

TRAIN Activities for Practice

TRAIN @ Home

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Special Olympics

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Resources:

Special Olympics Website :
<http://www.specialolympics.org/>

TRAIN SO Website:
<http://trainso.blogspot.com>

TRAIN Activities for Practice

Listed below are the seven sports skills, followed by fun activities that coaches can incorporate into their Special Olympic practices.

Aerobic Endurance

- Biking in place
 - Introduce the topic of biking. (**How many of you like to ride bikes? Bike riding is not only fun, but it is a good form of aerobic endurance. We're going to bike in place by peddling imaginary bikes.**) Athletes should spread out around the practice area. The coach can either pick an athlete to be the leader or participate as the leader themselves. All of the athletes should lie on their backs. They may prop themselves up on their elbows. Then the leader will say start and while lying on their backs they will move their legs in the air as if they are bicycling. They can continuously do this until one to three minutes depending on the level of physical ability and age. The coach should demonstrate this before having the students participate.
- Jump Roping
 - Introduce the topic of jump roping. (**Jump rope is a fun recess activity, but it is also a good form aerobic endurance because you are maintaining constant movement.**) Have the athletes break up into groups of 3 to 4. Have two people in the group hold the rope while the other two take turns being the jumper. Then when instructed by the coach after a certain amount of time, the athletes will switch and those holding the jump rope will become the jumpers and vice versa.
- Jumping Jack tag
 - Introduce jumping jack tag as a form of aerobic endurance. (**Tag, a classic game, can be given a new spin to make it an awesome aerobic endurance workout. By performing jumping jacks after you have been tagged, allows your body to be in constant movement.**) Pick someone in the class to be "it." The person that is "it" will chase all his/her teammates around the practice area and tries to tag them. When a teammate gets tagged they must perform jumping jacks until another teammate that has not been tagged comes and performs two jumping jacks with them without getting tagged. The coach can put a time limit on how long the person is "it."

Balance

- Hula Hooping

- Have athletes space out around the practice area. Instruct the athletes on the proper hula hooping techniques. **Hula hooping can be a bit hard, to hula hoop, start out by holding the hoop against your back. You may want to place it a little above your waist. They, rotate the hoop around your waist, and shift your weight back and forth on your feet to keep the hoop moving.** Continue on to have the team engage in a variety of activities with hula hoops. Some activities could include a king of the mountain competition to see which athlete can continuously hula hoop the longest. There is also a competition to see which athlete can complete the most hula hoop revolutions in a thirty second time period. Another competition can be a one minute time period to see who can do the most revolutions. The coach can demonstrate different types of hula hooping such as hula hooping around the neck, hip, ankle or adding multiple hula hoops. Then allow the students to have free style hula hooping session.
- Tight rope walking
 - There should be several lines of tape on the ground spread out throughout the practice area. The tape should be at least 15 feet. The athletes should be in several small groups lined up at one end. Inform the athletes from the beginning that this activity is not a race, and then allow them to begin. **(This tight rope walking activity is about being able to maintain your balance. It is not a race, each one of us may take a different length of time to walk the line, and stay balanced.)** If an athlete is unable to maintain their balance, they should start from the beginning again. After all the athletes have completed the tight rope walking successfully three times, they can be given props to add a challenge such as umbrellas, fans, scarves and canes.

Coordination

- Simon says
 - Introduce coordination by playing a game of Simon Says. **(Simon Says is a fun game in which coordination is important. The individual who is “Simon” is going to give instructions that everyone else must follow. If “Simon” doesn’t say “Simon says” and you do what they said then you’ll be out!)** Athletes should spread out around the practice area and the coach can either pick an athlete to be the leader or participate as the leader them self. The coach will say “Simon says touch your toes” and all the athletes should touch their toes. However if the coach/leader does not say “Simon says” before the command then the athletes should not perform the command. If the athlete does the command anyway then they are out of the game.
- Hacky Sack

- Hacky sack is another great game which reinforces coordination. (**Hacky sack is a fun game that you play with your feet and a little cloth ball filled with beans or rice. It involves foot/eye coordination; the aim of the game is to not let the ball hit the ground.**) Have the athletes break up into groups of 4 to 5. They will each be given a hacky sack. The athletes should go around the circle passing the hacky sack using only their feet, knee, and their ankles. The coaches can demonstrate how to pass and keep the hacky sack moving.
- Table Tennis (*Use regular tennis if outside, and racquets and tennis balls are available*)
 - Introduce the sport of table tennis. (**Table tennis, also called ping pong, is a popular professional sport. It is similar to regular tennis, and it involves a great deal of hand/eye coordination in order to score points, and keep your opponent from scoring.**) Split the team up, depending on the number of tables or courts that are available. The coach should go over the rules of table tennis/tennis and demonstrate how to pass the ball with the paddle/raquetball and how to serve the ball.

Flexibility

- Yoga
 - Have the athletes space out throughout the entire practice but still in view of the coach. (**Yoga is a good way to work on your flexibility. It is the combination of stretching and breathing. It can be rather relaxing and is a good way to reduce stress.**) The coach should demonstrate the yoga positions and do them with the athletes. Each of these poses should be held for thirty seconds (this can either be done by counting to thirty or using a timer) and concentrating on slowly breathing together as a class.
 - Positions ¹
 - Stand like a Tree- Instruct the athletes to breathe in while lifting one leg, bending at the knee, and raising the foot to stabilize on the other knee. Then have them raise their arms in extended position over their head with their hands together with the fingers extended.
 - Crawl like a Bear- Have the athletes get on their hands and knees. Then extend their arms out in front of them so that the torso is stretched. The legs should also be in a stretched position.
 - Stretch like a Butterfly- Instruct the athletes to sit on the floor and put the soles of their feet together. Have them hold onto their feet and let their knees drop towards the floor. They should be sitting up with a tall spine. The coach should instruct the students

to imagine them self as a butterfly with wings stretching out from their spine.

- Reach like a Monkey- Have the athletes stand with their legs wide apart. Then they should take a big breath in and stretch their arms and shoulders to the side. Then bend the knee of the side they are leaning towards. The coach should instruct the students to imagine they are they are filling up with their favorite color as they breathe in and out. They should then lean to the other side and do the same thing.
- Swim like a Fish- Instruct the athletes to lie down on their backs with their hands on their bellies. Have them take a breath in and out slowly. They prop they should then prop themselves up on their elbows with their palms flat on the floor, while lifting their belly and chest. The top of their head still resting on the floor. Instruct them to lift their chest up as if they were a fish with a colorful fin jumping up out of the water. They should breathe in and out slowly. Then come down carefully and slowly while exhaling.
- Fly like an Airplane- The athletes should stand up straight and tall. They should take a big breath in while reaching their arms out to the sides at shoulder height as they breathe out. They will then take another breath in and tip forward as they point one foot behind them, exhaling slowly. As they inhale again, they will lift their chest and lean forward while lifting the pointed foot into the air behind them. The body should be in line from the foot to the back to the neck. Then do the other side.
- Bend like a Gorilla- Standing up, athletes should start with their legs wide apart. Then they will bend forward at the waist, bending the knees a little bit. They should let their arms hang down in front of them. As they lean back, they can beat their fists on their chest and make a big gorilla noise.
- Stable like a bridge- The athletes should stand up facing a friend with enough space between them to bend forward. They should grab each other's wrists or hands, and bend forward at the waist until they are both stretching their backs long and straight. They should not pull on each other so much that they fall over. Some might need to bend their knees.

- Dance

- The coach should introduce the topic of dance for the athletes, and explain why it is a good form of practicing flexibility. (**Dance is a good way to practice flexibility. With dance we are able to move our body to the different beats and rhythms of music. Often time we are able to use props in dance to help us express ourselves.**) The coach should pick a variety of school appropriate music with various tempos. The athletes will then be given props such as glow sticks, rings, or scarves. The athletes can use the glow sticks to make lines, circles, or write their names, or they could move the scarves to the tempo and rhythm of the music. The athletes can be instructed to use one hand or two while they are free dancing.
- Limbo
 - Explain the activity and rules of limbo before beginning. (**Limbo is a fun party game in which flexibility is very important. Remember you are trying to go under the limbo pole without touching it by arching your back backwards. If you lean forward or touch the limbo pole, you're out. Once you have gone under the pole, go to the end of the line. After everyone has gone through the line, the pole will be lowered.**) Split athletes into two teams, if two sets of the limbo equipment are available in the case of a large team. Have the athletes form a line to go through the limbo setup one at a time. The limbo pole should start on the highest setting and only lowered once the entire line has gone through one time. If the student does not make it through the limbo setup then they are out and may participate from the sideline.

Power

- Bowling
 - Set the pins up at half court. There should be four lanes with pins lined up at one end and the bowling ball at the other end. Coach should instruct the athletes on correct form of releasing the bowling ball. The athlete should put their ring and index finger in the smaller holes while placing the thumb in the bigger hole. Starting with the bowling ball at their side, the athlete takes the first step towards the lane; they then should flex their arm by bending at the elbow. While taking a second step, the bowler will extend their arm at the elbow gaining momentum. Finally they will flex their arm at the shoulder by rotating their arm forward releasing the ball when the arm is in front of them. It is advised that the coach demonstrate this process several times, while explaining what they are doing, before allowing students to begin bowling.

Speed and Agility

- Cone Races
 - Set up cones across the practice area, and have the athletes line up. There are various ways in which the athletes can race through the cones. They can run in a straight line, or it could be a zigzag pattern. They may have to circle around a cone, or any other pattern that the teacher deems appropriate in order to test speed or agility. The coach will demonstrate the route that the athletes are supposed to take before they begin the cone races.
- Dribbling / Speed (See Figure 1)
 - Have athletes line up at both ends of the practice area, two lines on each side. Set the cones up each end of the practice area. Have the coach demonstrate what will be happening once before the athletes begin the activity. Have the first athlete in each line dribble the ball towards the other end of the gym, when they are five meters away from the opposite goal, they shoot. The next person in line receives the ball that was shot in the goal and dribbles down the gym floor to the opposite end and shoots. This continues for either a time limit, or until everyone has participated.
- Modified Soccer Game / Speed and Agility (Figure 2)
 - Split the athletes into two teams. Establish goals on either end, with each team picking a goalie. Place soccer ball in the center of the court to start game. Remind the athletes that playing soccer is a good way to practice speed and agility. Athletes will scrimmage; their end goal is to score on the opposing team, following the normal rules of soccer.

Strength

- Imaginary See-Saw
 - Introduce the activity of imaginary see-saw. **See-saw, a game most often found on a playground, is a good way to practice strength with a bit of modification. Imagining that you are sitting on a see-saw involves you to squat. Squatting strengthens your upper legs.** The athletes should partner with one other person. There is no see-saw needed for this activity. The athletes will pretend there is a see-saw. One person will go down and the other person will go up. They will maintain a squatted position when they are down without using any objects as help or putting their hands on the floor. The coach should be sure to demonstrate this activity and the proper squatting technique before allowing the students to participate.
- Crunch 'n' Score
 - Introduce the game. **(Sit up and crunches are a good way to strengthen abdominal muscles. This game Crunch 'n' Score is a way to make crunches a**

little bit more exciting.) Have the athletes separate into groups of two. One athlete should lie on their back on the ground. The other athlete should hold their partner's feet with their feet without hurting the other individual. The individual holding their partner's feet (most likely by kneeling on them) should also hold out their arms in a circular hoop position. The other student should be given a small soft ball (which could be as simple as balled up socks). Then the athlete, when instructed by the coach to commence, should complete a crunch. A crunch is completed by the athlete lifting their chest using their abdominal muscles. The shoulders should come off the floor but the entire torso should not be raised off of the floor. Every time the athlete rises up their chest they will throw the soft ball into the hoop that their partner has created with their arms. The coach should be sure to demonstrate the proper way to do a crunch and play the game before allowing the athlete to participate in it.