grouped with others with similar times or distances. Remember, participants must be of similar ages and share a common love for athletics.

Early in the season, encourage team members to try different events. They should try both track and field events. Then help them to select up to three in which to specialize. They can focus their training on these events for competitions.

As a coach, it is essential you coach everyone on the team. Never separate the athletes and partners in instructional settings. All teammates learn and train together. Treat everyone the same. Adapt your coaching style to meet the needs of your team members.

You should also make sure athletes and partner share leadership roles. Encourage them to do activities together. E.g. In warm-ups and stretching ask pairs of athletes and partners lead the rest of the team.

Unified Sports Team Athletics is a great way to bring together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities in an enriching experience.

ATHLETICS ATHLETE SKILLS ASSESSMENT

The sport skills assessment chart is a systematic method useful to determine the current skill level/ability of an athlete. The Athletics Skills Assessment Card is designed to assist coaches in

determining athlete's ability level in athletics. This can be done before they begin participation and during the season to assess their progress. Coaches will find this assessment a useful tool for several reasons.

- Help coach to determine with the athlete which events they are ready to compete in.
- Establish the baseline training areas of athlete.
- Assist coaches to group athletes of similar ability in training teams.
- Measure the athlete's progression (by repeating the assessment during the season).
- Help determine athletes' daily training schedule.

Before administering the assessment coaches need to perform the following analysis when observing the athlete.

- Become familiar with each of the tasks listed under the major skills
- Have an accurate visual picture of each task
- Have observed a skilled performer executing the skill.

When administering the assessment coaches will have a better opportunity in getting the best analysis from their athletes. Always begin by explaining the skill you would like to observe. When possible demonstrate the skill.

INSTRUCTIONS

Use this tool at the start of the training and competition season. It helps to establish a baseline measurement of each athlete's starting skill level.

Ask the athlete to perform the skill several times.

If the athlete performs the skill correctly 3 out of 5 times, check the box next to the skill to indicate that the skill has been accomplished.

Plan repeat assessment sessions into your training and competition season.

Use the information in the assessment to determine focus areas for your training season. This may be skills the athlete must learn, improve or refine.

NOTE: Athletes may learn and master skills in any order. Athletes have accomplished the list for the event when all possible items have been achieved. Coaches can use this card in conjunction with competition results to help identify when an athlete may be ready to attempt a more challenging event.

Special Olympics Athletics Skills Assessment Card

Athlete Name: _____

Date: _____

Coach Name: _____

<p>Running Basics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Maintains a balanced and upright posture <input type="checkbox"/> Maintains a hips tall position <input type="checkbox"/> Lifts opposite knee/arm while running <input type="checkbox"/> Does not swing the arms in front of the body or rotate the shoulders while running 	<p>Sprints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Can perform a stand up or block start <input type="checkbox"/> Has good foot speed <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to start and finish a sprint event <input type="checkbox"/> Sprints under control <input type="checkbox"/> Likes to run fast
<p>Starts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a stand up sprint start <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates proper sprinting form <input type="checkbox"/> Takes relaxed "On Your Mark" position in the starting blocks <input type="checkbox"/> Takes balanced "Set" position in the starting blocks <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a sprint start out of the starting position upon hearing start command 	<p>Hurdles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to step over a low barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to step over a low obstacle while running <input type="checkbox"/> Has good flexibility in hips <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to start and finish a sprint <input type="checkbox"/> Likes running over barriers
<p>Middle Distance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Can run for 3 minutes at a steady pace <input type="checkbox"/> Can run for 30 seconds at a fast pace <input type="checkbox"/> Likes running 2-4 laps around track 	<p>Long Distance Running</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Runs in balanced and erect posture <input type="checkbox"/> Runs with correct distance running form <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to start and finish a 1600M race <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to run at a certain pace
<p>Relays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Receives baton in a visual pass <input type="checkbox"/> Performs an up-sweep/palm down baton pass <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a down-sweep/palm up baton pass <input type="checkbox"/> Performs baton pass in exchange zone <input type="checkbox"/> Runs designated leg of relay race in proper manner <input type="checkbox"/> Runs to teammate in proper lane <input type="checkbox"/> Runs in lane while reaching back with designated arm <input type="checkbox"/> Can run to teammate with baton <input type="checkbox"/> Runs in lane while looking back at incoming runner <input type="checkbox"/> Can run 100m/ 400m <input type="checkbox"/> Likes running relays with teammates 	<p>Running Long Jump</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a 9-step approach <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a single leg takeoff <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates the step-style flight technique <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates the hang-style flight technique <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates proper landing technique <input type="checkbox"/> Jumps on command and under control <input type="checkbox"/> Can perform a good standing long jump <input type="checkbox"/> Can locate his/her starting mark <input type="checkbox"/> Can locate takeoff board <input type="checkbox"/> Likes jumping into sand pit
<p>Standing Long Jump</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Assumes a ready-to-jump position <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates the correct takeoff for a standing long jump <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates proper flight technique <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates proper landing technique <input type="checkbox"/> Jumps on command and under control <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete can perform two-leg takeoff <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete likes jumping 	<p>High Jump</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a 7-step approach for a flop style high jump <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a flop style jump, landing on back <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a scissor style high jump <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a 7-step approach for a scissor-style high jump <input type="checkbox"/> Jumps on command and under control <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete can jump up into the air off one foot <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete can take off with one foot and land in the pit

	<input type="checkbox"/> Athlete can perform a consistent three-step approach <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete can perform a one-foot takeoff <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete can jump backward into the pit <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete can run on a curve <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete likes jumping
Mini Javelin <input type="checkbox"/> Grips the mini-javelin correctly <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a standing throw <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a one-step throw <input type="checkbox"/> Can perform a full 5-step run up and throw <input type="checkbox"/> Pulls the mini-javelin through, leading with the shoulder and elbow <input type="checkbox"/> Steps forward and holds hand above shoulder height <input type="checkbox"/> Releases the javelin at the correct height to ensure good flight. <input type="checkbox"/> Completes the follow through	Shot Put <input type="checkbox"/> Grips shot correctly <input type="checkbox"/> Takes a ready-to-put position <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a standing put, or wheelchair sitting put <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a sliding put <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a glide put <input type="checkbox"/> Puts shot in a forward direction <input type="checkbox"/> Puts shot in the shot put landing sector <input type="checkbox"/> Performs reverse or weight transfer <input type="checkbox"/> Can balance the shot in one hand using the correct grip <input type="checkbox"/> Can safely pick up and hold the shot in proper position <input type="checkbox"/> Likes putting the shot
Wheelchair Racing <input type="checkbox"/> Assumes a ready-to-race position <input type="checkbox"/> Performs a forward stroke and recovery <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates ability to complete a wheelchair race <input type="checkbox"/> Races in a controlled manner <input type="checkbox"/> Likes wheelchair racing	Softball Throw <input type="checkbox"/> Grips a softball correctly <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates proper overhand throwing technique <input type="checkbox"/> Throws softball on command <input type="checkbox"/> Throws softball in a forward direction <input type="checkbox"/> Throws softball in the softball marking area <input type="checkbox"/> Can properly grip softball in throwing hand <input type="checkbox"/> Can take a correct ready-to-throw position <input type="checkbox"/> Likes throwing a softball
Race Walking <input type="checkbox"/> Walks in a balanced and erect posture <input type="checkbox"/> Walks in proper form at low speeds <input type="checkbox"/> Walks at various speeds, slow-fast <input type="checkbox"/> Walks in competitive race walking form <input type="checkbox"/> Walks under control <input type="checkbox"/> Likes race walking	

Tracking Your Athletes' Performances

PERFORMANCE RECORD

As a coach, an important part of your role is to track the progress of your athletes. A performance record or log is a great way to do this. Not only is it a useful tool to have with you at competition, but it can also help motivate your athletes. It can help you to show them how much they have improved

over a period of time. Equally, it can help to indicate when an athlete's performance has plateaued. This may be a sign that the approach to training needs to change. Is the athlete bored with training? Have they lost motivation? Have your training sessions stopped challenging your athletes?

Coaching is a balancing act. You must provide opportunities for your athletes to both be challenged and to succeed. Too much of either may damage their motivation.

Here are some simple examples of a performance record. You do not need to complete this for every session. However, it is a great idea to record performances throughout the season. This should be both in training and competition situations. You can also share this with your athletes from time to time. Showing them how they have improved can be very motivating. Consider inviting them to keep their own training log. This will give them a sense of responsibility over their own training. Each coach should identify the best way for themselves to track the performances of their athletes.

PERFORMANCE RECORD – EXAMPLE 1

In this example, the coach completes one page per training session or competition. Coaches can make additional notes. This means the coach needs just one page at a training session or competition. The disadvantage is that an athlete's records are spread across many pages. This can make it more difficult to monitor changes in performances. It can also be more difficult to arrange this information to support a protest against a Maximum Effort rule violation.

Coach Name: _____

Training Session Date: _____ **Time:** _____ **Venue:** _____ **Weather:** _____

Athlete Name	Event 1	Result 1	Event 2	Result 2	Electronic Time/ Stopwatch
Mary Smith	100m	18.23	200m	35.26	Electronic Timing
John Brown	400m Walk	1:32.5	Shot Put (4kg)	2.54m	Electronic Timing
Sarah Pitt	1500m	11.57			Stopwatch

Additional Notes:

PERFORMANCE RECORD – EXAMPLE 2

In this example the coach should have one page per athlete in a file. During training or competitions, the coach should record the athlete's performances. It can be helpful to note other information that might be relevant. Examples include the training venue; the weather (was it warm or cold? Was it windy?); How was the performance measured? Electronic Timing is more accurate than a stopwatch. Although coaches need one page per athlete in this example, it also means that all information is more easily accessible for each athlete during competition.

Coach Name: _____

Athlete Name: _____

Date	Event 1	Performance 1	Weather	Indoor/Outdoor	Measured by
4/3/17	100m	20.6s	Cold	Indoor	Stopwatch
11/3/17	100m	21.2s	Cold	Indoor	Stopwatch
18/3/17	100m	20.8s	Cold	Indoor	Stopwatch
18/3/17	200m	41.4	Cold	Indoor	Stopwatch
25/3/17	100m	22.1s	Windy	Outdoor	Stopwatch
25/3/17	200m	43.8	Windy	Outdoor	Stopwatch
1/4/17	100m	20.1s	Mild	Outdoor	Stopwatch
1/4/17	200m	41.2	Mild	Outdoor	Stopwatch
1/4/17	100m	20.4s	Mild	Outdoor	Stopwatch
8/4/17	100m	20.36s	Mild	Outdoor	Electronic Timing
8/4/17	100m	20.45s	Mild	Outdoor	Electronic Timing
8/4/17	Long Jump	3.01m	Mild	Outdoor	Measuring Tape
8/4/17	200m	39.21s	Mild	Outdoor	Electronic Timing

PERFORMANCE RECORD – EXAMPLE 3

This is the most detailed type of training record. The coach notes the athlete's name and event. They then provide a detailed description of the skills they are developing. The coach can keep note of successful drills or activities. They can also note which drills athletes found more challenging. While this is the most time consuming type of record to keep, it can also be a useful resource for the coach. It will help to not only track the athlete's progress, but their own development as a coach.

Event: Standing Long Jump

Athlete's
Name

Joe Sky

Skill: Flight Technique **Coach's Name** Sam Jones

Skill Analysis	Dates and Coaching Methods	Coach Observations	Date Mastered
Perform proper flight technique for standing long jump			
Perform correct take-off behind take-off line or board.	5/31: Demonstration by coach. 5 Attempts: 3 moderately successful, 1 good, 1 did not complete	Re-measure take off distance Increase power of take-off.	6/13
Bring legs and upper body forward while in flight by piking hips			
Keep feet slightly apart and parallel during flight			
Holds head forward and focuses a couple of meters ahead			
Distance Jumped	June 30 th	Measured at 2.4m	

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

All competitors must wear suitable clothing and footwear for Athletics. You should talk with your athletes about what clothing is acceptable. Remember that this may be different for training and for competition.

Talk with your athletes about why the correct clothing and footwear is important. Explain that the correct attire can help them to perform at their best.

- Clothing should be suitable for the activity the athlete will do. This means:
- Comfortable clothing that does not restrict movement
- Suitable material (i.e. breathable, not denim)
- Well-fitted athletic shoes (Trainers, Spikes)*
- Suitable for the conditions (i.e. weather, temperature, indoor/outdoor)

*** Note: Barefoot running is permitted under the rules.**

At competition it is your job to ensure your athlete' clothing complies with the official Special Olympics Athletics rules.

SHIRTS

Shirts should be:

- Comfortable
- Clean and Neat
- Allow freedom of movement. (A sleeveless shirt/vest gives a lot of freedom of movement. Athletes can wear a t-shirt underneath if desired.)
- Light fabric (T-shirts made of moisture wicking fabrics are preferred to cotton t-shirts. They allow the body and skin to stay cool and dry.)
- Suitable Length. (Shirts should be long enough to cover the torso but not to impede movement. Long shirts should be tucked into the waist band of shorts/pants)

SHORTS

Shorts or tracksuit pants should be well fitting. They should not be too loose or baggy. They should be comfortable and allow freedom of movement. Some athletes may find running tights more comfortable.

SOCKS

Athletics socks should be worn with any footwear. Well-fitting socks made of a breathable material will reduce moisture and may help prevent blisters and odour. They also support good foot hygiene and if cared for will last at least an entire season. They will also increase the life of the sports shoes.

SHOES

A well-fitting running shoe is the most important item of clothing for any athletics athlete. Different sports require different shoes which are designed for both the movement of the athlete and the surface they will train upon. A good running shoe should have:

- A thick padded heel cushion. This may reduce incidence of shin splints, calluses and other lower limb injuries by absorbing impact.
- Thick durable rubber sole.
- A firm heel counter. This adds more stability and keeps the heel straight in the shoe.
- Good flexibility.
- Most importantly - a good fit!



Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Fit Feet Program provides great advice for proper foot care and footwear. Athletes should consider participating in Fit Feet screening when it is available. Ask your local Program for more information or visit our Healthy Athletes resource page http://resources.specialolympics.org/Taxonomy/Health/Catalog_of_Fit_Feet_Resources.aspx

WARM-UP CLOTHING

Some athletes choose to wear track suits warming up prior to their training session or competition. They may also be used to help athletes to stay warm after a practice or competition.

Track suits/warm-up clothing should be:

- Light to medium weight
- Cotton sweatshirt or moisture wicking material
- Easily removed and put on
- Labelled with athlete's name (it is easy to lose kit when many people train together!)

Consider the weather and location of training/competition. Warm-up clothing may be heavier in cold weather. In wet weather you may need to consider waterproof or water resistant material. Nylon windbreakers are also a good choice for retaining warmth and keeping the athlete dry, windy weather.

TOP TIPS - CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

Show your athletes examples of the correct attire (Photos, Videos)

Bring them to another team practices to see the athletes in action

Agree with your athletes what action you will take if they attend training without the correct attire.

Lead by example. Always wear suitable attire to training and competition.

ATHLETICS EQUIPMENT

Track and Field Athletics has many events. Each event needs specific equipment. It is important that athletes train with the correct equipment for their event. Athletes should be able to recognize and select the correct equipment for their event. Practice identifying and naming each piece of equipment with your athletes during training. Encourage them to select the equipment they need at training. Remember that your athletes will need to be able to select their equipment independently at competitions.

TIMING DEVICES

When timing your athletes in training or competition, accuracy is important.

You can do this manually, using an electric or digital stopwatch. Manual times are recorded in one tenth (1/10) of a second. This is the case even if the stopwatch displays one-hundredth (1/100) of a second.

A fully automatic timing (FAT) system may be used at some competitions. When FAT is used, times are recorded in one one-hundredth (1/100) of a second.

As coach, it is your duty to regularly record accurate times for all of your athletes.

STARTING PISTOL



A starting pistol is used in most Athletics competition. It should also be used during training sessions. This helps to familiarize athletes with the gun before in a competitive event. A good start is important in any race and it takes practice to improve. In some situations a replacement may be permissible. Suitable replacements for the gun are a bell (mandatory in an indoor track), whistle or verbal start. You must discuss this with competition management before any event. A coach may use other replacements in practices only and not during competition.

STARTING BLOCKS

The use of starting blocks is optional. The starting blocks must be anchored behind the start line. When in the start position, the athlete's hands are set just behind the start line. The blocks must be adjustable to allow the athlete to find the best starting position.



HURDLES

Use hurdles that suit the ability of your athletes. Use practice hurdles when you introduce the basic technique of hurdling. Practice hurdles are collapsible or designed to fall over easily. If you cannot access specifically designed beginner or practice hurdles, you can improvise. A light stick balanced on cones of the correct height is a great alternative. Competition hurdles should only be used when athletes can hurdle with good, basic technique.

RELAY BATON

Each relay team needs one relay baton. Competition batons should be 10cm in circumference. They may be made of anodized aluminum, or lightweight, unbreakable plastic. For practice, you can improvise. The following materials cut into 30cm lengths, with smooth edges could be used: dowels, old broom handles, or PVC pipe.



LONG JUMP PIT

You must ensure the running long jump pit is safe for all of your athletes. Here are some important tips.

Ensure there is sufficient sand in the pit for a safe landing. It should have a depth of at least 30 cm of sand.

You must ensure the depth of sand is maintained during training and competition. Remember, each time an athlete jumps into the pit will displace some sand. Regular brushing and raking of the sand is important.

The landing pit must be long and wide enough to ensure a safe landing for all athletes.

A standard takeoff board is often more than 2m from the edge of the pit. In this case, you may need to put a temporary takeoff board/chalk line in the runway 1m from the front edge of the pit.

The long jump pit should meet IAAF requirements.

HIGH JUMP PIT

The high jump pit consists of:

- Landing mats (should cover a minimum area and depth of 500 x 250 x 50cm). Only approved and certified high jump mats may be used; pits made of other materials (such as gym mats) are not acceptable.
- 1 pair of adjustable standards
- A crossbar (the ideal practice crossbar is a fiber glass crossbar)

Shots

Special Olympics Athletics rules permit outdoor shots (iron) or indoor shots (covered with hard plastic) for use in competitions. However, the minimum weight requirements will be applied as listed below:

Category	Males:	Females
12+	4.0 kg	3.0 kg
8-11	3.0 kg	2.0 kg
Wheelchair	2.0 kg	2.0 kg



SOFTBALLS

The official size for softballs is 30 cm and weight (blue dot, traditional flight). Tennis balls may be used by athletes for whom the softball is still too challenging. These events are developmental throwing events

Some competitions will have a maximum distance in place for these events.

MINI-JAVELINS

Mini-javelins are made of rigid, plastic material. It has a shaft, a grip, and fins (see image). The tip is made of softer rubber with a blunt, rounded end. The mini-javelin is a safer alternative to an outdoor javelin. The following minimum weight requirements apply:



Category	Males:	Females
16+	400g	300g
8-15	300g	300g
Pentathlon Event	300g	300g

MENTAL PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Skill learning and tactical training on the field of play are just two elements of training in any sport. More and more athletes and coaches use mental training elements to complement their physical training. To find out more, refer to the sport psychology coaching guide on resources.specialolympics.org

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Strong Minds Program provides great advice wellness and mindfulness. Athletes should consider visiting the Strong Minds program at Healthy Athletes events when it is available. Ask your local Program for more information or visit our Healthy Athletes resource page www.resources.specialolympics.org

FITNESS IN ATHLETICS

Cross training is when similar, but different mode of exercise is incorporated into an athlete's training in order to improve fitness or performance for the athlete's main sport. For example, in athletics, this might include cycling, rowing, aerobics or swimming because all of these activities help improve endurance.

It helps to improve the athlete's conditioning, but reduces the impact on the muscles and joints which are heavily used in their sport. Cross training can be done during the sports season to increase the amount of training days or in the off-season to help the athlete maintain fitness for their sport. It is also a great way of introducing variety and creating fun alternative activities for athletes.

Cross training can also play an important role in the development of fitness. You can find out lots more about Fitness by:

Visiting our Fitness section on the resources webpages

Checking out our exciting Fit 5 Exercise cards and information
http://resources.specialolympics.org/Fitness-Cards/#.WK7Ae_LpU-k

Visit the FUN Fitness information on our Healthy Athletes resource page

Athletes and coaches should also consider visiting the FUN Fitness program at Healthy Athletes events when it is available. Ask your local Special Olympics Program for more information.

FIT 5

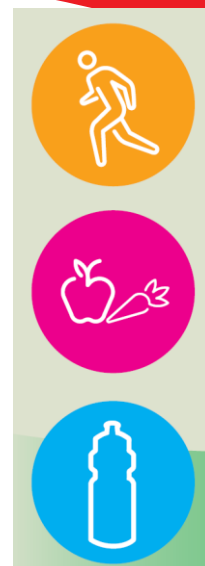
Fit 5 is a guide to achieving fitness and your personal best with physical activity, nutrition and hydration. It is based on the three simple goals of exercising 5 days per week, eating 5 total fruits and vegetables per day and drinking 5 water bottles of water per day. The guide provides tips and recommendations for achieving these goals and includes a fitness tracker to record progress. Athletes want to perform their best at every competition. They can do this by being fit. The Fit 5 plan will help them improve their health and fitness to make them the best athlete they can be.



FITNESS CARDS

The fitness cards demonstrate how to do various exercises on endurance, strength and flexibility. They can be incorporated into practice or given to athletes to complete at home. The cards depict Special Olympics athletes completing the exercises along with written descriptions of how to properly perform the exercises. Videos of these exercises can also be found on the fitness resources page. The cards are leveled 1 through 5 with 5 being the most challenging. There are instructions on how and when to safely advance to the more challenging exercises. The cards and levels are designed to be mixed based on ability and allow for creativity in creating training programs to improve your fitness.

http://resources.specialolympics.org/Fitness-Cards/#.WK7Ae_LpU-k



Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program also offers a FUN Fitness program. FUNfitness provides fitness screening and education services. Athletes can be assessed for flexibility, functional strength, balance and aerobic condition. Athletes and coaches can also receive information on how to improve performance and recommendations for maintaining an active lifestyle. Athletes and Coaches should consider visiting the FUN Fitness program at Healthy Athletes events when it is available. Ask your local Program for more information or visit our FUN Fitness pages

http://resources.specialolympics.org/Taxonomy/Health/_Catalog_of_FUNfitness_Resources.aspx

TEACHING THE RULES OF ATHLETICS

The best time to teach the rules of athletics is during training sessions. E.g. Coach Andy is teaching a hand-off in relays. Coach Andy begins by explaining the main coaching points. In practice, he ensures the athletes make legal baton exchanges. Coach Andy also explains to his athletes why the exchange must be in the zone.

As coach, it is your job to know the rules of your sport. These include:

- Official Special Olympics Athletics Rules.
- Special Olympics Sports Rules Article 1. (Rule 11 the Maximum Effort Rule is very important)
- International Association of Athletics Federations rules of competition www.iaaf.org

The Special Olympics Athletics rules were developed and modified for Special Olympics competitions based on IAAF rules. You AND your athletes must know the rules of their events. Some important event-specific rules are listed below. An athlete may be disqualified for breaking these, and other, rules.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE RUNNING EVENTS

1. One false start per race is allowed without disqualification of the athlete who false started. The next athlete who false starts in the race will be disqualified.
2. Events run in lanes. Runner must remain in lane for the full race or from the start to the break-line.
3. Athletes are not automatically disqualified for leaving assigned lanes if no advantage is gained.
4. Runner must start behind the start line.
5. A runner will be disqualified if he impedes another runner's progress and gains an unfair advantage. This may be by obstructing, jostling or interfering. This may include accidental incidents.
6. Runner must wear trainers or athletic shoes. Barefoot is also acceptable.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE RELAY EVENTS

1. Runners must pass the baton within the exchange zone.
2. Runners may not throw the baton to make a pass.
3. Runners must remain in their lanes throughout the 4x100 meter relay race.
4. Runners will be disqualified if they obstruct, impede or interfere with another runner's progress.
5. Within the takeover zone, the position of the baton is decisive not the position of the athlete.
6. Lane running in the 4x400M relay. The first leg is run in lanes. The second leg is run in lanes through the first turn. Athletes can break lanes at this point. Third and fourth legs are not run in lanes.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE LONG JUMP

1. Always start behind the takeoff line.
2. The best of three non-consecutive jumps will be marked as the final score.
3. Measurement of distance shall be perpendicular to the nearest edge of takeoff board to the nearest break in the sand made by any part of the athlete or anything attached to the athlete.
4. Exit pit from the sides or forward. A foul will be called if an athlete walks back toward the runway, through their mark and crossing over the take-off line.
5. Long jump athletes must be able to jump at least 1m. This is the minimum distance between the toe board and sand pit.
6. Standing long jump athletes must jump simultaneously with both feet.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE HIGH JUMP

1. Do not dive over the bar in competition or warm-up for competition.
2. If an athlete decides not to jump during their approach, they must stop. If time remains, they may restart their approach. If they have touched the pit, standards or bar or crossed the horizontal plane a foul will be called and they may not restart.
3. High jumps of any style must be made from a one-foot take-off. Do not take off from both feet.
4. Exit the pit from the sides or the rear.

5. Three consecutive fouls will determine final placement. Final score is last height cleared.
6. If two or more athletes are tied after a count back of failures, the result will be declared a tie. There will be no jump-off.
7. Athletes must be able to clear at least 1m to enter competition. The minimum opening height for all high-jump competitions is 1.00m.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE THROWING EVENTS

1. Use an official size and weight softball, tennis ball or shot.
2. Enter and exit the back of the throwing ring/circle or area.
3. Throw the softball or tennis ball in any manner.
4. The best of three non-consecutive throws will be marked as the final score.
5. Do not step on or over the softball/javelin throw foul line.
6. Do not step on or over the shot-put stop board.
7. Shot Put:
 - A legal put must be initiated with one hand, from in close proximity to the neck or chin.
 - The hand must not drop below this position during the put.
 - The hand must not be taken behind the line of the shoulders.
8. Mini-javelin:
 - The mini-javelin must be held by the grip with one hand only.
 - It must be thrown over the shoulder or upper part of the throwing arm.
 - It may not be slung or hurled.
 - No competitor may turn completely around so that his/her back is towards the throwing area.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE WHEELCHAIR RACING

1. Wheelchair athletes must start races with the front wheels behind the start line.
2. Motorized wheelchairs shall not be allowed in non-motorized wheelchair events.
3. All other running rules apply.

MAXIMUM EFFORT RULE

Athletes must participate honestly and with maximum effort at all times. This includes all divisioning and/or final competition rounds. If an athlete/team competes with less than best effort to secure a place in a lower division, they may be disqualified.

IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

Head Coaches must ensure that divisioning scores for their athletes reflect their ability. After divisioning, head coaches must verify that athletes' performances reflect their abilities. If this is not the case, the coach must submit an improved performance form. Coaching Tip: Bring a record of athletes' entry times/ performances to competition. This can be support a protest against a Maximum Effort Rule violation.

UNIFIED SPORTS® RULES

1. There are some specific Unified Sports® competition rules which apply in athletics. These apply for Unified Relays or Unified Sports® Team Athletics. Please refer to the Official Special Olympics Athletics Rules.
2. Team rosters must have an equal number of athletes and partners.
3. Teams must have an adult coach. Player-coaches are not allowed.

PROTESTS AND APPEALS

The rules of competition govern protest procedures. The competition management team enforces these rules. At competition, only the head coach can protest on behalf of an athlete. You must be familiar with the rules and know what you can protest. Sports Rules Article 1 will give you all of this information. Remember! You cannot make a protest simply because the athlete did not get their desired result. You must cite the specific rule violation/misapplication. Making a protest is a serious matter. It takes time to process and this impacts a competition's schedule.

Before competition, make sure you know the protest procedures for that competition.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Coaches and athletes who commit to good sportsmanship place value on:

- Fair play
- Ethical behavior
- Integrity
- Respect.

TOP TIPS FOR DEVELOPING GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

Here are some simple ideas you can use to foster sportsmanship with your athletes. These tips apply to athletes and coaches alike.

- Be a role model.
- Give your best effort during each event/training session.
- Train as you would like to compete.
- Always finish your event. Never quit (Unless you get injured).
- Fair Play at All Times, stick to the rules.
- Respect your teammates
- Respect your opponents
- Respect the decision of the officials at all times

ATHLETICS PROTOCOL & ETIQUETTE

EXPECTATIONS OF COACHES

1. Be a role model. Set a good example for athletes and fans to follow.
2. Give athletes direction on the responsibilities of being a good sportsman. Insist that sportsmanship is a priority.
3. Respect the judgment of officials. Abide by rules of the competition. Never behave in a way that could incite fans.
4. If your athlete has not performed as usual in divisioning, submit an Improved Performance form.
5. Treat other coaches, athletes, fans with respect. This includes opponents!
6. Shake hands with officials and the opposing coach in public.
7. Develop and implement sanctions for athletes or coaches who do not behave in a sportsmanlike way.
8. Read, sign and abide by the Special Olympics Coaches' Code of Conduct.

EXPECTATIONS OF OFFICIALS

1. Ensure that every athlete receives courteous, objective and impartial officiating.
2. Be consistent in applying the rules of the sport to all competitors.
3. Know the current Official Special Olympics Athletics Rules and IAAF rules.
4. Treat every competition as a prestigious and important event.
5. Maintain a calm demeanor. Refrain from actions that draw attention away from the athlete.
6. Take appropriate steps to ensure that every athlete has a fair chance to compete.
7. Always keep the safety of all participants to the forefront.



EXPECTATIONS OF ATHLETES AND PARTNERS IN UNIFIED SPORTS

1. Treat teammates with respect.
2. Encourage teammates when they make a mistake.
3. Treat opponents with respect: shake hands prior to and after contests.
4. Respect judgment of officials. Abide by rules. Never behave in a way that could incite fans or others.
5. Cooperate with officials, coaches and others to conduct a fair contest.
6. Do not retaliate in any way if opponents show poor behavior.
7. Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing Special Olympics.
8. Define winning as doing your personal best.

9. Uphold the high standard of sportsmanship established by your coach.
10. Read, sign, and abide by the Special Olympics Athletes' Code of Conduct.

TOP TIPS FOR COACHING ATHLETES ON PROTOCOL AND ETIQUETTE

1. Discuss examples of athletics etiquette.
2. Congratulate opponents after events, win or lose.
3. Control temper and behavior at all times.
4. Shake hands with officials.
5. Teach waiting for one's turn in field events.
6. Teach staying in lane during running events. Emphasis this when moving from the second curve to the straight-away. Remind athletes to follow the dotted lines.
7. Recognize good sportsmanship.
8. Give sportsmanship awards competitions or training sessions.
9. Commend the athletes when they demonstrate good sportsmanship.

REMEMBER

1. Sportsmanship is an attitude. You show it in that is shown in how you and your athletes act on and off the field of play.
2. Be positive about competing.
3. Respect your opponents and yourself.
4. Always stay under control even if you are feeling mad or angry.

Term	Definition
ANCHOR LEG	The final or fourth leg of a relay race.
APPROACH	The run-up made by an athlete before performing the actual skill, i.e. long jumping, high jumping.
BATON	Tubular object carried by and passed between members of a relay team.
BLIND PASS	Passing the baton in a relay race with the outgoing runner receiving the baton from the incoming runner without looking at the exchange.
CHUTE	An extension of the straight-away on an oval or semi-oval track.
CIRCLE	The competition area for the shot put.
CROSSBAR	The bar, which can be raised and lowered, that is placed between two standards for the high jump.
CROUCH START	The all-fours position of a runner at the start of a sprint.
DEAD HEAT	When two or more runners cross the finish line simultaneously, resulting in a tie.
DID NOT FINISH (DNF)	When an athlete starts a race, but drops out before crossing the finish line.
DISQUALIFICATION (DQ)	When an athlete violates a rule, does not show up for a scheduled event, or gains an unfair advantage by impeding or interfering.
DRIVE LEG	The leg that exerts the force during a stride or takeoff.
EXCHANGE ZONE	The 20M-long zone in which the baton must be passed from the incoming runner to the outgoing runner during a relay race.
FALSE START	Leaving the starting blocks before the start command.
FARTLEK	A Swedish term meaning speed play. A type of workout which requires the runner while on a continuous run to use fast, moderate, or slow periods of running alternated as desired by the runner. This workout is both aerobic and anaerobic.
FIELD	Participation area for field events.
FOOT STRIKE	Striking the ground with the foot supplying the mechanical force that propels the body forward.
FOUL	An infraction of a rule.
FRONT RUNNER	An athlete who is leading a race, thus setting the pace.
GRIP	The hand position of a throwing implement.

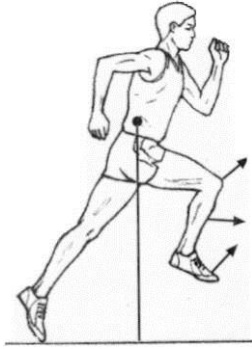
Term	Definition
HANDOFF	The exchange or pass of the baton between the incoming and outgoing runners of a relay team.
HEAD WIND	Direction of the wind blowing toward the athletes.
HEAT	A grouping of athletes for competition.
INTERVAL TRAINING	Alternating runs at maximum effort for specified times (usually 2-5 minutes) with "recovery" periods of jogging. Usually the period of rest is equal to the period of the run. This is an aerobic workout.
JOGGING	Running at a slow pace.
KICK	Acceleration of pace; leg speed at the end of a race.
LEAD LEG	First leg to leave the ground in jumping or hurdling.
LEAD-OFF LEG	First runner on a relay team.
MARKS	An athlete's starting point for a race or a jump.
OVER DISTANCE	Steady pace running in excess of 10 minutes in duration and the basis of any distance running or walking program. This is an aerobic workout. This is the only type of workout carried on year-round. Long Slow Distance (LSD) running is accomplished at a pace approximately 65 percent of VO ₂ Max.
PACE	The rate of covering a specific distance while running or walking.
PASSER	The relay runner who hands off the baton.
PASSING	When an athlete declines to attempt a jump or throw when it is his turn.
PIT	The landing area for long jumpers and high jumpers, usually filled with sand or sawdust (long jump) or synthetic materials (high jump).
RECEIVER	The athlete who receives the baton in a relay race.
SCRATCH LINE	The restraining line which cannot be crossed in throwing and jumping events.
SECTOR	The landing area for the shot put and softball throw.
SET	A group of repetitions followed by a rest period.
SHOT PUT	Iron, plastic or brass spheres used for shot put competition.
SPRINT TRAINING	Repeated quality runs (in excess of 75 percent of the runner's basic speed) of 50-150m with rest periods that allow complete recovery. This is an anaerobic workout.

Term	Definition
STAGGERED START	The start used for the 200M, 400M, 800M, 4x100M and 4x400M relay races, in which the runners are positioned at different points around the curve of the track.
STANCE	An athlete's particular starting position.
STARTING BLOCKS	Metal blocks set on the track behind the start line, used to support the athlete's feet for all sprints.
STRAIGHT-AWAY	Straight area of a track from one curve to the next.
STRIDE	Distance covered by an athlete's leg cycle while running.
TAKEOFF	The act of leaving the ground.
TAKEOFF FOOT	Foot from which the athlete propels himself off the ground.
TAKEOFF MARK	Spot from which the athlete leaves the ground.
TECHNIQUE	The form used by an athlete to perform a skill.
TOE-BOARD	A restraining board, which the athlete may not cross over, used in the shot put.
VISUAL PASS	A relay pass with the outgoing runner receiving the baton from the incoming runner while looking back at the other runner and baton during the exchange.
WARM-UP	The gradual process of raising the body temperature and loosening muscles prior to strenuous exercise.

OVERVIEW: BASIC MECHANICS OF RUNNING

Special Olympics athletes are, first and foremost, athletes. The basics of running mechanics are the same as for any athlete. Remember that some of your athletes may have physical impairments. You may need to work with them to adapt their running technique. As a coach, you may also need to adapt your coaching methods. You can best support your athletes learning by:

- Recognizing and understand their abilities.
- Making simple change to techniques and drills.
- Continue to challenge them AND give them a chance to experience success.



Sprinter



Distance Runner

Coaching Points – Basic Running Mechanics

1. The quicker the foot strikes the ground, the faster the athlete runs.
2. When running fast, the heel must be lifted high under buttock.
3. Leg turnover and stride length determine the speed at which an athlete runs.
4. Getting Into Proper Running Form
5. Take a Hips Tall position with your trunk and head directly above the hips.
6. Let arms hang loosely at the sides of your body.
7. Close hands loosely with the thumbs up.
8. Lean forward slightly; bend ankles until body weight is centered on balls of feet.
9. Bend arms; bring hands to top of hips forming a 90-degree angle between lower and upper arms.
10. Keep head in a neutral position, looking forward, with facial muscles relaxed.

Top Tips for Coaching Basic Running Mechanics (Skill Development)

1. Demonstrate the ideal running position. Ensure you keep the hips tall position and emphasize relaxed shoulders and arms.
2. Ask your athletes to walk with quick steps on balls of their feet.
3. Emphasize the foot striking the ground under the runner's body, not ahead of it.
4. Ask your athletes to run straight at you. Watch to ensure their shoulders stay parallel to ground and their upper body is not twisting back and forth.
5. Invite athletes to stand facing you or a partner. Ask them to mirror your body position.
6. Use a stick or broom handle to demonstrate upright position.
7. Video playback can be a great tool to review your athletes' body position. Show your athlete footage of themselves running and point out areas for praise and for improvement.
8. You can never do too much basic running drill work.
9. Encourage your athletes to train at least 2-3 days at home.
10. Be patient.

OVERVIEW: STARTS

A good start is vital in any track event. It does not matter what the distance is. The basics of a start in Special Olympics is the same as any athletics event. However, you may need to vary how you

coach the start to meet your athletes' learning needs. The type of start your athlete uses may also be impacted by their ability.

Sprint races usually begin with a block start. In Special Olympics sprint events (up to 400m), athletes may use a stand up start or a block. Some athletes may not be able to use blocks due to balance or mobility limitations. Assess each athlete individually. Identify the start type that is best for them. Remember to challenge them too! In distance events, all athletes use the stand-up start. Make sure you know the specific rules related to starts.

The start involves 2 or 3 fundamental commands.

On your mark

Set (only in races from 400m upwards)

Go

Note that "Go" is usually a starter's pistol or whistle. You may need to adapt the start for visually or hearing impaired athletes.

Block Start

Each athlete should set the blocks in a way that is comfortable to him/her. Coaches and athlete should discuss whether to use blocks. If they will use blocks they should agree when and how often to train on the blocks. Communication between athlete and coach, as ever, is vital. Coaches should always remember that an athlete's physical ability and range of motion may impact their ability to use a block start.

SETTING THE BLOCKS

1. Align the blocks in the direction of start.
2. Place the Starting block 1 foot length from the Start line (Block Start 1)
3. Place the front pedal 2 foot lengths from the start line (Block Start 2, Block Start 3)
4. Place the rear pedal 2 and a half to 3 foot lengths from the start line or 1 foot length from the front pedal (Block Start 4)



Block Start 1



Block Start 2



Block Start 3



Block Start 4

NOTE: You may need to adjust the blocks based on your athletes' preference. This describes a good starting point for block setting. With practice you can help your athlete to identify and record how to set up their blocks.

Coaching Points - Block Starts

1. Special Olympics athletes use the same standard block setting as other athletes. Coaches should consider the ability of athletes to set their own blocks. You can develop a strategy or routine with your athletes to help them set their own blocks.
 - Athletes must be able to remain still in "On Your Mark" position.



2. Athletes should distribute weight evenly over their hands and back knee.
3. Athletes must be able to take and hold a balanced "Set" position. This includes holding his/her weight on their hands behind the start line.
4. On the Starter pistol athlete steps forward with rear foot first into run.



Coaching Points - Stand Start Training

Using a 2 command Start: “On your Mark”, Starter Pistol

1. Before the “On your mark” command, the athlete’s weight should be on their back foot.
2. On the “On your mark” command, the athlete shifts their weight to the front foot.
3. Athlete assumes the racing position and awaits the starter pistol.
4. On the Starter pistol signal they run.



Using a 3 command Start: “On your Mark”, “Set”, Gun


1. Athlete assumes the same initial position (weight on back foot).
2. Between the “On Your Mark” and “Set” commands, the athlete shifts their weight from back to front foot.
3. Athlete assumes the racing position and awaits the starter pistol.
4. On the starter pistol signal they run.

Insert 2.11 Stand Start Video

Training Drills for Starts

Drill	Partner Push Drill	Purpose	Develop arm and leg drive Allow coach to evaluate efficiency of athlete’s start
Reps:	8 x 3-4 steps	When to Use	Beginning of Skill work
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take proper set position. 2. Coach stands in front of athlete. 3. Coach places hands on athlete’s shoulders. 4. On command, athlete drives explosively into a fully extended position. 5. Coach provides resistance and support 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerful and Explosive knee drive • Strong thrusting arm action 			

Drill	8 Step Drill	Purpose	Increase strength and power of start Develop explosive movement patterns Develop consistency in foot strike and leg frequency
Reps:	8 x 8 steps	When to Use	Beginning of Skill work
Teaching Points			
1. Begin from a start command 2. Drive out of blocks taking only 8 steps			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in time over distance • Powerful and explosive coordination of arm and leg action 			

Drill	Partner Up Start Drill	Purpose	Improve arm strength and coordination Improve reaction time to start command or sound of pistol
Reps:	8 x 5-10 steps	When to Use	Beginning of Skill work
Teaching Points			
1. Take regular push up position 2. Lower knees to track 3. Move power leg forward. 4. Move rear foot about 12 inches behind front foot 5. On command, execute start.			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick knee drive - explosiveness 			

TOP TIPS FOR COACHING BLOCK STARTS (SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

1. Practice setting the blocks several times. Develop a strategy with your athlete for setting blocks.
2. Front leg pushes back forcefully to provide needed drive out of blocks.
3. Body moves both forward and upward.
4. Do repeat starts for 10, 20 and 30 meters while maintaining good sprinting form.
5. Concentrate on reacting to the sound of start command.
6. Emphasize using arm action to get out of blocks quickly.
7. Emphasize using force against ground or block pedal.
8. Emphasize that the back foot needs to go beyond starting line on first step.
9. Place colored tape two meters in front of start line on which athlete can focus.
10. Emphasize first moving back foot forward and front arm back.
11. Practice moving arms and back foot at sound of pistol or start command.
12. With your athlete's permission, you may need to physically move their feet and arms into the correct position. This should only be as they learn the skill. For competition they must be able to perform a block start independently.
13. To practice drive (athlete's forward leg pushing against block) out of the blocks, have athlete jump into air from set position and jump in the air and land in set position.

TOP TIPS FOR BLOCK STARTS AT COMPETITION

Remind your athletes to:

1. Raise their hand to the official if they are having trouble with setting their blocks.
2. Take time to set the blocks correctly.
3. Back into their blocks.
4. Develop a routine. Practice it. Repeat it at competition.
5. Relax – breathe.

Sprinting Key Skills Checklist

YOUR ATHLETE CAN

- Perform a stand-up or block start
- Maintain erect posture with hips tall
- Push off the track with balls of feet
- Move foot backward under body upon landing
- Drive knees up so thigh is parallel (horizontal) to track
- Maintain high heel recovery as drive foot leaves ground
- Maintain tall posture, with slight forward body lean from ground, not from waist
- Swing arms forward and back without rotating shoulders
- Keep feet flexed, toes up
- Sprint under control for entire race

OVERVIEW: THE SPRINTS (100M-400M)

Power and coordination are important elements in producing speed. We can improve speed through good running mechanics and coordination. Read the "Basics of Running Mechanics" section for more information.

Speed is determined by two main factors. These are:

- Stride Length (Length of each step)
- Stride Frequency (How often steps are made)
- Improving both of these factors will increase your speed.

A sprint has four main phases:

- The start,
- Acceleration,
- Maintaining momentum
- The finish.

Coaches must break down each phase to help athletes understand and learn.

START PHASE

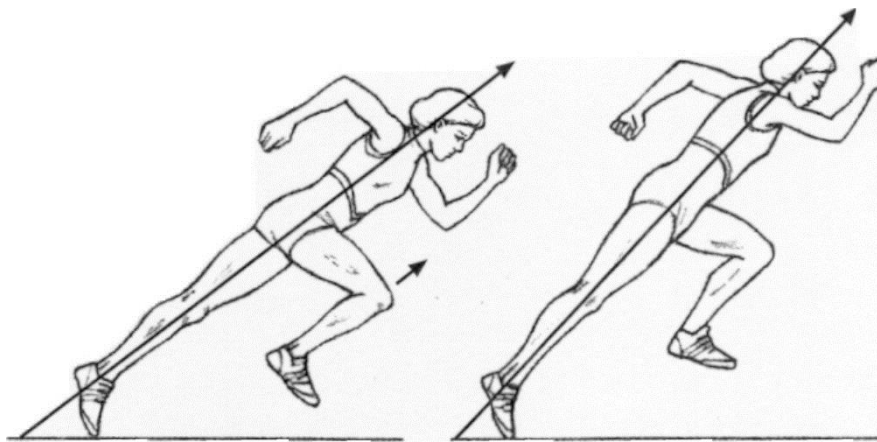
Read the "Starts" section for more information.

Coaching Points for Phases of Sprinting

COACHING POINTS - ACCELERATING PHASE

After the Start, the accelerating phase begins.

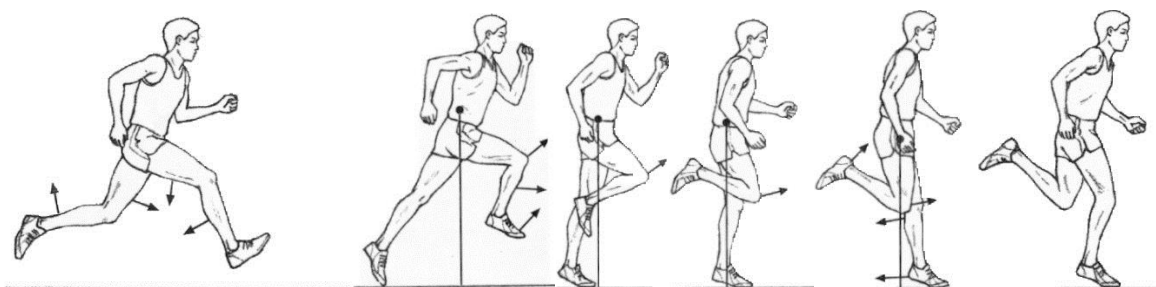
1. Acceleration is created by driving or pushing with the drive leg until it is straight.
2. The free leg drives low and fast the pace the foot under the body's center of gravity.
3. The athlete must lean forward. The more the athlete leans forward, the more acceleration they create.
4. Vigorous arm action helps keep balance, rhythm and relaxation.
5. It is helpful to show athletes a good demonstration, photos or videos of this skill. This can help them to better understand what they must do.



COACHING POINTS - MAINTAINING MOMENTUM PHASE

In this phase, the focus is on maintaining speed.

1. The athlete must combine good basic mechanics with the speed they created in the accelerating phase.
2. The key focus areas are as follows:
 - a. Posture/Body Position
 - b. Head Position
 - c. Arm Action
 - d. Leg Action



COACHING POINTS - FINISH PHASE

This is a very important skill to practice. The point at which the athlete's chest crosses the line determines their final time. While sprinting toward the finish line, the athlete should have good running posture and a normal stride action.

In the final strides of the race, the athlete should:

- Run through and not to the finish line. Coaches can help athletes to learn this by asking athletes to pretend that the finish is a few meters beyond where it really is. This encourages them to maintain their momentum
- The athlete should lunge forward and lean through finish line.
- Coaches can create different scenarios to help learning. E.g. Place people standing in different areas at the finish line. This helps athletes to experience the reality of a race finish and to practice in a competition like situation

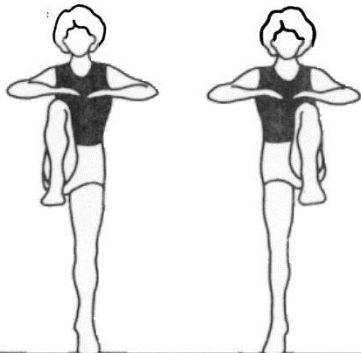


Training Drills for Sprinting

Drill	Skips	Purpose	Develop quick leg action Develop consistency in proper foot strike
Reps:	3x30m	When to Use	Warm Up
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take hips tall position 2. Bend and drive one leg up 3. Extend leg from knee 4. Drive leg down on ball of foot. 5. Alternate legs every other skip. 6. Jog back to start 7. Repeat. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heel drive to buttocks 			

Drill	Quick Step Running	Purpose	Develop quick leg action over distance
Reps:	3x30m	When to Use	Warm Up
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take hips tall position 2. Run in place, bringing heels up and under buttocks. 3. Run forward using medium length strides 4. Use low knee lift. 5. Carry upper body erect. Slight forward lean. 6. Hold head level, slightly forward. 7. Keep relaxed arm action. 8. Maintain a smooth pace throughout run. 9. Walking lunges back to the start point. 10. Repeat. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead with knee then extend leg • Foot is flexed • Leg drive down is very fast 			

Drill	Fast Leg Drill	Purpose	Develop quick foot and leg action
Reps:	3 x 10-15 seconds	When to Use	Warm Up
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take hips tall position. 2. Quickly alternate driving knees up. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickness in legs and arms • Little ground time. 			

Drill	Knee Claps	Purpose	Develop straight forward running position Develop proper body balance
Reps:	3x30m	When to Use	Warm Up
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take hips tall position. 2. Hand raised chest high. Palms open, facing down with elbows bent. 3. Drive knee to palm with quick leg action. 4. Alternate legs 5. Walking lunges back to starting point. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use short steps – little distance covered with each step • Maintain slight lean forward. • Do not lean back when driving knee to chest. 			

TRAINING TO IMPROVE TECHNIQUE - SPRINTING

Observation	Correction by coach	Drill/Test
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Arms and shoulders rotate	Keep torso parallel to direction of running	Practice while running on the spot. Sit on ground, leg stretched out in front and do running arm action.
Athlete not running in upright position	Make sure drive leg is being fully extended (push off)	Bounding and Strides
Athlete is tense (Fists clenched, shoulders high)	Practice running relaxed. Emphasize correct breathing	Practice relaxation and breathing techniques
Athlete weaves in lane	Feet should be parallel to lane lines	Run on lane lines and between cones/pylons

TOP TIPS FOR COACHING SPRINTING (SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

1. Practice the correct arm movement:
 - a. By standing in front of the athlete and asking them to hit your hands with their hands while making the correct arm action.
 - b. While running on the spot.
 - c. By sitting on the ground with legs stretching in front. By sitting it is more difficult to rotate the trunk. This encourages the correct arm movements.
2. Stand in front of the athlete and ask them to run in place hitting your hands with their knees. This helps them to develop the correct knee lift.
3. Practice running in different lanes. Ensure your athletes can run from any lane.
4. Remind athletes that everyone must stay in their designated lanes during sprint races. Use pylons or cones to help guide athletes to remain in their correct lane. Remember that they cannot be used in competition. Athletes should be able to remain in lane before entering a competition.
5. Practice sprinting form on straight-aways and curves.
6. Ask your athlete focus on finish line. Practice with people standing in different areas of the finish area.

TOP TIPS FOR SPRINTING AT COMPETITION

Remind your athletes to:

1. Relax
2. Focus on their technique
3. Lean through finish line

Relays Key Skills Checklist

YOUR ATHLETE CAN

FIRST LEG

- Perform a block start or stand-up start
- Hold baton in hand while running
- Sprint under control with hips tall, erect posture, slight forward body lean from ground
- Run the curve, staying in lane
- Pass baton in exchange zone with designated technique

SECOND LEG

- Receive baton in exchange zone with designated technique
- Hold baton in hand while running
- Sprint under control with hips tall, erect posture, slight forward body lean from ground
- Run the straightaway
- Pass baton in exchange zone with designated technique

THIRD LEG

- Receive baton in exchange zone with designated technique
- Hold baton in hand while running
- Sprint under control with hips tall, erect posture, slight forward body lean from ground
- Run the curve in lane if 4x100
- Pass baton in exchange zone with designated technique

FOURTH “ANCHOR” LEG

- Receive baton in exchange zone with designated technique
- Hold baton in hand while running
- Sprint under control with hips tall, erect posture, slight forward body lean from ground
- Run the curve
- Lunge forward and lean through finish line

Overview: Relays

Relay passing/Baton exchange is one of the most difficult concepts to teach.

Coaches must include relay passing into regular training sessions. Place athletes in order according to their strengths. Some athletes are better at handing off than receiving a baton. Each position in the order requires its own skills (see table below). Official Special Olympics Athletics rules list all the relay events offered in competition.

BEGINNING AND ADVANCED EXCHANGES

BEGINNING EXCHANGES: The baton carrier has baton in the right hand. The baton receiver accepts the baton in the left hand. He/She immediately moves it to the right hand. There is a risk that athletes could drop the baton when changing hands or that this switch could impact their running action.

ADVANCED EXCHANGES: The baton receiver does not switch the baton from one hand to the other. The runners exchange as follows:

Leg	Athlete Role
Lead-off Leg	carries baton in right hand
Second Leg	receives in left hand, carries in left hand and passes with left hand, stands closer to right in lane
Third Leg	receives in right hand, carries in right hand and passes with right hand, stands closer to left in lane
Fourth Leg or "Anchor" Leg	receives in left hand, carries in left hand, stands closer to right in lane

When possible, it is recommended to teach athletes the advanced exchange.

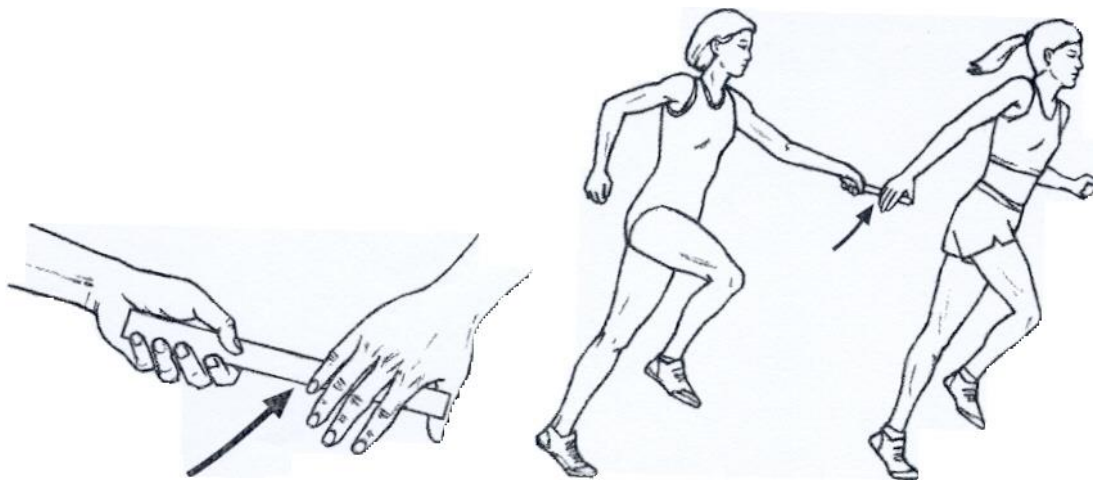
The baton must be placed firmly into the waiting runner's palm. There are two common ways to teach this exchange.

- Up-sweep exchange
- Down-sweep exchange.

Coaches should choose the method best suited for their athletes. The Down-Sweep exchange is more popular and easier for athletes to learn. It allows the runner to see where they are placing the baton.

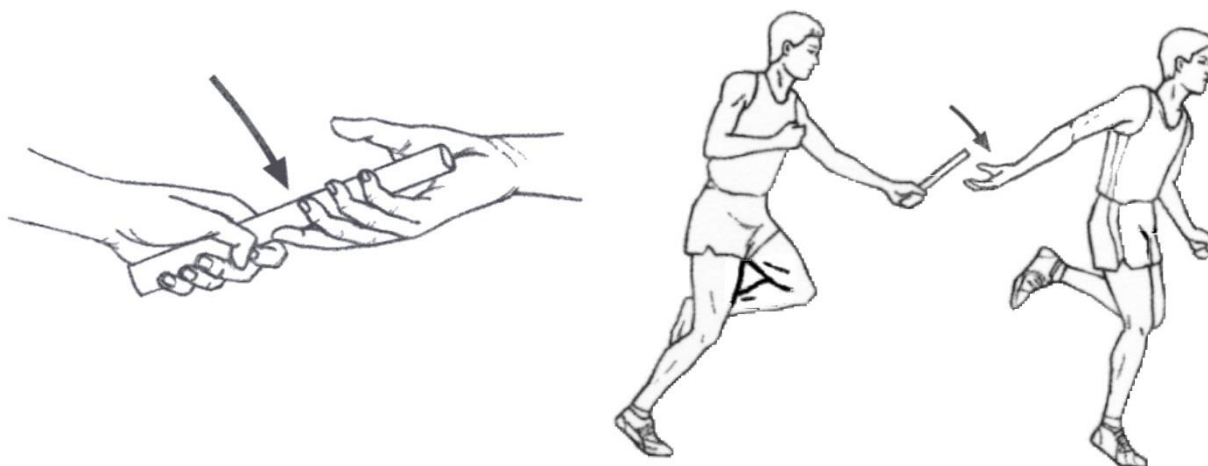
COACHING POINTS UP-SWEEP BATON EXCHANGE

1. Outgoing runner begins to sprint at the signal from the incoming runner
2. Outgoing runner reaches back with receiving hand – forming an inverted V (see image)
3. Incoming runner places baton into outgoing runners hand, in an upward sweeping motion
4. Outgoing runner takes the baton from incoming runner and sprints.



COACHING POINTS DOWN-SWEEP BATON EXCHANGE

1. Outgoing runner begins to sprint at the signal from the incoming runner
2. Outgoing runner reaches back with receiving hand – almost parallel to the track.
3. Outgoing runner's palm is facing up, forming a V with thumb towards torso.
4. Incoming runner places baton into outgoing runners hand, in downward sweeping motion
5. Outgoing runner takes the baton from incoming runner and sprints.



COACHING POINTS - RECEIVING A VISUAL PASS

1. Receiving athlete stands in front of first zone line (nearest start line) to the right side of lane.
2. Place power foot forward. Look back over the left shoulder.
3. Hold left hand back. Keep body weight slightly forward.
4. Look back over left shoulder for incoming runner.
5. Begin running forward when incoming runner reaches a point 4-5 meters from exchange zone.
6. Keep left hand back, fingers pointing to left, thumb pointing down and palm up.
7. Watch incoming runner pass baton overhand into left hand.
8. Turn to look forward, continue running and move baton to right hand.

4 X 100M RELAY

All runners in the 4x100m and 4x200m relays must stay in their designated lanes the entire race.

Leg	Baton Ability	Athlete Strengths
Lead-off Leg	Passes baton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good starter, with good acceleration and balance • Can run the curve, staying in the lane
Second Leg	Receives baton Passes baton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very fast runner • Ability to run strong straightaway • Excellent speed and endurance
Third Leg	Receives baton Passes baton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can run the curve, staying in the lane
Fourth Leg or “Anchor” Leg	Receives baton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most competitive runner • Ability to catch and pass runners • Consistent finisher

TOP TIPS FOR COACHING 4X100M RELAY BATON EXCHANGE (SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

1. Holding baton
 - a) Use a piece of tape around the baton, indicating where the athletes should hold it.
2. Receiving baton
 - a) Identify all the 20m exchange zones with athletes.
3. Practice holding the recovery hand back. The receiving hand depends on what type of exchange is chosen.

4 X 400M RELAY

A visual pass is often used for the 4x400m relay. This technique can also be used for the 400m (4x100m) relay. However, the exchange may take longer.

In the 4x400m relay, the lead-off (first) runner must stay in lane the entire lap. The 2nd runner may break for lane 1 after running around the first turn. The 3rd and 4th runners may break for lane 1 after receiving the baton. However, they must not impede another runner.

Leg	Athlete Role
Lead-off Leg	Get the team out in front. Must be aggressive and strong, and have a good sense of pace. Ability to run in lane the entire lap.
Second Leg	Keep the team in the race. Must be physically strong, able to handle bumping. Must be able to negotiate the breakpoint. If the team is not in first place, job is to get team in first place.
Third Leg	Put team in a position to win. Must be able to run well from behind or maintain a lead and build upon it. Often, this is second best possible anchor on team.
Fourth Leg or “Anchor” Leg	Secures the victory, puts the relay away. Must be able to run well from behind or maintain a lead. Ability to catch and pass runners. Often, the strongest/fastest leg – the “horse.”

TRAINING TO IMPROVE TECHNIQUE - RELAYS

Observation	Correction by coach	Drill/Test
Incoming runner runs into outgoing runner	Outgoing runner may need to start running sooner. Outgoing runner may not be standing close to the correct side of the lane	Correction of starting position. Repetitive practice building to full speed.
Exchange happens outside of zone	Outgoing runner may need to start running later	Practice with incoming runner shouting command at same spot. Tip: Use a mark on the track.
Incoming runner has difficulty putting baton in outgoing runner's hand	Receiving arm position must be at correct height and angle Athlete practices holding the receiving arm steady.	Outgoing runner needs to be aware of how the arm is held using proper form. Outgoing runner can focus on strengthening exercises to hold arm in correct position.

Baton Handoff Drill

Insert Video 3.22 Baton Handoff Drill

TOP TIPS FOR COACHING RELAYS (SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

1. Demonstrate correct stance for running start.
2. Demonstrate correct hand position for passing and receiving baton.
3. Demonstrate ready position for outgoing (receiving) runner.
4. Practice hand-off while walking and jogging, and in race conditions.
5. Emphasize making the exchange as quickly as possible.
6. Demonstrate hand-off between all legs of the relay.
7. Establish running order as soon as possible.
8. Remind athletes that the incoming runner must remain in lane at all times. This includes after exchange has been made. Nothing they do should interfere with other runners.
9. Encourage relay runners carry the baton during other parts of the session. E.g. conditioning, sprint drills. This will help them to become comfortable and confident in holding the baton.
10. Remind the incoming runner to run through the pass. This means they should not slow down in the exchange zone. Encourage them call out to the outgoing runner if he/she is running too fast or too soon to complete the exchange in the zone.
11. Place strip of tape on the track to indicate incoming/outgoing runner marks.

TOP TIP FOR RELAYS AT COMPETITION

1. Remind your athletes to be confident and avoid nervousness. Lack of confidence and focus leads to errors in exchanges.

Middle Distance Key Skills Checklist

Your Athlete Can
Run longer distances (400m/800m/1500m)
Pace self (or can learn)
Demonstrate speed, strength and endurance
Maintain erect posture with hips tall
From the back of the foot, roll through the ball of the foot and push off
Show spring, rhythm and light touch in foot action
Have controlled, relaxed arm action
Keep shoulders not hunched and elbows tucked in
Keep body relaxed and moving efficiently

Overview: Middle Distance

Middle distance events are the most demanding in track and field because they are actually long sprints. 800m and 1500m events are considered middle distance. Training is designed to develop these skills listed. A training program should be developed to meet individual needs.

Training for Middle Distance

Middle distance training focuses on pace. The key for a coach is to keep a balance between training volume and intensity. Athletes need a strong aerobic base. It helps them to be able to pace themselves, but speed is also an important part of their training. Middle distance athletes need good endurance to maintain speed over a race.

Middle distance runners should try and maintain a prescribed pace established by the coach.

Example: During a 1600m training run, the athlete would run each of four 400m laps in 2 minutes per lap. The coach might also set a target time for athletes to run a given distance. Example: Run 200m every 3 minutes. To increase the challenge, the athletes would increase speed or decrease time between intervals.

Athletes can do “surges” to develop speed. Example: Set out cone at intervals around the track. The athlete runs at normal stride to first cone. Then they “surge,” or increase speed, to next cone. They continue to alternate from normal to “surge” pace between cones.

STAND START

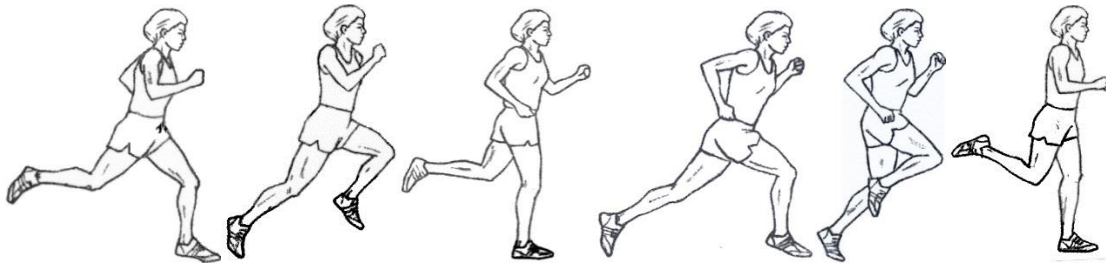
All distance runners must use a standing start. All distance races begin with a 2 command start. Refer to the Starts section for more details.



COACHING POINTS FOR MIDDLE DISTANCE RUNNING TECHNIQUE

When coaching middle distance runners, the coach needs to find the right combination of speed and endurance for each athlete.

1. It is important to have a comfortable stride and rhythm and to not over stride.
2. Unlike sprinting, the foot strikes the ground less on the ball of the foot and more to the back of the foot. The foot rolls onto the ball and pushes off.
3. The knee has some flexion.
4. Knee lift is lower than that of a sprinter.
5. Heel does not go as high as a sprinter.
6. Leg movement is smooth.
7. Swing arms from shoulders. The elbows are bent at around a 90-degree angle but can straighten a little more on the down swing. Arms and shoulders should be relaxed.
8. Head straight; chin level, focus ahead 20-30 meters.



TRAINING TO IMPROVE TECHNIQUE - MIDDLE DISTANCE RUNNING

Observation	Correction by coach	Drill/Test
Runner not erect enough. (Chin is too low;)	Remind athlete to: Position the chin higher Hold shoulders back. Maintain this position.	Practice Correction
Runner appears to be bobbing up and down (excessive bouncing).	Remind athlete to: Pull through elbows. Wrist needs to go hip to chin.	Practice correction. Do arm movement while standing.
Runner is "twisting."	Remind athlete to: Keep torso in a forward direction and toes pointed forward.	Have runner run on a line or inside of the lane.

TRAINING DRILLS FOR MIDDLE DISTANCE RUNNING

As a general rule, duration for the 800m runner is not very long, 25-35 minutes on non-track days and 45 minutes to an hour on the long run day. Remember: the focus is maintaining speed over a longer distance.

Drill	Russian Workout	Purpose	Develop Speed Endurance
Reps:	5 (increasing to 15 over time)	When to Use	Mid Season
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Run 5x200m at $\frac{3}{4}$ race pace. 2. Rest 45 seconds between each 200m. 3. After five repetitions, rest three minutes. 4. Repeat. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athlete developing speed endurance 			

DISTANCE RUNS

Middle distance training should include a distance runs. There are two main types of distance run, depending on the type of effort and recovery needed.

1. Distance Run: Duration of 35-40 minutes. The pace is set so that the runner can manage without too much stress. This should be a flat, soft-surfaced, continuous run. This is more common early in the season. Do not worry so much about time. As the season progresses, mark each mile and make necessary corrections.
2. Hill Running is more difficult. The first 20 minutes maximum are flat. The next 30 minutes must have a series of uphill climbs or a steady hill climb. As with the long slow run, do not worry so much about time.

INTERVAL TRAINING

Below are some examples of interval sessions. Sample recovery times are listed. Coaches can adjust as necessary.

	Increasing speed/decreasing recovery reps	Russian intervals	Pick-up Reps
Intervals	4 x 200m	3 x 300m at set pace	4x400m at set pace
No. Sets	2 sets	2 sets	1
Recovery in Sets		Jog 100m in 30s	90s
Recovery between sets	No additional recovery between sets	Jog 800m	

TOP TIPS FOR COACHING MIDDLE DISTANCE RUNNING (SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

1. Demonstrate stand-up start with commands. (Refer to Starts section)
2. Demonstrate and practice breaking into lane one at the correct point.
3. Practice one turn stagger start as used in 800M.
4. Demonstrate and practice how to safely pass another runner. Run around the runner on the outside. Get two strides ahead before cutting back in.
5. Run or ride along with runners on a bike to help control running pace. A stopwatch, pedometer or GPS watch can help you to monitor pace.
6. Establish split times with athletes for certain distances of the race.
7. Make sure athlete receives ample recovery time from training.
8. Train to race: Simulate race conditions as much and as often as possible. (e.g. start each practice interval with 2 command start).
9. Learn when to stop a session when an athlete is not running well. Practicing slow teaches you to race slow.

TOP TIPS FOR MIDDLE DISTANCE AT COMPETITION

1. Plan the race.

2. Warm up thoroughly.
3. Save energy for the last part of the race.
4. Run your race and plan.
5. Surge when others try to pass.
6. Never take the lead unless you plan on keeping it.
7. Maintain contact with the leader if not leading. Keep in striking distance.
8. Respond to the moves of other runners.
9. Avoid getting behind or boxed in.

[Check out our Sample 8 week Training Plan for 800m in the Distance Running appendix.](#)

[Click or tap here to download the Sample 8 week Training Plan for 800m](#)

Long Distance Key Skills Checklist

Your Athlete Can
Run longer distances
Pace themselves (or can learn to)
Maintain erect posture with hips tall
Settle more on the back of the feet. Roll through the ball of the foot and push off
Show spring, rhythm and light touch in foot action
Have relaxed arm action
Keep shoulders not hunched and elbows tucked in
Keep body relaxed and moving efficiently

Overview: Long Distance Running (3000m-10,000m)

Long distance events are great for athletes who enjoy running. Long distance athletes must commit to training throughout the week on a long-term basis. Well planned training programs are vital for success in long distance events. Training must be consistent and progressive. Sessions should be designed to challenge athletes physiologically and psychologically. The goal of the training is to support the athlete to maximize their potential and competition experience.

NOTE: Half Marathon and Marathon events and training will be addressed in the following section.

Training for Long Distance Running

There are several types of training techniques for long distance runners. A training plan should be designed to match an athlete's fitness and skill level. Training plans should be reviewed often and adjusted as needed based on the athlete's progress. Variety in training techniques is vital. Different

types of sessions have different goals. A well balanced and varied program ensures the athlete develops in all the key areas.

LONG DISTANCE TRAINING TECHNIQUES

Interval Training

- Repetitive training runs (often on a track).
- Effort and recovery are usually equal.
- Effort can be from one to five minutes.
- Recovery can be walking or slow running.

Fartlek Training

- Also known as “speed play.”
- Athlete combines normal run with varying bursts of effort (speed).
- Usually on a varied terrain (flat and hills).

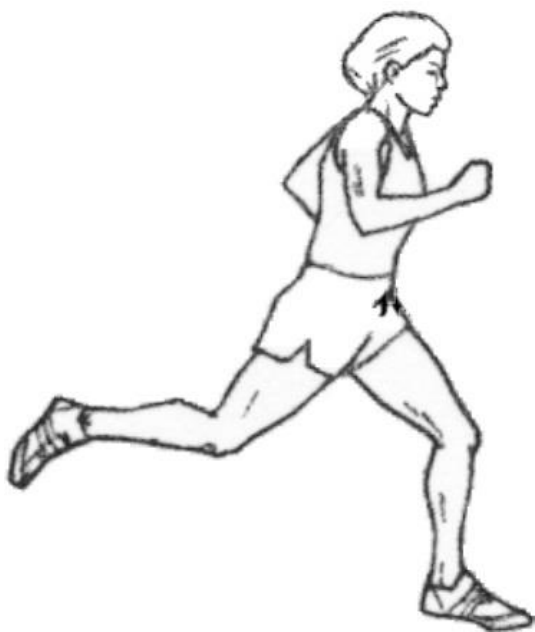
Long Runs

- Athletes run for a specified distance or time at a moderate speed for longer distances.

Speed Training

- Aims to improve the speed at which the athlete can maintain relaxed and correct running form.
- Mainly during the pre-competition and competition phase of the season.
- Example: Athlete runs 1x600m all out with a 20-minute rest interval. This is followed by 10x100m as fast as possible, with a 100m walk interval between each.

Coaches can find information on different techniques are in coaching or running books, magazines and on the Internet.



COACHING POINTS - LONG DISTANCE RUNNING TECHNIQUE

1. Stride length and rhythm should be comfortable. Do not over stride.
2. The foot strike is more to the back of the foot than in sprinting. The foot rolls onto the ball and pushes off.
3. The knee is slightly bent.
4. Leg movement is smooth.
5. Swing arms from shoulders in a comfortable back and forward movement. Keep the arms and shoulders relaxed.
6. Keep the head straight and chin level. Focus ahead 20-30 meters.

TRAINING TO IMPROVE TECHNIQUE – LONG DISTANCE RUNNING

Observation	Correction by Coach	Drill/Test
Athlete's leg drive causes the body to move upward instead of forward.	Make sure hips maintain same level – do not rise up and down.	Practice each step as a push forward and not a push upward. Observation
Arms swing across the chest.	Arm movement should be back and forward and not across chest. Ask athlete to point where they are going with each arm swing.	Sit-down arm movement drill.
Athlete tenses up while running.	Improve aerobic/anaerobic endurance	Concentrate on relaxation, especially facial muscles (relaxation drills).
Head is swinging/ bobbing side to side.	Ensure arms are moving back and forward and not across the chest. Ensure athlete is running upright and not leaning back.	Concentrate on technique. Ask athlete to look straight ahead and focus on something down the track.

TOP TIPS FOR COACHING LONG DISTANCE RUNNING (SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

1. Run in place bringing heels under buttocks.
2. Demonstrate rolling the foot forward. Emphasize pushing off the balls of the feet.
3. Demonstrate a quick turnover (leg speed)
4. Demonstrate a smooth foot strike (No pounding downward).
5. Encourage athletes to be aware of the front part of their foot leaving the ground to get better push-off.
6. Check for upper body twisting by looking at athlete from front view.
7. Check for crossover of feet or toes pointing outward.
8. From side view, check that hands are relaxed and stop at midline of torso on upward swing and back at hip on downward swing.

Standing Long Jump - Key Skills Checklist

Your Athlete Can
Stand behind board/line with feet shoulder-width apart. Toes are pointed out slightly
Hold chin up and head straight
Extend arms in front of body
Bend knees and ankles. Swing arms backwards low past knees
Swing arms up and out toward landing area
Drive knees up and extend off ground. Spring forward off both feet
Bring legs under buttocks
Bring legs forward by bending at hips
Extend legs forward, leading with heels
Swing arms downward past legs
Keep feet parallel and slightly apart
Keep head forward to prevent falling backward
Extend heels forward
Land in pit or on mat, heels first
Bend knees to absorb landing

Running Long Jump Key Skills Checklist

Your Athlete Can
Measure and mark approach
Perform a nine-step stride approach
Plant takeoff foot on board behind foul line
Take off from board by extending takeoff leg
Keep upper body straight and head up
Step Style
Drive right knee and left arm forward and upward over sand pit
Extend lead leg with takeoff leg trailing
Stride in air
Circle right arm overhead. Bring left leg forward
Reach, extending arms and upper body forward
Drop arms below legs. Bend knees upon hitting sand
Land in sand heels first, hands sweeping past hips
Roll over on toes, falling forward
Hang Style
Drive right knee and left arm forward and upward
Hold left leg and right arm back
Drive left leg and right arm (they are parallel)
Arch back to achieve hang position
Circle arms clockwise
Lower upper body toward thighs
Extend legs, and reach arms forward and back
Hit sand heels first and bend knees
Move upper body forward and roll over toes, falling forward

Overview: Long Jump

Special Olympics competitions offer two long jump events:



Standing long jump



Running long jump

Running long jump is a more advanced event than the standing long jump. Long jump is an event that combines speed and spring. It can be a lot of fun. There are three components involved when coaching long jump:

- Approach
- Takeoff
- In flight (step or hang style) (Note: In flight also includes landing)

The coach should train the athlete to exit the pit beyond their mark in the landing area.

Standing Long Jump

Standing long jump does not include a running takeoff.

The take-off board is set on the runway at the edge of the landing area.

The coach should train the athlete to exit the pit beyond their mark in the landing area

COACHING POINTS – STANDING LONG JUMP READY POSITION

1. Stand behind board/line with feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointed out slightly.
2. Hold chin up and head straight.
3. Arms are relaxed at sides. Back is straight and body leaning slightly forward.

COACHING POINTS – STANDING LONG JUMP TAKEOFF

1. From ready position, bend knees and ankles into a squat position. Strongly swing arms backward.
2. Strongly swing arms up and out toward landing area. At the same time both legs drive and extend off ground.
3. Take off by swinging arms forward and low past knees, then up toward landing area.
4. Exhale and spring forward off both feet at a 45° angle. Use strong ankle and leg extension to create a powerful takeoff (thrust).
5. The toes leave the ground last.



COACHING POINTS – STANDING LONG JUMP IN-FLIGHT

1. In flight, extend body with slight arch to back; raise arms above head.
2. Bring legs under buttocks; then bring them forward by bending 90 degrees at hips.
3. Extend legs forward, leading with heels, and swing arms downward past legs.
4. Keep feet parallel and slightly apart.
5. Keep head forward to prevent falling backward; look ahead of landing.

COACHING POINTS – STANDING LONG JUMP LANDING THE JUMP

1. Extend heels forward for extra length.
2. Land in pit or on mat, heels first, with momentum carrying you forward.
3. Bend knees to absorb the impact of the landing.
4. Exit the pit beyond their mark in the landing area.



TOP TIPS FOR COACHING STANDING LONG JUMP (SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

1. Demonstrate ready-to-jump position to athlete.
2. Give a verbal commands (e.g. "Ready!") to the athlete to assume position.
3. Demonstrate two-leg takeoff. Emphasize taking off from both feet.
4. Pull legs up underneath trunk to go as far as possible.
5. Ask athlete to practice jumping on bouncy surfaces. (e.g. springboards/ small exercise trampoline).



6. Demonstrate proper flight technique.
7. Emphasize back-to-front motion to keep momentum going forward.
8. Ask athlete to practice jumping over a towel/two separated ropes on the ground to improve distance.
9. Emphasize moving legs and arms from back-to-front to keep athlete's momentum going forward.
10. Practice landing after jumping off a box or springboard.
11. Concentrate on falling forward after landing.
12. Play jumping games which promote standing long jump skills. Use jumping instead of running in relay games.
13. Jump over a series of spaced lines.

Running Long Jump

DETERMINING THE TAKEOFF LEG FOR THE RUNNING LONG JUMP

The athlete's stronger leg is usually their take-off leg.

- Ask the athlete to take three consecutive hops from a standing start using the right leg only.
- Measure the distance traveled.
- Repeat with the left leg.

The leg used to hop the furthest is usually their stronger leg.

For some athletes, there is no clear difference between legs. In this case, it is helpful to know that most right-handed people use their left leg as the take-off leg for jumps. However, if the athlete is more comfortable using the opposite leg, they should use it.

All coaching points in this section are based on a left-foot take off. If your athlete uses a right foot take off, you should switch the foot in the instruction.

MEASURING AN ATHLETE'S APPROACH

As your athlete becomes stronger and more skilled, their approach will need adjustment. Initially, the athlete should use three strides. As they improve, they can progress through five, seven and nine strides. Elite athletes may use up to nineteen strides! The number of strides should correspond with your athlete's maximum speed when they hit the take-off board or tape.

1. Athlete stands on takeoff board and runs back along the runway. Take the number of strides (e.g. 3 or 5) that will be used on the approach. The point where the athlete stops or reaches the number of strides is marked. This initial mark will be adjusted by moving forward or backward.
2. Athlete faces take-off board from this mark.

3. Athlete does a controlled run of at least 9 strides towards the take-off board. They should reach the take-off board on their take-off foot.
4. The athlete should run through the sand in the landing pit.
5. Mark the point where the athlete's take-off foot hits take-off board.
6. Adjustments can be made forward and backward to fit individual needs.
7. When you are sure that the athlete's approach is consistent, measure and record distances for future practice and competitions.
8. Run approach again and mark the location of first and third steps of the takeoff foot. The athlete can run a consistent approach by matching his/her stride to meet these marks.

TOP TIPS FOR MEASURING APPROACH IN LONG JUMP

1. Demonstrate the starting stance.
2. Emphasis the starting position of take-off foot behind the other foot. Show the take-off foot taking the first step
3. Place different colored footprints on the runway
4. Encourage athletes to practice their approach run often. This helps develop consistency.
5. Support the athlete to measure the approach themselves. This will help them to be able to identify the starting point of their approach when you are not present.

COACHING POINTS – THE TAKE-OFF

1. Perform the approach run and plant the takeoff foot on board behind foul line.
2. Stretch upward immediately prior to takeoff.
3. Strongly take off from board by extending and pushing through the takeoff leg.
4. Bend the other leg. Drive the thigh up and over sand pit.
5. Keep upper body straight and head up. The athlete should focused ahead in the sand.
6. Land in a running position on non-takeoff foot and run through the sand.

TOP TIPS FOR COACHING THE TAKE-OFF IN LONG JUMP

1. Demonstrate single leg take-off.
2. Always take an odd number of strides in the approach.
3. Begin with a three- or five-stride approach. As the athlete's skill and strength improve, progress to nine strides.
4. Remind the athlete to always take first stride with take-off foot.
5. Practice often. Move the start point back until your athlete has a consistent approach.
6. Emphasize strong extension of take-off knee and ankle.
7. Emphasize vigorous lift and drive by opposite knee and arm.



COACHING POINTS – IN-FLIGHT - STEP STYLE

1. From takeoff, drive right knee and left arm forward and upward over sand pit.
2. While in flight, extend the lead leg with the take-off leg trailing. The athlete should appear to be in a stride position mid-flight.
3. Circle right arm overhead and bring left leg forward. Arms and legs should now be parallel.
4. As the athlete prepares to land they should extend their arms and upper body to reach forward.
5. Drop both arms below legs and bend knees as they hit the sand.
6. Land in sand heels first, with hands sweeping past hips.
7. Roll over on toes, falling forward.



TOP TIP FOR COACHING STEP STYLE IN-FLIGHT IN LONG JUMP

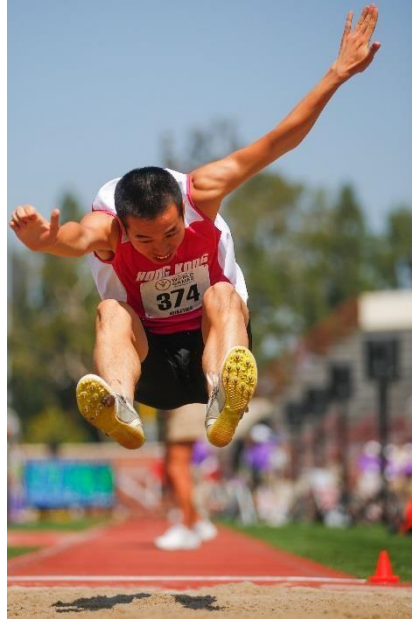
1. Demonstrate step-style flight. The right knee should lead the flight.
2. Practice pop-ups drill.
3. Increase length of approach as flight technique improves.

COACHING POINTS – IN-FLIGHT (HANG STYLE)

1. From takeoff, drive right knee and left arm forward and upward. Hold the left leg and right arm back.
2. Drive the left leg and right arm so that they are parallel.
3. Arch the back to achieve the "hang" position.
4. Move the arms in a circle clockwise.
5. Prepare for landing by
6. Lowering the upper body toward thighs,
7. Extending legs



8. Reaching arms forward and then backward.
9. Hit sand heels first. Bend knees to absorb shock of landing. Move upper body forward and roll over toes to fall forward.



TOP TIPS FOR COACHING HANG STYLE IN FLIGHT FOR LONG JUMP

1. Demonstrate hang-style technique.
2. Ask athlete to practice jumping up and arching their back.
3. Start athlete with a shorter approach and gradually increase.

TRAINING TO IMPROVE TECHNIQUE – LONG JUMP

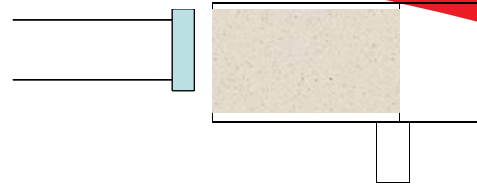
Observation	Correction by Coach	Drill/Test
Athlete stutter-steps and takes off on the wrong foot and looks down at board.	Verify run-up and start point. Practice doing run the exact same way each time.	Do run-up on track with controlled acceleration.
Athlete is not getting any height in the jump (stays close to ground).	Increase drive. Make sure upper body is not angled forward. Look up at take-off and use extension of legs.	Bounding and jumping drills. Strengthen core muscles
Athlete lands upright	Increase forward reach and momentum. Increase height so legs can be repositioned	Strengthen core muscles. Bounding. Two-footed jumps

LONG JUMP DRILLS

Drill	Pop-Ups	Purpose	Develop hitch kick and arm action in the air Develop Height on jump
Reps:	10-12 jumps per set	When to Use	Beginning of Training Session or Beginner jumpers
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Place hurdle or string or light rope across pit about five feet from takeoff board. Take Hips Tall position and begin short approach (five or seven strides). Run toward pit with moderate, controlled speed. Hit board driving up and out over marker. Perform hitch kick and arm action in air and land into pit. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athlete can take off at mark closer to pit if needed Athlete can step onto low box to help create height Maintain tall body posture in position 			

Drill	Forward Height	Purpose	Develop height on jump Develop tall body position during jump
Reps:	10-12 jumps	When to Use	Beginner jumpers
Teaching Points			
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1. Place string or light rope across pit about 10 feet from takeoff board.
2. Take Hips Tall position, begin short approach.
3. Run toward pit with moderate, controlled speed.
4. Hit board, driving up and out beyond marker.
5. Perform hitch kick or hang using arm action in air, and land into pit.
- 6.



Points of Emphasis

- Maintain tall body position in flight

Drill	Cross the Brook	Purpose	Develops jumping and falling forward Develop tall body position during jump
Reps:	10-12 Jumps	When to Use	Beginner jumpers or Technique work
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place two ropes on ground about shoulder-width apart, forming a "brook." 2. Jump from one side of the brook to the other. 3. Space ropes farther apart to work on hopping distance. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Powerful drive from legs 			

Drill	Circle Jumping	Purpose	Develop powerful, explosive leg action
Reps:	10-12 Jumps	When to Use	Beginner jumpers or Technique work
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place a series of hoops, etc., on ground. 2. Hop or bound from hoop to hoop. 3. Initially place hoops close to each other, then set them progressively farther apart to demand long reaching strides and explosive leg action. Pylons can also be used for athletes to land beside if athletes may land/step on hoops. 4. Use a forward and upward swing of the arms to help each jump. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Good Arm Action 			

Drill	Plyometric Hops/Bounds (over low obstacles)	Purpose	Develop powerful, explosive leg action Develop Spring in legs
Reps:	2 x 5 obstacles	When to Use	Technique work
Teaching Points			

1. Create and place five obstacles one meter apart.
2. Hop or bound over the obstacles.
3. Land and immediately hop or bound over next obstacle.
4. Use arms to obtain height and distance over obstacles.

Points of Emphasis

- Good Arm Action
- Strong Knee Drive

TOP TIPS FOR COACHING LONG JUMP (SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

1. Demonstrate the starting stance.
2. Emphasize that the take-off foot starts behind the other foot and takes the first step of the approach.
3. Place different colored footprints or hula hoops to step in on the runway to guide the approach.
4. Encourage athletes to regularly practice their run up to develop a consistent approach.
5. Athletes should have good, controlled speed on the approach.
6. Emphasize strong extension of take-off knee and ankle at take-off.
7. Emphasize vigorous lift and drive by opposite knee and arm at take-off.
8. Increase length of approach as flight technique improves.
9. Emphasize height reached by the feet during flight.
10. Remind athletes to land heels first.
11. Athlete should practice falling forward after landing.
12. Train athletes to exit the landing pit beyond their mark in the landing area.

TOP TIPS FOR LONG JUMP AT COMPETITION

1. Practice visual imagery. Ask the athlete picture him/herself running down the runway and hitting the take-off board without a foul. Then they should visualize themselves flying through the air up and out into the pit.
2. Remind your athletes to sprint down the runway, accelerating as they approach the take-off board.

Shot Put Key Skills Checklist

Your Athlete Can
Hold shot in throwing hand. Spread fingers around shot
Balance shot with thumb and little finger
Place shot against neck, below ear, with palm turned out
Keep elbow away from body
Standing Put
Stand with feet just wider than shoulder width near toe board. Face perpendicular to toe board
Keep shoulders parallel to direction of throw
Step back and bend back leg, keeping back straight
Turn upper body 90 degrees away from direction of put
Drive hips and chest counterclockwise toward direction of put
Extend throwing arm and keep thumb down. Snap wrist and fingers outward, releasing shot.
Sliding Put
Stand in middle of ring. Face perpendicular to toe board.
Lower upper body. Flex back leg to quarter squat.
Lift front foot and extend forward. Slide body toward front of circle.
Keep back leg flexed, with body perpendicular to throw's direction.
Rotate back leg and extend body upward. Force hips in throw's direction
Thrust chest forward and extend both legs
Transfer weight to left leg
Extend right arm and push shot with fingertips
Extend throwing arm and keep thumb down. Snap wrist and fingers outward, releasing shot.
Gliding Put
Stand at rear of circle. Face away from toe board.
Place power foot in front. Have ball of other foot on throwing surface.
Hop backward. Turn both feet 90° counterclockwise until parallel to toe board.
Land on both feet simultaneously.
Rotate and raise trunk upward. Begin turning feet 90° toward throw's direction.
Transfer weight from right to left foot. Pivot both feet and knees toward direction of put.
Keep right elbow away from body, extend right arm
Extend throwing arm and keep thumb down. Snap wrist and fingers outward, releasing shot.

Overview: Shot Put

Shot Put requires the athlete to put the shot as far as possible. A combination of strength, power and speed will propel the shot further. The ability to accelerate the shot faster depends on the amount of force (speed) the athlete can apply, using strength and power.

There are three primary styles of putting the shot:

- Standing put
- Slide
- Gliding put

Warm-up is very important for shot put to prevent injury. The same general warm up advice applies as for all events. However, coaches should take special care ensure the athletes' wrists and hands are well warmed up.

Gripping the shot put is the same for all athletes. The following coaching points are made for a right-handed put.

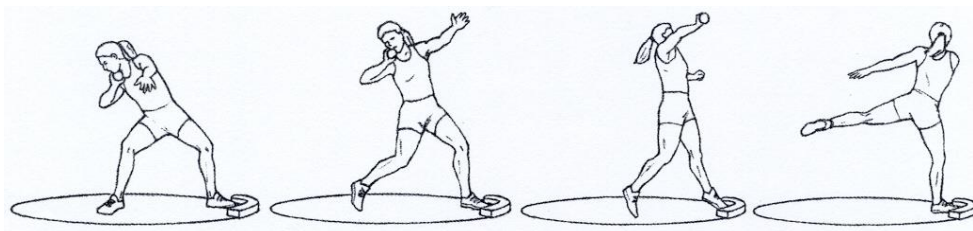
Coaching Points - Gripping the Shot Put & Ready Position

1. Hold shot with both hands.
2. Place shot in throwing (right) hand and spread fingers around shot.
3. Do not rest or allow the shot to drop into palm of hand
4. Place thumb and little finger wider apart for balance and support.
5. Raise shot above head, wrist flexed backward.
6. Shot is supported by thumb and little finger on sides. The majority of weight is on other fingers.
7. Bring arm down, place shot against neck, below ear, with palm turned out.
8. Elbow is away from body and must stay behind the shot.
9. Apply pressure against neck to support shot.
10. Shot must not fall below the level of the shoulder or be behind the shoulder during the put.



Coaching Points – Standing Put

1. Take ready position. Take a wide stance near the toe board. Stand perpendicular to the direction of throw. The left shoulder at front of the ring.
2. Shoulders are parallel to direction of throw.
3. Left arm (non-throwing arm) is relaxed and extended in front of body.
4. Step back and bend right leg, keeping back straight.
5. Turn upper body 90 degrees away from direction of put.
6. Body weight is over bent right leg.
7. Drive hips and chest counter-clockwise toward direction of put.
8. Extend right arm and snap fingers, releasing shot.



Coaching Points – Sliding Put

1. Take ready position. Take a wide stance near the toe board. Stand perpendicular to the direction of throw. The left shoulder at front of the ring.
2. Lower upper body and flex right leg to quarter squat.

3. Lift left foot and extend it forward, sliding body toward front of circle.
4. Right leg remains flexed. Body is perpendicular to direction of throw.
5. Rotate right leg. Extend body upward to force hips around to direction of put.
6. Thrust chest forward and extend both legs.
7. Transfer weight to left leg and emphasize a strong leg push.
8. Extend right arm and push shot with fingertips.
9. Release shot, right arm extending in direction of put.

Coaching Points – Gliding Put

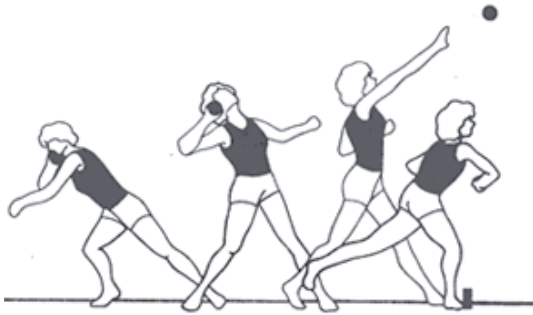
1. Take ready position. Stand at rear of circle, facing away from the direction of put. Keep weight is on right leg.
2. Place ball of left foot on throwing surface.
3. Hop backward powerfully. Turn both feet 90 degrees parallel to toe board. Note: The right leg provides most of the gliding force.
4. Glide in a balanced position from the back to the center of the circle.
5. Land on both feet simultaneously.
6. Rotate and raise trunk upward. Feet should begin to turn 90 degrees toward direction of put.
7. Transfer weight from right to left foot. Pivot both feet and knees toward direction of put.
8. Keep left toe close to throwing surface during extension, and ground the foot quickly.
9. Drive to toe board with left foot. Do not hop.
10. Keep right elbow away from body. Extend right arm forcefully.
11. Keeping thumb down, put the shot and forcefully snap the wrist and fingers outward.
12. Extend beyond toe board to improve release point.



Coaching Points – Advanced Skill Reverse Shot Put (Weight Transfer)

This technique does not include a “reverse” movement. This is a technique for advancement athlete where the athlete is able to “follow-through” after the shot is put and rotate their body to gain additional power. This power can translate into a greater distance. The Reverse shot put is a rotational movement.

1. After shot is put, right arm continues past body to the left.
2. Left arm continues back around body.
3. Switch feet - right foot moves toward toe board, and left foot moves to the back.
4. All of weight is on right leg.
5. The athlete should finish the throw facing the opposite side of the circle and should take care not to watch the shot as it is released. Watching the shot may cause their momentum to carry their body and foot over the front of the circle resulting in a foul throw.



Coaching Points – Finishing the Throw

After an athlete has fully complete their put, it is important they exit the throwing circle correctly.

1. Athlete should be stable and balanced before moving out of the circle.
2. Athlete should exit to the rear (back half) of the circle.

Wheelchair Shot Put Key Skills Checklist

Your Athlete Can
Sit upright in chair. Buttocks are against chair and feet on foot supports.
Hold shot in throwing hand. Spread fingers around shot.
Balance shot with thumb and little finger.
Place shot against neck, below ear, with palm turned out.
Keep elbow away from body, pointing it back away from body.
Grab left armrest with left hand for balance.
Extend throwing arm and keep thumb down. Snap wrist and fingers outward, releasing shot.

Coaching Points – Wheelchair Shot Put


1. Set front wheels of chair behind toe board of the ring. Lock back wheels.
2. Sit upright in chair with buttocks against chair and the feet on foot supports.
3. Grip shot in right hand. Do not let the shot drop into the palm of the hand.
4. Place shot against the side of neck, not under chin.
5. Keep right elbow to the right side, pointing back away from body.
6. Grab left armrest with left hand for balance if required or hold at eye level.
7. Extend right arm forcefully.
8. Lower left shoulder, raise right shoulder.
9. Keeping thumb down, put shot, snapping wrist and fingers outward.

Training to Improve Technique – Shot Put

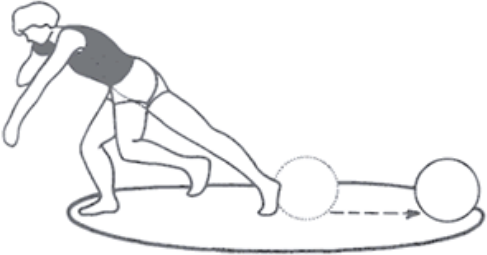
OBSERVATION	CORRECTION BY COACH	DRILL/TEST
Throwing the shot instead of “putting” it	Throwing elbow may have dropped below the shoulder. Shot may not be cradled directly under chin	Correct hand/arm/elbow positioning, keeping elbow high. Practice in standing put stance
Shot is not going upward when put	Use legs when thrusting; make sure upward direction is being followed with the body	Use a target to “put over” in the air (coach should hold a long stick/bar).
Put has no thrust from fingers	Hold shot properly (pads of fingers and thumb). Do not let shot drop into palm of hand	Strengthen thumb and fingers. Practice without shot
No distance/power in put	Lift upward simultaneously with legs and back, making sure legs are “thrusting” and all parts are occurring in the right sequence	Break skill down. Practice without shot or use lightweight shot

Training Drills for Shot Put

Note that drills may use shot puts or use a soccer ball, basketball or light medicine ball for drills involving throwing. Throwing can be from behind the head, between the legs or around the side of the body. It is important to assess your athletes' skill levels correctly and ensure the safety of athletes and others while performing drills.

Drill	UNDERHAND TOSS	Purpose	Warm the body up properly for any shot put practice or competition
Reps:	10 throws	When to Use	Warm-up, in throwing ring
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand facing landing area. 2. Hold shot in front of body with both hands. 3. Bend knees and throw shot up and out, away from body, using an underhand toss. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good extension of arms and legs • Deep squat, with explosive drive up through hips 			

Drill	CHEST PASS	Purpose	Warm the body up properly for any shot put practice or competition
Reps:	5-10 throws	When to Use	Warm-up, in throwing ring
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand facing landing area. 2. Hold shot with both hands with fingers behind shot. 3. Push shot out like a basketball chest pass. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good arm extension 			

Drill	GLIDE TO MEDICINE BALL	Purpose	Develop efficiency in extending leg toward the toe board
Reps:	5-10 glides	When to Use	Integrate into entire technique as soon as possible.
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place medicine ball at center of throwing circle. 2. Take forward straddle position, facing back of throwing circle, with shot in throwing position. 3. Bend the throwing-side knee, transferring weight over knee. 4. Non-throwing leg is relaxed and extended; arm is out to the side. 5. Drive non-throwing leg toward body. 6. Push and glide back toward medicine ball with non-throwing foot. 			
Points of Emphasis			

- Low efficient leg extension – ball is pushed directly forward
- Focus only on leg action and weight transfer.

Drill	PUTTING FOR DISTANCE	Purpose	Develop complete putting action Develop explosive power in putting action
Reps:	5-10 throws	When to Use	Once technique work begins.
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Push ball from as far back behind body to as far forward as possible. 2. Drive up onto toes and push forward with body. 3. Release ball so that arms are fully extended in front of body and above head. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use whole body in this action, not just arms. • Complete arm extension • Weight behind body 			

Drill	PUTTING FOR HEIGHT AND DISTANCE	Purpose	Develop complete putting action Develop explosive power in putting action
Reps:	5-10 throws	When to Use	Once technique work begins.
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stretch a rope between two high jump standards, 2M above ground. 2. Stand behind rope and put ball over rope. 3. If successful, take two steps back away from rope and repeat. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use whole body in this action, not just arms. • Complete arm extension • Weight behind body 			

Drill	GLIDE DRILL	Purpose	Warm the body up properly for any shot put practice or competition Develop powerful and explosive glide action
Reps:	5-10 glides	When to Use	Warm-up, in throwing ring
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stand with feet parallel in back of circle. 2. Using a normal glide, drive backward off left foot. 3. Land in power position. 4. Rotate hips and feet on drive back. 5. Keep shoulders square to back of circle, opening up left foot and hip 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick driving action to power position • Good rotation of hips and feet to power position 			

Drill	WEIGHT TRANSFER – STANDING THROW	Purpose	Develop effective use of the legs
Reps:	5-10 throws	When to Use	Limited use – integrate into entire technique as soon as possible
Teaching Points			

1. Take straddle position with shot in throwing position.
2. Bend the throwing-side knee, transferring weight over foot.
3. Non-throwing leg is relaxed and extended; arm is out to the side.
4. Shoulders are parallel to ground.
5. Drive weight up and out from throwing side.
6. Rotate hips, transferring weight behind shot release.
7. Thrower is facing direction of throw upon release of shot put.



Points of Emphasis

- Hip rotation progressively increases with proper weight transfer
- Focus only on leg action and weight transfer

Drill	PUSH-THROW WITH THE BALL	Purpose	Develop putting arm action Develop coordinated body leg movement
Reps:	10-20 throws	When to Use	Early in season – technique work.
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Throw tennis ball against wall with a pushing or putting action. 2. Use body to make throw and extend legs. 3. Push ball with fingertips. 4. Catch ball on rebound from wall and repeat. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting ball, not throwing ball. • Getting body weight behind put • Extending legs 			

Drill	PUSH-PUT THE BALL WITH PARTNER	Purpose	Develop putting arm action Develop coordinated body and leg movement
Reps:	10-20 throws	When to Use	Early in season. Technique work
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partners stand facing each other, 2-3 meters apart. 2. Push ball to partner with one- or two-handed push pass. 3. Step toward partner with left leg if throwing with right arm. 4. Keep elbow of throwing arm at shoulder height. 			
Points of Emphasis			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting ball, not throwing ball • Do not use a real shot • Get body weight behind the put • Extend legs 			

Top Tips for Coaching Shot Put (Skill Development)

1. Demonstrate the correct way to enter and exit ring.
2. The athlete should always enter and exit the ring from the rear of the throwing circle.
3. Break down putting into parts. Practice each part.
4. Elbow must stay behind the shot.
5. Athlete should keep right elbow at shoulder level during put.
6. Move hips forward. Keep chest high and square to direction of put.
7. Extend the legs during put.
8. Extend the arms powerfully, pushing shot off fingertips. Finish with a snap of the wrist
9. Finish put with right arm extended in front of body, hand above head level.

10. Athlete should keep balance the entire time in the throwing circle
11. Practice without a shot, with a softball, and finally with the shot.
12. Put begins with extension of legs.
13. Complete the putting motion fully, before looking at the distance.
14. The athlete's chin and chest are straight and up.
15. As technique improves, left arm gets more involved in putting action.
16. Keep shot next to neck before the put, to avoid throwing shot.

Top Tips for Coaching Wheelchair Shotput (Skill Development)

1. Emphasize sitting up straight in wheelchair
2. Practice without a shot. Progress to a light softball and finally shot put. Progress based on athlete's skill level and strength.
3. Maintain a strong erect posture during the putting action

Top Tips for Shot Put at Competition

Remind your athletes to:

1. Use their legs. Explode from the bent position up towards the sky.
2. Put their body weight behind the put.
3. Bend their knees and drop buttocks back towards middle of the ring. This will help stop them from falling forward and fouling.

Softball Throw Key Skills Checklist

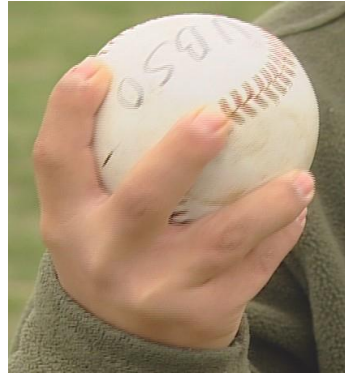
YOUR ATHLETE CAN
Standing Throw
Place thumb under ball. The index, middle and ring finger should be on top. The little finger should be on the side.
Stand 1.5 strides behind foul line. Left shoulder facing throw's direction
Keep feet parallel with toes pointing forward. Legs should be a little wider than shoulder-width apart.
Raise right arm with elbow pointing back. Hold ball behind the head
Bend left arm and hold it in front of chest
Push off right foot. Take one step with left foot toward direction of throw
Transfer body weight from the right leg to the left leg
Bring right arm up and forward, leading with elbow
Extend right arm, snap wrist and release ball off fingertips
Follow with throwing arm, down and across body
Wheelchair Softball Throw
Sit upright in chair with buttocks against chair and feet on foot supports
Place thumb under the ball, with index, middle and ring finger on top, and little finger on side.
Bend and lift right elbow 90 degrees away from body. Bring ball behind head.
Hold left arm above eye level. Lean back slightly in chair with a small arch in back
Push left arm to right, pulling it back down to left.
Raise right shoulder and drop left shoulder. Keep right elbow up and away from body
Bring right arm up and forward, leading with elbow
Extend right arm sharply and high over right leg. Snap wrist and release ball off fingers
Follow through with throwing arm down and across body

Overview: Softball Throw

Throwing events in Special Olympics athletics are fun and exciting. Softball throw is a unique event in Special Olympics. It is a development event for athletes with lower ability level. In time, some athletes will progress on to traditional throwing events such as shot put or mini-javelin.

Coaching Points - Gripping the Softball & Ready Position

1. Pick up softball with the throwing (dominant) hand.
2. Place the thumb under the ball. Ensure the index, middle and ring finger are on top. The little finger should be on the side. The coach may need to adapt this grip according to the size of the athlete's hand.
3. Apply pressure by squeezing fingers to keep ball in the hand.



Coaching Points - Standing Overhand Softball Throw

1. Stand 1.5 strides behind foul line. The left shoulder faces the direction of the throw. Feet are parallel and a little wider than shoulder width and toes point forward.
2. Raise right arm, with elbow pointing back and holding ball behind head.
3. Bend left arm. Hold it in front of the chest.
4. Push off right foot. Take one step with left foot in direction of throw.
5. Transfer body weight from right leg to left leg.
6. Bring the right arm up and forward, leading with the elbow.
7. Forcefully extend right arm. Snap the wrist and release the ball off fingertips.
8. Follow through, down and across body.
9. Official Special Olympics Athletics rules require an overhand throw, similar to American baseball.



Coaching Points – Wheelchair Softball Throw Ready Position

1. Set front wheels of chair just behind the foul line. Lock back wheels.
2. Sit upright in chair. Ensure buttocks are against back of the chair. Place

feet either on the ground or on the foot supports.

3. Properly grip the softball.
4. Bend right elbow to 90 degrees, lift it away from body, and bring ball behind the head. The hand is behind the elbow.
5. Hold left arm above eye level. Lean back slightly in chair with a small arch in back.

Coaching Points – Wheelchair Softball Overhand Throw

1. Take ready position. Throw ball by pushing left arm to the right. Then pull it back down to left.
2. Raise right shoulder as the left shoulder drops. Keep right elbow up and away from the body.
3. Bring right arm up and forward. Lead with elbow.
4. Extend right arm sharply, high over right leg. Snap wrist and release ball off fingers.
5. The right arm follows through, down and across body.

Tip Tips for Coaching Softball Throw (Skill Development)

1. Demonstrate how to grip softball.
2. Demonstrate proper throwing position.
3. Manually place athlete's fingers on ball.
4. Athletes with small hands may place all four fingers on top and the thumb to one side, and hold the ball in the palm of the throwing hand.
5. Stand behind athlete and move his/her arm through throwing motion.
6. Practice throwing motion without a ball first, then with ball.
7. Practice throwing over a barrier, like a high jump standard with the crossbar.
8. Emphasize holding up throwing arm and throwing overhand.
9. Make sure left shoulder is lower than right and back is arched when releasing the ball. This allows the athlete to apply maximum force to throw.
10. Practice with athlete taking one step before throwing.
11. Place marks on ground to help the athlete step with correct foot.

TOP TIPS FOR SOFTBALL THROW AT COMPETITION

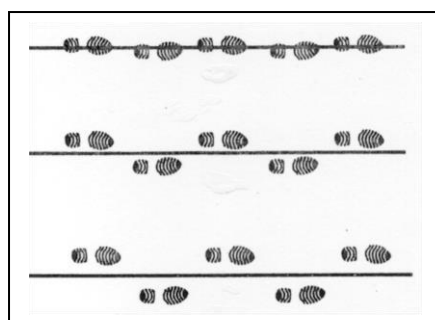
1. Conduct a practice competition. Teach your athletes about roles at competition. One athlete plays the official and others assist in marking the distance of the throw.
2. Remind your athletes to:
 - a. Listen for the official to call their names.

Race Walking Key Skills Checklist

Your Athlete Can
From start, push off with rear foot. Step forward with front foot
Swing arms vigorously to stimulate quick foot movement.
Power body forward by lifting heel and pushing off with toes
Place feet in a straight line with toes pointed directly forward
Rotate hips forward and in with each stride
Drop and roll hips while twisting back and forth
Bend the knee as leg is swung forward
Straighten knee all the way back, pulling ground as the heel touches it
Use toes and calf muscles to push body forward
Increase drive off toes by rolling over and off them
Walk with head up, torso erect and centered over hips
Hold hands with fingers bent, relaxed and loose
Swing arms across chest as they move back and forth
Maintain upright position with neck and shoulders relaxed
Use relaxed hip movements as speed increases
Race walk under control for entire race
Perform proper heel-toe movement

Overview: Race Walking

Walking is defined as propelling oneself forward while keeping at least one foot in contact with the ground. The skill of race walking is complex. It requires a lot of practice and endurance. Athletes must use quick steps. The heel of the lead foot must touch the ground before the toes of the support foot leave the ground. During a race walking event, the athlete must always have one foot in contact with the ground. During the stride, the leg must be straight for a moment. The supporting leg must be straight in a vertically upright position. A walker may be disqualified if they do not have continuous contact with the ground.



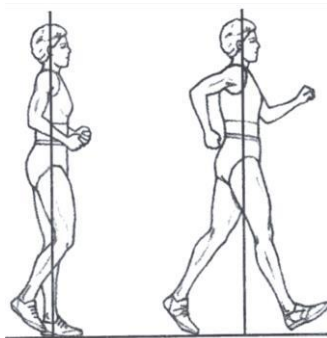
Correct foot placement

Incorrect foot placement. Shows insufficient hip rotation or lack of flexibility

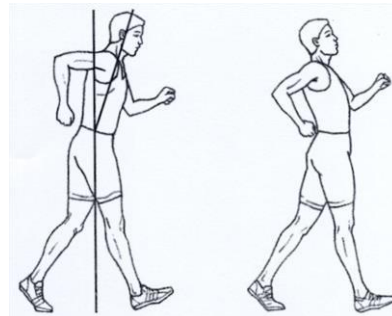
COACHING POINTS – BEGIN WALKING MOTION AND ACCELERATION

1. Take a stand start position. Push off with rear foot and front foot simultaneously. Step forward with rear foot.
2. Swing arms vigorously to stimulate quick foot movement.
3. Power body forward by lifting the heel and pushing off with toes.
4. Walk forward, swinging bent arms in opposition to legs.
5. The heel of the lead foot must touch the ground just before the toe of the trailing foot leaves the ground in heel-toe movement. Feet are placed one in front of the other.
6. Hold hands so the fingers relaxed and loose.
7. Walk with the head up. Keep the torso erect and centered over the hips.

CORRECT FORM



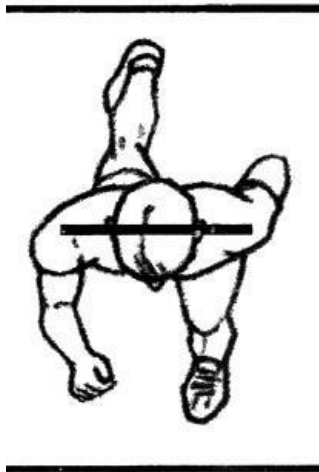
INCORRECT FORM



COACHING POINTS - MAINTAINING MOMENTUM IN RACE WALKING

1. Let toe and calf muscle push body forward with feet landing in a straight line.
2. Let the hips rotate forward and in with each stride.
3. Hold arms at 90 degrees. Swing arms vigorously forward and back.
4. Let arms swing across your chest as they move back and forth. Forearms should be parallel to the ground, and arm swing originates from shoulders.
5. Maintain an upright position. Neck and shoulders are relaxed.
6. Hips drop and roll while twisting back and forth. This allows your legs to move faster and easier and gives you a longer stride.
7. The knee bends and swings forward taking the step. This allows toes to clear ground.
8. The advancing leg must be straightened at heel strike. It must remain straight until it is in the vertical position.
9. Toes and calf muscles are used to push the body forward. Feet land in approximately straight line with toes pointed forward.

10. Increase drive off toes by rolling over and off them.
11. Use relaxed hip movements as speed increases.
12. Race walk at highest speed possible while maintaining the correct form.
13. Complete race with a strong finish.



Good hip rotation




Too much hip rotation

TRAINING TO IMPROVE TECHNIQUE – RACE WALKING

OBSERVATION	CORRECTION BY COACH	DRILL/TEST
Hips are moving side to side, not forward/backward	Improve hip mobility. Increase understanding of correct motion (or increase awareness of the error)	Break steps down to demonstrate correct direction hips need to move
Arms move too vigorously up and down and cross body	Swing arms forward and backward (like pistons), flexed at elbows. Do not cross arms over the body	Practice standing; guide proper technique
Rear foot leaves the ground before leading foot touches the ground	Get foot down quicker. Remember grabbing motion into ground with foot	Slow down/reduce speed

TRAINING DRILLS FOR RACE WALKING

Drill	Race Walking Drill	Purpose	
			Develop pacing Develop capacity to surge
Reps:	3 x 300m of increasing – decreasing patterns	When to Use	Beginning of skill work
Teaching Points			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start at slow pace 2. Blow whistle after about 50m to indicate increase in speed. 			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Blow whistle again after another 50m to indicate another increase in speed. 4. Blow whistle 2x to indicate decrease in speed. 			
Points of Emphasis			
Maintain proper form			

TOP TIPS FOR COACHING RACE WALKING (SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

1. Demonstrate each component of this event:
 - Starting the race.
 - Walking: keeping at least one foot in contact with the ground.
 - Making contact with the heel at a point just in front of the body's center of gravity.
2. Race walk 100m:
 - In smooth and easy strides. Keep continuous contact with the ground.
 - With no lateral swinging of the trunk or hips.
 - With the arms bent 90 degrees at elbows.
 - At various speeds. Maintain proper form and pace.
 - At a high speed. Concentrate on arm and leg drive and proper form.
3. Race walk 200m with no backward lean or forward sway.
4. Use arms to control speed.
5. Ask the athlete to feel the strong push off the toe of the back foot. Ask them to concentrate on using strong pushes off the back foot to increase stride lengths while race walking 100-200m.
6. Emphasize using bent arms to increase the power of each leg drive.
7. Practice the arm swing while standing still.
8. Teach the athlete to stay in his or her own lane.
9. Roll up onto and off the toes of the back foot to increase drive. Note that the back foot becomes nearly vertical at high speeds.
10. Note that as the feet pass each other, the hip of the swinging leg reaches its lowest point and the other hip reaches its highest point.
11. Tell the athlete to think of walking “more easily” when walking faster.
12. Place feet directly in front of each other. Try not to allow feet to turn outward.
13. Keep head up, looking at the finish line.

Wheelchair Racing Key Skills Checklist

Your Athlete Can
Sit in back of seat. Buttocks are pressed against lower part of chair back
Lean upper body forward. Keep shoulders ahead of hips
Hold knees and feet together and centered in chair
Grasp wheels or handrails at 11 o'clock position
Keep head slightly forward
Push wheels or handrails forward from 11 o'clock to 4 o'clock position. Then release hands from wheels
Keep moving arms and hands in a circular motion. Move past 6 and 9 o'clock positions and recover to 11 o'clock position.
Keep body and head still during stroke and recovery

Overview: Wheelchair Racing

Wheelchair Racing events in Special Olympics are available for athletes using manual and motorized wheelchairs.

The following events may be offered at Special Olympics competitions:

Manual		Motorized
10m	100m	30m Slalom
25m	200m	50m Slalom
30m Slalom	400m	25m Obstacle Race
4x25m Shuttle Relay		

Manual wheelchair and Motorized wheelchairs are not permitted in the same events. Athletes must be able to complete their event independently. This means that coaches may not provide assistance during the race.

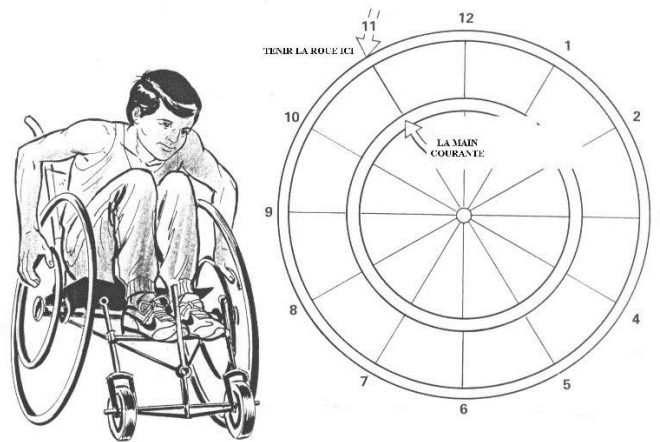
COACHING POINTS – WHEELCHAIR RACING (READY-TO-RACE POSITION)

1. Athletes must remain seated on the cushion or seat of the wheelchair.
2. Lean upper body forward so shoulders are ahead of hips.
3. Hold knees and feet together in the center of the chair.

4. Grasp wheels or handrails at 11 o'clock position, i.e. just behind highest point of wheel (12 o'clock position). Thumbs should be inside and fingers outside.
5. Keep head slightly forward and focus several meters ahead.

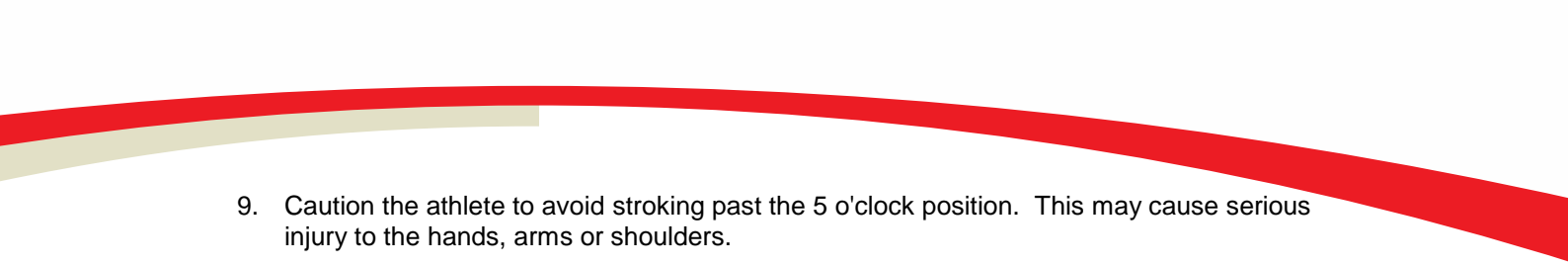
COACHING POINTS – WHEELCHAIR RACING (FORWARD STROKE AND RECOVERY)

1. Take ready-to-race position. Push the wheels or handrails forward from 11 o'clock to the 4 o'clock position. Release hands from wheels.
2. Keep moving arms and hands in a circular motion. (i.e., past 6 and 9 o'clock positions, and recover to the 11 o'clock position). Repeat
3. Keep body and head still during stroke and recovery.



TOP TIPS FOR COACHING WHEELCHAIR RACING (SKILL DEVELOPMENT)

1. Demonstrate the ready position.
2. Prompt athlete to reposition an arm, hand, leg if needed. Do this by touching it, or reposition it in the correct position. Always ask your athlete's permission before you make physical contact.
3. For athletes with balance difficulties, position feet upward against chair. Raise knees to the chest.
4. Explain the stroke by showing a wheel and clock positions for hands.
5. Remind the athlete to:
 - Keep body, trunk and head still.
 - Move only the arms and hands.
 - Upper body movement slows the chair's momentum. (e.g. bouncing/rocking back and forth)
6. Explain that the strongest part of a stroke should be from the 12 o'clock to the four o'clock position.
7. Run practice competitions. Practice reacting to the sound of the start pistol/command.
8. Concentrate on getting both hands to stroke and recover in unison. Emphasize equal strength so the chair's motion is smooth and efficient.

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9. Caution the athlete to avoid stroking past the 5 o'clock position. This may cause serious injury to the hands, arms or shoulders.
 10. Special Note for Wheelchair athletes with arm paralysis. They may pull their chairs forward or push their chairs backward with their feet. Athletes who push their chairs backwards must start with all wheels behind the start line. They must wear helmets.

Distance Running Appendix

800M – 8-WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM

This workout should be adjusted to match athlete's fitness and skill level. From week 4 onwards, add a 4th day and race weekly. This race can be a local event, an official SO event or you can even create a monthly race at training sessions. The important thing is that your athletes get to practice running their event at race pace.

You should ensure every session begins with a warm-up and ends with a cool-down. Refer to our Warm Up and Cool Down Guide on the resources webpage for more information.

WEEK 1		
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Quick turn drills 8x200m at 50% Focus: Run tall, quick turn Rest: Jog 400m	Quick turn drills 6x300m at 50% Focus: Run tall, quick turn Rest: Jog 400m	Quick turn drills 2x400m at 50% Rest: Jog 400m 1x800m at 50%
WEEK 2		
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Quick turn drills 1000m at 50% Rest: Jog 800m 1200m at 50%	Quick turn drills 4x400m at 75% Rest: Jog 400m 6x300m at 75% Rest: Jog 400m	Quick turn drills 800m at best effort
WEEK 3		
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Quick turn drills 2 miles distance run on road, alternate 3 minutes run/30 seconds walk	Quick turn drills 4x400m at goal pace Rest: Jog 400m 800m jog 4x400m at goal pace Rest: Jog 400m	Quick turn drills 1200m at 75% Rest: Jog 800m 1000m at 50% Rest: Jog 800m 4x200m at goal pace Rest: Jog 400m
WEEK 4 - ADD A DAY 4 AND RACE!		
Same as Week 3,		
WEEK 5 - ADD A DAY 4 AND RACE!		
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
QUICK TURN DRILLS 3 miles distance run on road, alternate 4 minutes run/1 minute walk	QUICK TURN DRILLS 30 SECONDS – RUN AS FAR AS POSSIBLE REST: 90 SECONDS 60 seconds – run as far as possible Rest: 2½ minutes 90 seconds – run as far as possible Rest: 4 minutes	QUICK TURN DRILLS 4x400m at goal pace Rest: Jog 400m 4x400m at goal pace
WEEK 6 - ADD A DAY 4 AND RACE!		
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
4 miles run on road, easy steady pace. Last 3 miles, alternate between 2 minutes hard running	QUICK TURN DRILLS 4x400m at goal pace Rest: Jog 400m 2x300m at fast as possible	QUICK TURN DRILLS 200m at goal pace, 200m jog 300m at goal pace, 300m jog 400m at goal pace, 400m jog