



## **Keep on Coaching without Technology**

We are coaching in an entirely unprecedented situation. For most of the coaches around the world, we have been fortunate to never have been in a situation like this, where we are unable to reach our athletes, unable to meet together and unable to have the regular contact that helps us to build a connection with our team.

Technology certainly CAN make things easier. However, it is important to remember that these technology solutions we have proposed, are not available to everyone. Not every coach or athlete has regular, reliable internet access, many have none. Not all have access to cell phones or even landlines.

Below, we have provided you with a few simple ideas of how you might be able to connect and engage with your athletes during this period of quarantine and social distancing, even without technology.

### **Post out Training Sessions**

In most locations, postal services are still operating as normal. If this is the case in your location, you could consider reaching out to your athletes by mail. You can share some training sessions for them to do at home, set a challenge, or even just connect through a letter or postcard!



If your athletes are based in a residential school or institution at which you are not a staff member, you may find you can reach out directly to a designated and agreed staff member within the institution. Your local Special Olympics program may be able to help you to identify the appropriate contact person.

In times of social distancing, quarantine, shelter in place, loneliness and isolation are very real challenges for many of us and especially for many of our athletes. Use this opportunity to make connections. Don't underestimate the power and impact of the simple act of writing a letter. Receiving a personal letter from their coach sends a strong message to your athletes that although you are far apart right now, you are thinking of them and looking forward to training with them again soon.



## Phone Calls

At times we become so concerned about efficiency and reaching as many people as quickly as possible, that we can forget how valuable a one to one communication can be.



If technology does not offer you a solution and you cannot leave home to post or collect mail, is it possible for you to call your athletes and/or their caregivers/family. Not only will you make a person connection, it is also an opportunity to talk with your athletes about how they are coping in this situation. As a coach, you are a role model and a person your athletes look to for guidance and support.

Check out our [Strong Minds](#) resources for some great tips on how to support your athletes' wellness during this time.

## Cell/Mobile Phone

Group Texts or Messaging Groups using free tools such as WhatsApp, Viber and WeChat can provide you with an easy way to connect with a group of athletes, coaches, families and others.



Most of these messaging apps are available for free download from App Store (iOS) or Play Store (Android). It is important to note that these services typically require data or Wi-Fi connections. Most of them allow you to send simple text messages, photos, documents and even videos.

If you plan to set up a Group Chat, we recommend you secure permission from all your group members before you add them to any group. Check out the [safety guidelines](#) for online activities, which have been created by our friends in Special Olympics North America.

For ideas on how to use this type of service, check out our "Out Top Ten Tips for Virtual Coaching Sessions".