



Athlete Centered Home Training Guide



**An Athletes Handbook for
Training at Home**



The Mission of Special Olympics:

To provide year-round sports training and athletic completion in a variety of Olympics-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

The Special Olympics Oath:

*Let me win but,
But, if I cannot win,
Let me be brave in the attempt*



Facts about Special Olympics

- ✓ It is a year round sports training and competition program.
- ✓ There are 26 sports offered globally. Check with your local director to see which sports are offered in your area or click [here](#)
- ✓ There are team and individual sports.
- ✓ You must be 8 years old to compete; 2 years old to train; no upper age limit.
- ✓ Special Olympics is for people with intellectual disabilities.
- ✓ Special Olympics is free.
- ✓ Special Olympics is an international/worldwide organization.



Introduction to This Training Guide

Note: *This training guide is a simplified version of [Special Olympics Athletics: A Handbook for Training at Home](#). To see the full guide click the link above or go to www.specialolympics.org to view other sports home training guides and resources.*

This athletics home Training guide can best be used as a reference for athletes, friends and family members who want to improve track and field skill, improve the athlete's overall body development and increase his or her level of physical fitness. This guide is intended for use at home, between those practice sessions and has more general information, including warm-up exercises, basic rules for track and field competition, a fitness\nutrition plan, and tips on staying in shape between seasons.

Athletes of all ages and ability can participate successfully in a Special Olympics program. Wheelchair athletes are not restricted to participating only in wheelchair races. Athletes with low motor abilities may participate in events designed for lower ability athletes and regular events. Every athlete can find at least one event in which he can succeed and excel.

In essence, success in sports depends on the athlete's determination and practice habits. By merely participating in training program, the athlete will learn self-discipline as well as the ability to make independent decisions. Most importantly, the athlete will learn life-long fitness skills that will help him or her lead a more production and independent life.

Coaches and Athletes, please take the time to go over this guide **together**. A successful home training program can only work with the support of all involved!

An Athletes Introduction to this Guide

This Guide will help me to train for different sports, for example, soccer. Soccer involves a lot of running and kicking as well as passing to your teammates. This guide will help me to stay in shape and help me with home training in order to stay fit and to eat healthier. In order to compete, I use this guide as a visual tool to help me to stay in shape for my events when I am not practicing with my team.

Caitlyn Gunn - Special Olympics Maine Athlete



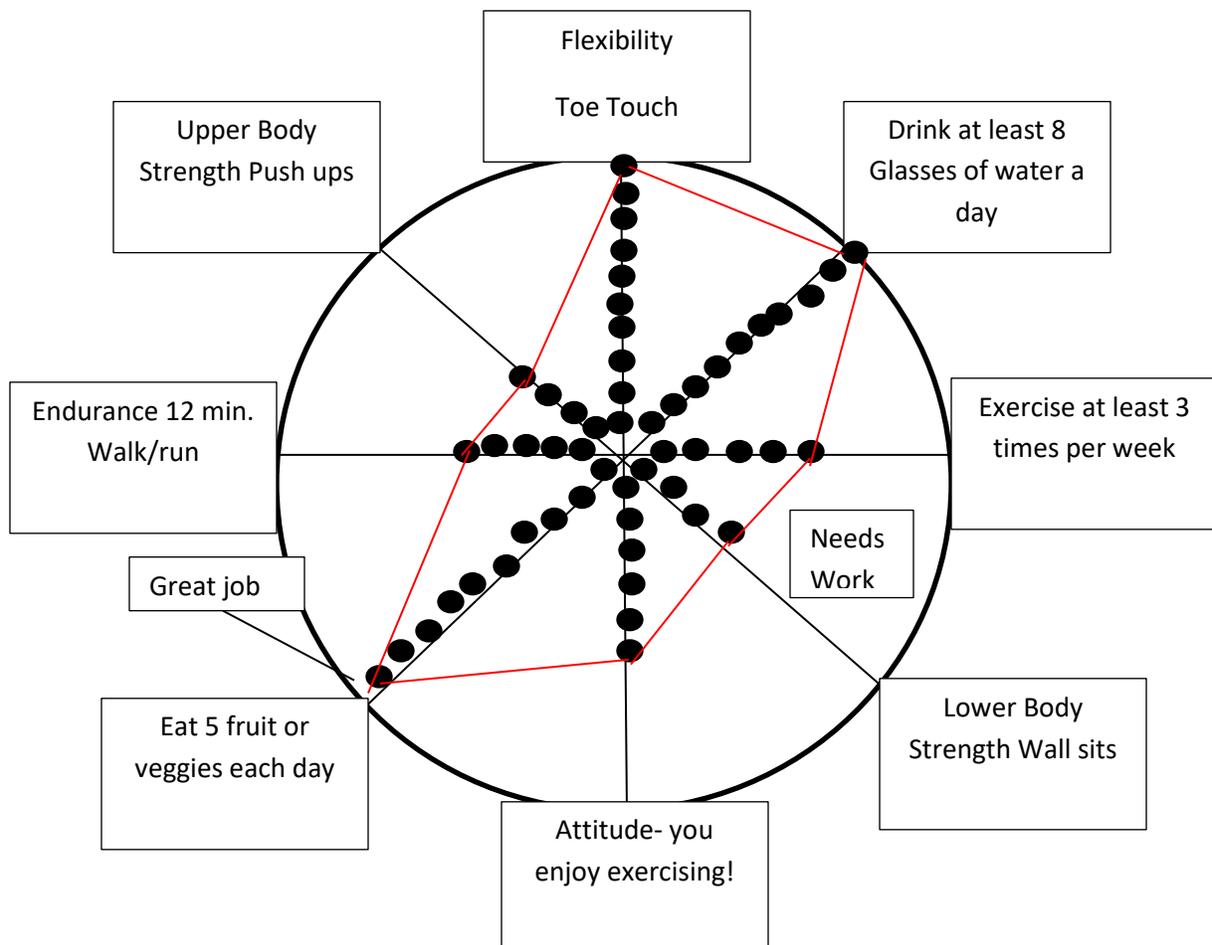
The Fitness/Nutrition Wheel!

A good way to begin your home training journey is to complete this Fitness/Nutrition Wheel. If you are honest with yourself, this wheel will help you to see which area of fitness/nutrition you should work on.

Test yourself on the fitness items below. Each item is a spoke on the wheel. Assume that a score of ten on each item test is the best you can get. Put a dot on each spoke to mark your score for each skill. A score of 10 goes all the way out to the outside edge. A score of 0 is all the way in the center of the wheel. Now connect the dots to see which fitness items you should be working on at home between practices!

The goal is to make a perfect wheel!

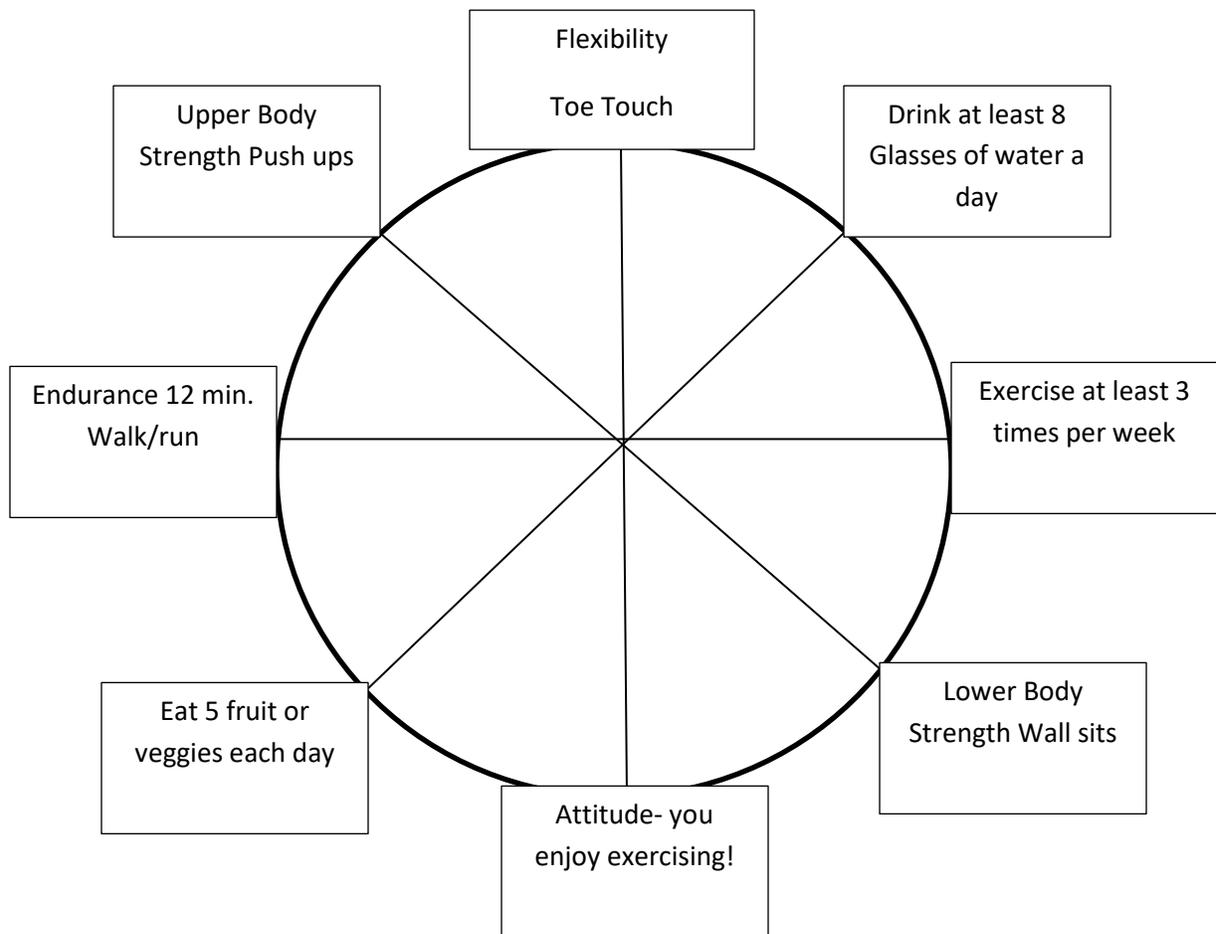
Sample





Fitness/Nutrition Test

An honest answer to each question will only help you to improve. Ask your Coach to help you answer honestly if you need to.





Fitness/Nutrition Test (continued)

Name 3 fitness items that you could work on to make your wheel roll:

- Item 1:
- Item 2:
- Item 3:

Item 1:

Strategy for improving:

Item 2:

Strategy for improving:

Item 3:

Strategy for improving:

Total fitness score at beginning of the season:

Total score at mid-point of the season:

Total score at end of the season:



Athlete Builder Strategies!

Fitness Builders

Trait to be Improved	Potential Strategies
Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down everything you eat - you will think about it more • Before you snack, drink a glass of water • Try fruit as a snack instead of candy
Endurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk around your neighborhood instead on watching TV at least once a day • Write down how long you exercise each day and try to add 10% each week • Learn how to measure your heart rate, then record it after each workout
Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a record of how many strength activities you can do from the list below • Try an exercise until you are tired, rest for one minute then try again • Find a workout partner to help you and who you can encourage too
Have a plan and goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know what you want to have happen because you exercise - write down what you want to be able to do - and tell someone • Write down all the smaller things that you hope will happen as you get more fit and mark them off as they happen • Always start by telling people your goal and see if they have ideas on how to help
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without straining, try to touch your toes, use that as your measure • Do at least two of the stretching exercises below • Never stretch without warming up a little first
Hydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you drink at least 8 glasses of water each day • When you get bored or think you want a snack, have a glass of water • Drink water when you are thirsty – flavored drinks as a treat or snack



A Special Olympics Home Training Chart

Athlete Action

Athlete Name:

Date:

Coaches Comments:

Game Plan:

Athletes: Record your daily point score by adding each action you complete for each category. Each action is worth 1 point (maximum of 5 points per day. Each Special Olympics Team Practice attended with your team is worth 5 points.

Coaches: It's fun to compile a team score each week. You can set a weekly score for your team to beat as an incentive to practice at home and score points for the team. Set individual point total goals for the athletes. (i.e. 100 points = patch, 200 points = t-shirt)

Warm-Ups/Stretching

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:
- 4:
- 5:

(1) Skill Work

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:
- 4:
- 5:

(2) Strength and Conditioning

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:
- 4:
- 5:



Athlete Scoreboards

Here are some weekly scoreboards to get you started. Keep track of your points at home and see if you can get better over time. Make copies of this page so you can keep going all year long!

Athlete Scoreboard

M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	TOTAL

Athlete Scoreboard

M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	TOTAL

Athlete Scoreboard

M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	TOTAL

Athlete Scoreboard

M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	TOTAL

Athlete Scoreboard

M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	TOTAL

Athlete Scoreboard

M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	TOTAL

Athlete Scoreboard

M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	TOTAL



Warm-Up/Cool Down

To get the most of your training, whether it is at home or with your team, always remember to Warm-up your body by stretching, and cooling down your body after the work out.

Think of your muscles as a rubber band. Put the rubber band in the freezer for an hour then take it out. Immediately, stretch the rubber band. Most likely, the band will snap. The same thing happens with your muscles if they aren't warmed up. However, if you slowly work the band...and warm it up...the rubber band will stretch further and further. The same goes with your muscles. The more you warm them up, the greater your muscles and joints will allow you to stretch and move.

On the other side, cooling down your muscles after a work-out helps with soreness and cramping! A simple easy going walk to lower your heart rate mixed with slow, steady stretching will do wonders to your body and you will find that you will not be as sore in the morning.

At the end of this guide are a series of stretches to help warm up and cool you down!

Points To Remember About Home Training

- ✓ For any athlete or player preparing for the Olympics *or* Special Olympics, the hours of training and free-play spend in addition to regular practice time are perhaps the most important part of becoming an accomplished athlete.
- ✓ The simple fact is, an athlete who practices a sport for **only** two or three hours a week will never master the sport.
- ✓ It is unrealistic to expect a coach, in only a few hours a week, to completely prepare an athlete for success in competition.
- ✓ A coach who is truly committed to improving the performance of an athlete can stimulate athletic activities outside of their regular practices by utilizing a resource that goes untapped in many Special Olympic Programs: the commitment of an athlete's home or family.
- ✓ Through a simple "Home Training" program, coaches can successfully double or triple the time an athlete spends learning a sport.
- ✓ A home training program can take time and effort to initiate, but the long-term rewards can be remarkable for everyone involved!



Sample Warm-Up/Cool Down Stretches



15 seconds
(page 43)



10 seconds
each side
(page 42)



15 seconds
(page 85)



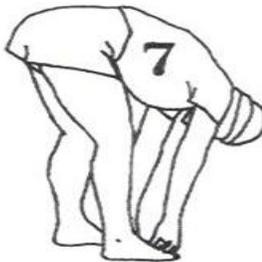
15 seconds
each side
(page 79)



30 seconds
each leg
(page 71)



30 seconds
(page 53)



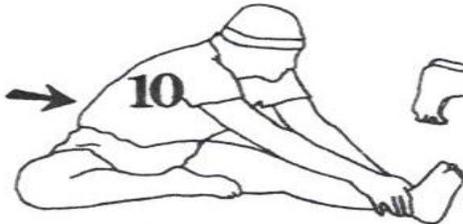
20 seconds
(page 52)



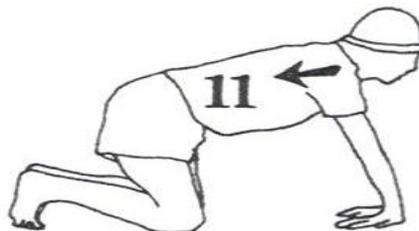
25 seconds
(page 65)



30 seconds
(page 56)



30 seconds
each leg



20 seconds
(page 40)



20 seconds
each leg



All of us here at Special Olympics Maine want to see all of our athletes compete to the best of their ability! We hope that by providing this Home Training Guide, all athletes will not only increase their knowledge of the sport they are competing in, grow healthier and stronger, but will help raise levels of competition to new levels.

Special Olympics Maine would like to thank Special Olympics Maine Athlete Caitlyn Gunn and Coach Jeff Bosse for providing their input and developing into this guide!

-Special Olympics Maine Staff