



High 5 for Fitness Lessons

Ages 15-21

Special Olympics





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Introduction

High 5 Lesson Plan Overview



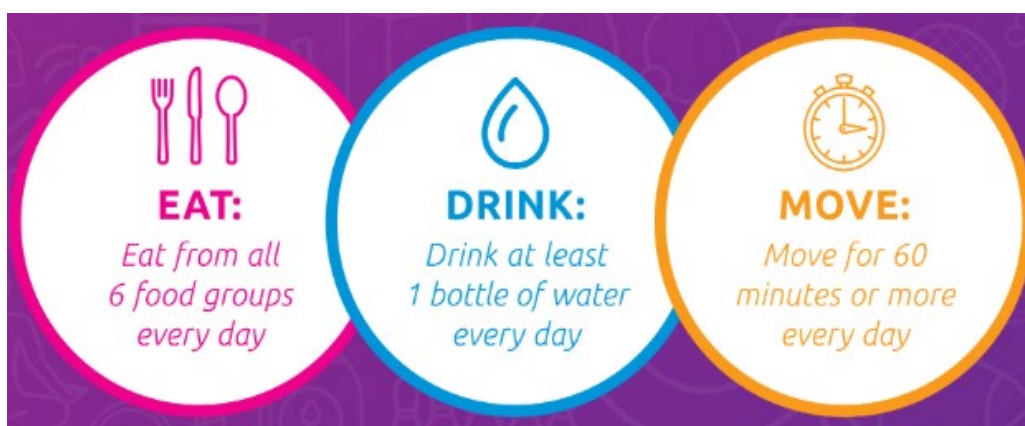
High 5 for Fitness ("High 5") is a collection of resources ([here](#)) designed to help youth ages 8–21 take charge of their fitness by making healthy choices about physical activity, nutrition, and hydration. To complement these resources, Special Olympics developed a series of structured fitness lessons to support teachers in delivering effective, school-based programs. These lesson plans can empower educators and school staff to create inclusive and engaging

fitness experiences for youth with and without intellectual disabilities using the High 5 materials. Beyond the classroom, the lessons can also be used in community programs and sports settings to encourage healthy habits and active lifestyles among young people.

HIGH 5 FOR FITNESS:

High 5 is designed to increase knowledge and awareness of healthy behaviors, and to promote youth engagement in physical activities that improve flexibility, strength, and endurance. The program offers an inclusive approach to teaching students with and without intellectual disabilities across three age groups: 8-11, 12-14, and 15-21 years.

For youth between the ages of 15-21, High 5 focuses on three healthy lifestyle goals:



HIGH 5 RESOURCES:

In addition to these lessons, High 5 for Fitness includes the following materials:



- 1) Health Guide that provide information on how to be healthy including nutrition tips, ways to stay hydrated, and exercises for health and sport performance,
- 2) Cards that include a variety of exercises that target flexibility, endurance, and strength, and progress through three levels (Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3) to challenge youth to engage in more complex exercises while meeting their current ability level,
- 3) Videos that serve as a supplementary resource and provide demonstrations of each exercise, with music by Hip Hop Public Health and a timer/counter so that students can keep track of how long they perform each exercise,
- 4) Educator's Guide with simple tips that describes how to use High 5 resources in schools or community settings, and
- 5) Caregiver's Guide that provides simple tips on how to use High 5 resources at home.

(***For links to each of the bolded resources listed above, see Appendix E***)

HIGH 5 LESSON PLANS OVERVIEW:

The High 5 Lesson Plans consist of twelve 15–30 minute lessons designed to be implemented twice per week over a six-week period. Requiring minimal equipment and space, these lessons are flexible and can be used in various settings as part of physical education classes, movement breaks, structured recess, or community-based after-school programs.

The inclusive, exercise science-based approach to the fitness lessons provides the opportunity for all youth to develop physical activity knowledge, apply key fitness concepts, and build self-efficacy as part of their physical literacy journey.

Physical Literacy is...

"...the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life." (IPLA 2017)

UNIQUE FEATURES:

The High 5 lessons were designed to promote exercise participation and build fitness among students with and without intellectual disabilities in inclusive settings. Youth with intellectual disabilities may face barriers to physical activity that limit their participation and results in low fitness levels and increased risk for adverse health conditions. As such, these youth can



benefit from individualized instruction that meets their diverse needs. High 5 lessons offer the following unique features that promote fitness and inclusive participation for all students:

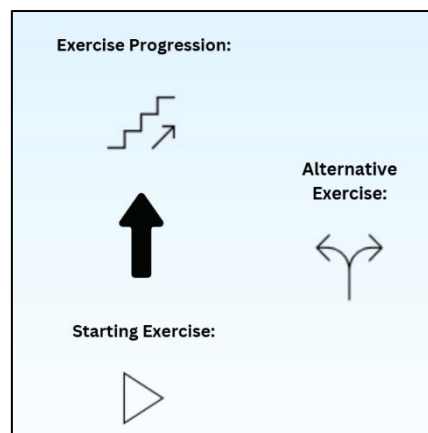
- **Variety of Fitness Formats:** Lessons give students the opportunity to experience multiple types of fitness training, including circuit training, interval training, Unified Partner/Teammate workouts, and more.
- **Exercise Modifications:** Each lesson provides detailed teaching progressions and regressions for strength exercises to accommodate varying levels of coordination, cognitive ability, and fitness.
- **Facilitator Prompts:** Sample spoken prompts are included to guide educators in delivering clear, supportive instructions that enhance student understanding of lesson objectives.
- **Progression Challenges:** “Progression Challenges” give students a chance to try advanced exercises aligned with higher skill levels or older age groups.
- **Educator Exercise Science Tips:** Each lesson features “Educator Exercise Science Tips,” which offer insights into exercise training principles and physiological responses. These tips help educators build foundational knowledge and awareness of key exercise science concepts.
- **Make It Fun Activities:** Select lessons include a “Make It Fun” section that provides optional games or activity add-ons to boost student engagement during exercise instruction.
- **Standards Alignment:** Lessons align with components of the fitness concepts and physical activity knowledge outlined in SHAPE America’s Health and Physical Education Standard 2.
- **Health Education Activities:** Each lesson includes health education components that equip students with knowledge to support healthy nutrition and hydration habits at school and at home.
- **Visual Learning Supports:** Ladder-style visuals illustrate the teaching progression and key lesson themes, helping students and educators track learning pathways.
- **Inclusive Environment Strategies:** The resource offers strategies for fostering inclusion, including suggestions for peer and para-educator support, as well as guidance on adapting learning progressions for diverse needs.



HIGH 5 LESSON ICON LEGEND:

Icons are used in the High 5 Lessons to draw attention to several unique features. Use this icon legend to assist navigation through the lessons:

Videos:	
Teaching Progression:	
Starting Exercise:	
Exercise Progression:	
Alternative Exercise:	
Progression Challenge:	
Facilitator Prompt :	

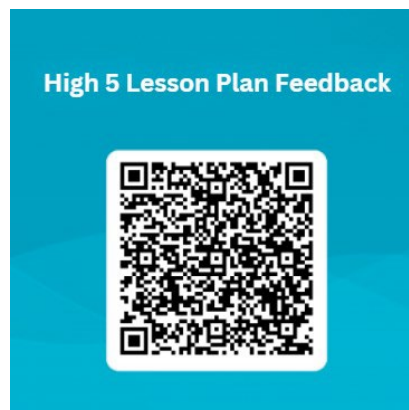


Use the icon template above to navigate Activity B images.

HIGH 5 LESSON TARGET AUDIENCE:

The fitness lessons are intended to be delivered in an inclusive (Unified) environment, meaning youth with and without intellectual disabilities participate together. The activities, instructions, themes, and formats in this version of the High 5 Lesson Plans are suitable for youth between ages 15-21. Considering that one size does not fit all, the lessons can be (and should be) modified to meet the diverse abilities and learning styles of all youth.

We want to hear from you! Please consider completing the High 5 Lesson Plan Feedback Form (using the QR code to the right) so we can consistently improve our resources to align with your preferences.





USING HIGH 5 LESSONS:

Each lesson is designed with flexible timing to accommodate different schedules and settings. While lessons typically average about 20 minutes, educators are encouraged to adjust the duration as needed. This might involve completing only *Activity A* for a quick movement break, implementing all activities during fitness clubs, or even combining two lessons for extended physical education periods. Incorporating warm-up and cool-down activities is strongly recommended (see Appendix E for relevant resources). For warm-ups, choose movements that mirror the main lesson activities to help students prepare for the specific skills they will practice. Cool-downs provide an opportunity to focus on static stretches that promote flexibility.

High 5 exercise cards are organized into Levels 1 through 3, providing a structured progression from foundational to more advanced fitness skills. Level 1 activities are simpler and less physically demanding than those in Levels 2 and 3. Educators may adjust the sequence as needed to match students' current abilities and goals. While each lesson builds upon the previous one, the lessons can also be used independently or in any order.

Exercise progressions and regressions are not strictly tied to fitness level and are not inherently positive or negative. Factors like mobility, coordination, cognitive ability, and core strength can influence which exercise is best for each student. For example, if a student is learning to progress from a bodyweight squat to a weighted squat, they may first need to refine their form by practicing sit-to-stand exercises with weights. Shifting focus to foundational movements can often be an essential step in mastering new skills and building strength.

The tips below may be helpful in supporting students of all abilities:

Communication:

- Use concise and simple language during exercise instruction.
- Demonstrate/model activities and provide visual cues (e.g., High 5 for Fitness cards & videos).
- Provide simple verbal cues (e.g., instructions on the High 5 for Fitness cards).
- Provide opportunities for students to ask questions and seek clarification as needed.

Activity Implementation:

- Break activities into small steps and allow for practice or "walk through" for complex activities.
- Reduce wait time and provide continuous feedback during activities.
- Use repetition & multiple opportunities for practice to support skill development.



We want to hear how you are using High 5 Lessons. Use the QR Code to access a resource library that includes materials created by educators and PE professionals who have piloted these lessons. Please share any resource that you have created or use the existing resources at your school or in your community.

High 5 Resource Library



LESSON THEMES

Inspired by the [SHAPE America Health and Physical Education Standards](#), each lesson provides a suggested teaching progression to meet a range of cognitive abilities, foundational knowledge, and fitness experiences. Each theme is covered in two lessons.

The Benefits of Staying Active: Students will learn the importance of regular physical activity, identify ways to incorporate activity into their daily lives, and understand how activity supports a healthy transition into adulthood.

Your Heart in Action: Students will explore how physical activity strengthens the heart, learn how to monitor their heart rate, and apply this knowledge to improve fitness and ensure safety.

Exercise, Rest, and Recovery: Students will understand how exercise affects their body, the role of rest in recovery, and how to create a balanced physical activity routine that promotes overall health.

Fueling Your Body: Students will recognize how food and hydration choices impact energy levels, understand the relationship between nutrition and physical activity, and identify snacks and foods that affect performance, recovery, and enjoyment during exercise.

Stretching for Success: Students will recognize the importance of stretching, understand the need for warm-ups and cool-downs, apply dynamic and static stretching techniques, and design a flexibility training plan.

Setting Fitness Goals: Students will identify physical activities that contribute to fitness, set goals for fitness development, monitor progress through self-assessment, and create a practice plan to improve a self-selected skill.



Fitness Components and Training Formats

THREE FITNESS COMPONENTS

High 5 for Fitness, and the lesson plans, focus on building three components of health-related fitness through targeted exercises that become progressively more challenging. The three components of fitness are defined below:

Strength: The goal of strength exercises is to build muscle strength while also improving endurance and power, key components that support motor skill development, daily functioning, and athletic performance. Learning strength exercises progressively helps students develop proper form, coordination, and technique, reducing injury risk and building confidence. Each lesson introduces progressive variations of one *High 5* strength exercise. When selecting which variation a student should perform, consider factors such as coordination, confidence, mobility, cognitive ability, and core strength.

Endurance: Aerobic endurance is the ability to perform moderate intensity exercise for extended periods of time. The goal of endurance exercise is to improve how long the body can sustain physical activity without fatigue. Endurance training emphasizes gradually increasing the duration or distance, intensity, or frequency of an aerobic activity. A step-by-step progression of form and technique is not typically part of endurance training, so detailed variations of endurance exercises are not provided as they are for strength exercises.

Flexibility: Flexibility is defined as the range of motion of a joint or group of joints. The goal of flexibility exercise is to increase the range of motion of the joints and improve overall muscle elasticity. Flexibility training focuses on gradually deepening stretches and extending the duration of holds, rather than the step-by-step progression of form and technique, so detailed variations will not be provided in these lessons.

SIX TRAINING FORMATS

The lessons incorporate a variety of exercise training formats, presented in developmentally appropriate ways.

Circuit Training: A series of exercises performed in sequence with minimal rest, with students moving between stations to target different muscle groups or skills.

Intervals: Alternating periods of work and rest, with exercises designed to build endurance and strength, ranging from relays to structured High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) workouts.

Sports Skill Training: Using practice of specific sports-related skills in a way that mimics fitness training, such as 30 seconds of dribbling and 30 seconds of rest to mimic intervals.



Challenges: Activities where students work individually or in teams to complete as many repetitions or rounds as possible within a set time, fostering goal setting, perseverance, and a sense of accomplishment.

Supersets/Giant Sets: Pairing two or three exercises back-to-back with little to no rest, designed to enhance strength and endurance by targeting different muscle groups or the same group in diverse ways, in an efficient amount of time.

Unified Partners: Exercises or activities completed in pairs, emphasizing teamwork, communication, and mutual support.



High 5 for Fitness Lessons

Lesson 1 – Flexibility, Warm-ups, Cool-Downs

Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objectives: (1) Learn to apply flexibility techniques before and after physical activity to support warm-up and recovery. (2) Develop body awareness and control during stretching movements.

Equipment: High 5 Cards, High 5 Guides, High 5 Videos

Estimated Set-up Time: 3-5 minutes

Activity A (4-5 minutes): Introduce High 5 Flexibility

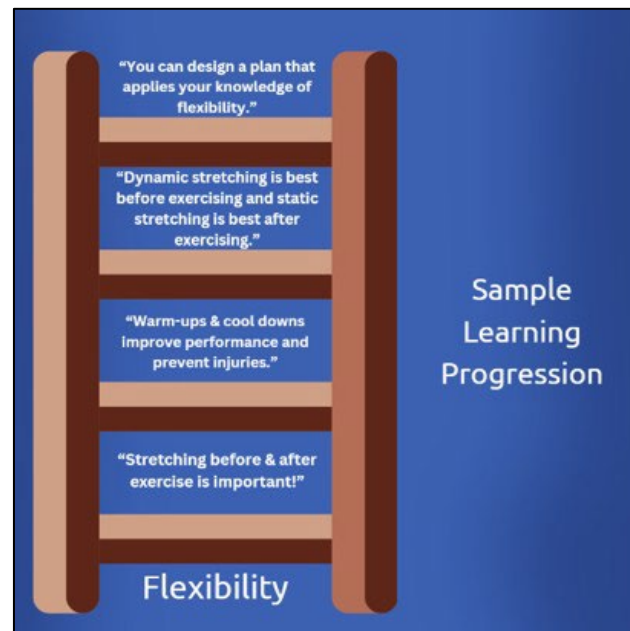


Educator script is presented in quotations and/or denoted by the icon to the left.

“Today we’re going to learn why it’s important to stretch before and after exercising. We’ll practice different types of stretches that help our muscles warm up, stay flexible, and cool down.”



Use the following prompts to discuss flexibility before completing the circuit. Prompts are listed in the sample learning progression to the right →



Activity Prompts:

“Why do you think we need to stretch before and after exercising?”

Instructions: Ask students to list examples of dynamic stretches. Sample stretches are listed below each answer.



Before Exercising Answer: “We need to wake our muscles up and get them ready for movement. Before exercising you should always do some dynamic stretching to improve performance.”

(Examples: Leg Swings, Arm Circles)

After Exercise Answer: “We need to cool our muscles down after we move. After exercising you should always do some static stretching to assist with muscle recovery.

(Examples: Cross Body Shoulder Stretch, Straddle Stretch)

“Which stretches are best before playing a sport or running? Which ones are best after a game?”

“Dynamic stretches help prevent injuries by warming up muscles, while static stretches are for cooling down and improving flexibility.”

“Different activities need different stretches—dynamic stretches are best before jumping and running, while static stretches are best after a game.”

Activity B (10-15 minutes): Flexibility Circuit

Place one flexibility exercise from Level 1 or 2 at each station.

“During this activity, we’ll rotate through a circuit of six stations. You will have 30-60 seconds at each station to perform your flexibility exercise.”

“Remember to take deep breathes and control your movements when you stretch.”

“Wait for my signal to move to the next station.”



****TIP:** Use High 5 video demonstrations (links in Appendix E) of each exercise to ensure students use correct form.**

Sample Flexibility Circuit

Station 1



Heel and Toe Walks

Station 2



Hip Circles

Station 3



Cross Body Shoulder Stretch

Station 4



Large Step with Reach

Station 5



Arm Circles

Station 6



Straddle Stretch



Unified Teammate Support

Use props like yoga blocks as reach targets instead of the floor. Remind students to breathe deeply and slowly to help them relax into the stretch. If a student struggles to reach, have them modify the exercise by bending their knees or using a strap to extend the stretch.

Educator Exercise Science Tip

Students with cerebral palsy or spastic muscle conditions can have increased muscle tightness, which can cause involuntary contractions if stretched too quickly. To avoid this, use slow, gentle movements to allow muscles to gradually relax.

Make It Fun!

End the flexibility circuit with a “Dynamic Stretch Dash”. Split students up into teams of equal number and have them form two lines (one behind the other) behind a cone at one end of the space. Place another cone directly in front of each line at a distance three times as long as the line of students. Instruct the first student on each line to perform a specific dynamic stretch (i.e. Large Step with Reach or Lunge with Twist) until they reach the cone at the opposite end of the space. Students will then walk or run back to their line and high five the next student to start their turn. The game concludes when all members on both lines complete the stretch and return to a seated position with their team. Repeat with different dynamic movements.



Lesson 2 – Circuit Training

Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objectives: (1) Complete a full circuit with appropriate pacing, effort, and transitions.

(2) Identify the benefits of circuit training (muscular endurance and improved cardiovascular fitness).

Equipment: High 5 Cards

Estimated Set-up Time: 3-5 minutes

Activity A (2-4 minutes): Introduce the High 5 Level One Sumo Squat

“Today we are going to develop skills to perform a Sumo Squat.”

If you already know how to Sumo Squat with good form you will have the opportunity to improve and challenge yourself.”



“Stand with your feet wider than shoulder width apart. Shift your weight to your heels as you slowly bend your knees and hips like you’re sitting in a chair. Pause”

“Press through your heels to straighten your legs and return to standing.”

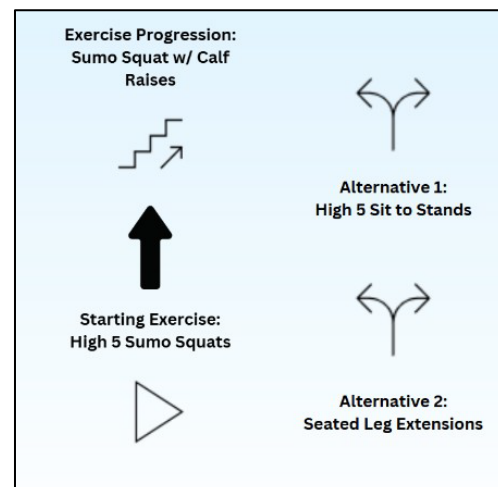
Activity B (5-6 minutes): Sumo Squat Exercise Modifications

“Now that you know how to perform a High 5 Inchworm, let’s keep practicing so you feel comfortable trying it on your own!”

“If you can perform the High 5 Sumo Squat and would like to keep practicing it you can do 3x8, 30 sec. rest.”

“If you feel confident in your High 5 Sumo Squats and want to try Sumo Squats with a Calf Raise, you can do 3x10, 30 sec. Rest.”

“If you would like to practice your technique before doing more squats, you can practice the Sit-to-Stand.”





"If you would like to strengthen your leg muscles without squatting, you can do 3x8 Seated Leg Extensions (each leg)."

Activity C (7-10 minutes): Small Group Circuit Training

Set up 4-6 stations. One station should be dedicated to the Sumo Squat, allowing students to practice the version they chose. The remaining stations should include a mix of flexibility and endurance exercises. Each station should have a Level 1 and a Level 2 or 3 exercise from the same fitness category, so students can self-select based on their comfort and skill level.



"Today, we're going to rotate through different stations. At each station, you'll see options for exercises at different levels. Choose the one that challenges you! We'll spend 20-40 seconds at each station, and when it's time to switch, we'll use the transition as an active recovery. This means you'll walk slowly to the next station."

Unified Teammate Support

Support the selection of appropriate exercises at each station. Repeat instructions/demonstrations. Ensure a smooth transition to the next station.

Educator Exercise Science Tip

Did you know that students struggling to keep their heels down during a squat may have reduced ankle mobility or need to improve core strength? Incorporate ankle circles/calf stretches, and planks into lessons or have them perform a different version.

Make It Fun!

Add jump ropes or hula hoops to a circuit station for endurance exercise variety! If equipment is not available, write down the name of one flexibility, endurance, or strength exercises on 4-6 cards. Have students pick from the cards and perform that exercise for the allotted amount of time. Encourage students to reference High 5 Cards for exercise instructions.



Lesson 3 – The Benefits of Staying Active & Circuit Training

Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objectives: (1) Identify the short and long-term benefits of circuit training. (2) Build endurance, coordination, and strength through circuit training.

Equipment: High 5 Cards, High 5 Guides, High 5 Videos

Estimated Set-up Time: 4-6 minutes

Activity A (5-10 minutes): Small Group Circuit Training

See lesson 1 Keep the Sumo Squat exercise so students can continue to practice the version they chose, or progress to the next version. For variety, select different endurance/flexibility exercises, for more practice select the same exercises as the previous lesson.

***LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY*:** Choose a few students to select and demonstrate the exercises for the circuit.

Activity B (5-10 minutes): Physical Activity Reflection

Activities are listed in a sample learning progression based on the suggested learning progressions for physical literacy shown in the diagram to the right 🗨️

Choose one of the four activities below. Determine whether students will be working as a class, small groups or pairs based on the activity you choose. Decide how you will provide examples and how you want students to respond/identify their answers.

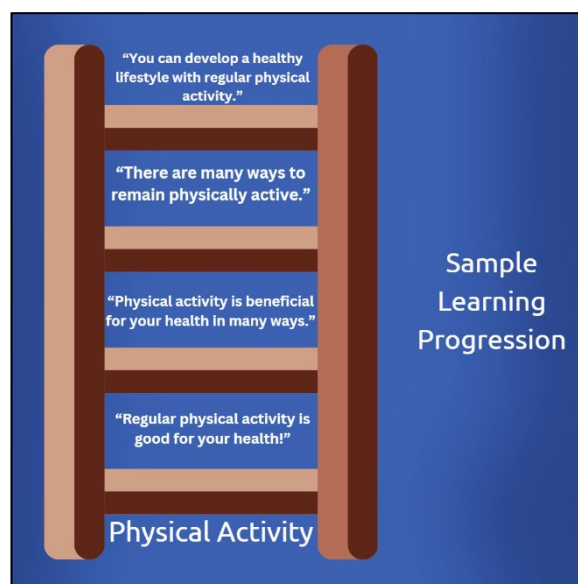


****TIP:** Show High 5 Videos (featured in Appendix D) to illustrate examples of physical activity!***



Activity Instructions/Options:

1. "All of you will start seated. I will state an activity. Stand up if it is a physical activity. Stay seated if it is not a physical activity."
2. "I'm going to give you an example of physical activity. You are going to indicate if that physical activity is an endurance activity, strength activity, or flexibility activity."





3. "Think about your daily routine. Come up with two ways that you can incorporate more physical activity into your day. Consider what that activity is and what part of your day you could do it."
4. "When you become an adult, you may not have the same opportunities to be active. What two physical activities that you participate in now will you be able to continue with? What are two new activities that might be easier to access as an adult?"

Unified Teammate Support

Assign groups or Teammates different prompts (selected based on ability). Teammate or ParaEducator can answer the question first to provide an example. Provide visual cues for the physical activities stated (broom for chores, soccer ball, etc.)

Make It Fun!

Play a game of "Fitness: Fact or Fiction?". Have students spread out across the space and give each other enough room to play. Assign one exercise to the answer "Fact" and one to the answer "Fiction" (i.e. Jumping Jacks = Fact, Squats = Fiction). Ask students a series of questions about the benefits of staying active and encourage them to act out their answers with the proper form. After each question, state the correct answer and demonstrate the corresponding movement.

Sample Benefits of Physical Activity Fact/Fiction Questions:

1. Regular physical activity can improve heart health and circulation. True
2. Exercise has no effect on mental health or mood. False
3. Staying active can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease. True
4. Physical activity can improve focus and academic performance. True
5. You only benefit from exercise if you play sports competitively. False
6. Stretching and flexibility exercises can help prevent injuries. True
7. Exercise increases stress levels and makes it harder to sleep. False
8. Being physically active can boost self-confidence and self-esteem. True
9. You need to work out for hours every day to see any health benefits. False
10. Physical activity can improve posture and help reduce muscle tension. True



Lesson 4 – Sports Skills Training

Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objectives: (1) Learn how sports skill training can contribute to higher fitness levels.

Equipment: High 5 Cards, 5 Basketballs, 3 Footballs

Estimated Set-up Time: 7-8 minutes

Activity A (2-4 minutes): Introduce the High 5 Level One Spiderman

“Today we are going to develop skills to perform a Spiderhuman, by performing Plank Toe Taps. If you already know how to do Plank Toe Taps, you will have the opportunity to improve and challenge yourself.”



“Start in a push-up position with your hands flat on the floor, directly under your shoulders, and your toes on the ground. Keep your body straight from your head to your heels.”

“Tighten your core muscles, making sure your back stays flat and your hips don’t sag or lift.”

“While holding the plank, lift one foot off the ground and tap it out to the side, then bring it back to the starting position. Repeat with the other foot, alternating taps while keeping your body stable.”

Activity B (5-6 minutes): Spiderhuman Exercise Modifications

“Now that you know how to perform a High 5 Inchworm, let’s keep practicing so you feel comfortable trying it on your own!”

“If you can perform the Plank Toe Taps and would like to keep practicing it, you can do 3x20second holds, with a 20-second rest in between.”

“If you feel confident in your knee planks and want to try the High 5 Spiderhuman, you can do 2x8 on each side.”

“If you would like to strengthen your abs without doing planks, you can do 3x10 Seated Opposite Knee to Elbow.”

Exercise Progression:
High 5 Spiderhuman



Starting Exercise:
Plank Toe Taps



Alternative:
Seated Opposite Knee
to Elbow



"Now, we are going to use sports drills to improve both our skills and fitness. A strong core helps athletes perform better in sports, and practicing sport-specific skills will help improve your overall fitness."

Choose one sport or several. Set up 4-6 stations with drills that mimic fitness training,

such as 30 seconds of skill practice followed by 30 seconds of rest. Include at least one station focused on core strength.

Station examples-work 30 seconds, rest for 30 seconds (mimicking intervals):

- Crossover dribble basketball around cones
- Basketball lay ups
- Football shuffle & partner throws
- Quick toe taps on soccer ball
- High 5 Spiderman
- High 5 Sumo Squat

Unified Teammate Support

Remove cones and allow straight line dribbling for students as needed. Use lower hoop options for lay ups if needed. Consider adding a tactile marker (e.g., a foam block) under the abdomen to provide sensory feedback on maintaining alignment.

Educator Exercise Science Tip

Small-sided games, like 3v3 soccer or basketball, mimic high-intensity interval training (HIIT) by combining bursts of activity with rest, while also improving sports skills. Have students play for 3 minutes, then rest for 3 minutes.

Make It Fun!

End the sports skills circuit with an agility relay. Set up cones or another object in a zig zag pattern in front of two to three lines of students (ensure equal number of students in each line). On your signal challenge the students to walk, run, shuffle, or back pedal through the cones and high five the next person in line for their turn. The game ends when all students have participated. Repeat 2-3 times with different forms of cardio.



Lesson 5 – Sports Skills Training & Your Heart in Action

Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objectives: (1) Identify the role of the heart in athletic performance. (2) Describe how lifestyle factors (physical activity levels, nutrition, hydration) impact heart health in athletes.

Equipment: High 5 Cards

Estimated Set-up Time: 7-8 minutes

Activity A (10-15 minutes): Small Group Circuit Training

Set up the sports skills training circuit like lesson three. Continue with the High 5 Spiderman exercise so students can continue to practice the version they chose, or progress to the next version. For more practice select the same exercises from the previous lesson, for variety include different exercises or equipment like agility ladders or plyometric options.



Before the circuit: "Before we begin the circuit, let's try to feel your heartbeat. During the circuit we'll check for it again to see if it's faster or slower than before."

Here are some simple and direct speaking cues for guiding students to feel their heartbeat. Choose the most appropriate for your class or provide a couple of options.

Chest: "Place your hand over the left side of your chest, right below your collarbone. Press gently and stay still. Can you feel a soft 'thump-thump' under your hand? That's your heart beating!"

Neck: "Using two fingers, gently press the side of your neck, just below your jawline and next to your windpipe. Don't press too hard—stay still and feel for a pulsing sensation."

Wrist: "Hold out one arm with your palm facing up. Using two fingers from your other hand, place them just below your thumb on the inside of your wrist. Press gently until you feel a steady beat."

Activity B (5-10 minutes): Your Heart in Action

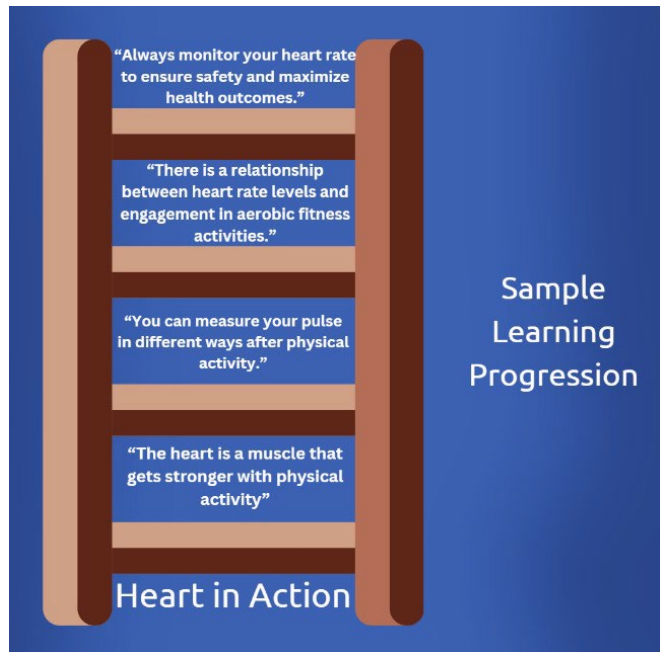
After the circuit, students gather for a group discussion. Ask students if they noticed anything about their heart during the circuit using the following prompts ordered in the learning progression at the bottom of this activity.

- Question: "When you were dribbling the basketball or running between cones, did you notice what happened to your heartbeat? Did it start to beat faster or slower?"
 - Teacher Response: "That's right, it beats faster because your heart is working hard to send more blood and oxygen to your muscles so you can keep moving!"
- Question: "Think back to when you were doing the lay-ups. Why do you think your heart was beating faster during these exercises? How does a faster heartbeat help you during sports?"
 - Teacher Response: "A faster heartbeat helps your muscles get the energy they need, which is why your heart speeds up when you're doing something active."



- Question: "How did your body feel when you were dribbling compared to when you were doing the Plank?" ○ Teacher Response:

"Monitoring your heart rate shows how steady-state activities keep it consistent, but high-intensity intervals cause spikes that your body can't sustain for as long, which is why you need rest between bursts of effort."



Unified Teammate Support

Assign groups or Teammates different prompts (selected based on ability). Teammate or Para Educator can answer the question first to provide an example.

Educator Exercise Science Tip

Heart rates over 200 beats per minute are normal and expected when healthy children participate in active play, fitness training, or sport. During high-intensity bouts, all-out efforts are encouraged.

Make It Fun!

Partner Pulse Challenge: Have students find a partner to perform a set of exercises. One student will perform an exercise while the other measures their heart rate. At the end of 30-60 seconds, the partners will switch roles. After both partners complete the exercise, have them discuss their heart rates and any differences between them. Repeat 2-3 times and conclude with a group discussion of what the partners observed.

Sample Discussion Prompts:

1. Which exercises made your heart beat the quickest?
2. Where did you find your pulse? (i.e. neck, wrist, heart)
3. What are some ways to lower your heart rate?



4. How is your heart rate impacted by resting after exercising?
5. Name an exercise that you can do to aid in recovery



Lesson 6 - Interval Training

Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objectives: (1) Define interval training and explain how it alternates between periods of high and low intensity. (2) Complete a structured interval workout using a set work-to-rest ratio.

Equipment: High 5 Cards

Estimated Set-up Time: 3-4 minutes

Activity A (2-4 minutes): Introduce the High 5 Bicycle Crunch

“Today, we are going to learn another core exercise, the High 5 Bicycle Crunch. If you already know how to do a Bicycle Crunch, you will have the opportunity to improve and challenge yourself.”



“Start by lying flat with your lower back on the floor. Bend your knees and lift your legs so they form a 90-degree angle. Place your hands lightly behind your head with your elbows wide.”

“Lift your shoulder blades off the floor using your core (not your hands) and bring one knee toward your chest while extending the other leg straight. Rotate your torso so that your opposite elbow moves toward the bent knee.”

“Switch sides by extending the bent leg and bringing the opposite knee in. Keep your elbows wide and avoid pulling on your neck.”

Activity B (5-6 minutes): Bicycle Crunch Exercise Progression

“Now that you know how to perform a High 5 Inchworm, let’s keep practicing so you feel comfortable trying it on your own!”

“If you can perform the High 5 Bicycle Crunch and would like to keep practicing it, you can do 2x20 with a 20-second rest in between.”

“If you would like to strengthen your abs without doing planks, you can do 2x12 Seated

Opposite Elbow to Knee.”

Activity C (7-10 minutes): Interval Training

“We’re going to work on endurance with interval training, which means doing short bursts of hard exercise followed by a break. This strengthens your heart and improves your endurance, so you can exercise longer and at higher levels. There are many ways you can do interval training. Today we will try Tabata.”



"In Tabata, we'll perform each exercise for 20 seconds at full effort (meaning your heart will be beating fast and you'll be working as hard as you can), followed by a 10-second rest. After each rest, we'll go right into the next exercise. We'll go through all four exercises and repeat the cycle for 8 rounds. The whole workout will take about 4 minutes, so stay focused, give your best effort, and have fun!"

Choose four High 5 Level 1 or Level 2 endurance exercises. You can do this workout as a large group or divide into small groups, depending on your class size and space available. Make sure each group has the same exercises in the same order so that you can coach technique to everyone.

Unified Teammate Support

Have someone stand with the person demonstrating the original exercise and have the second person offer alternative exercises based on student needs, such as seated marching, hops in place or marching butt kickers.

Make It Fun!

Memory Moves: Have students form groups of 3-4. Create a list of 4-6 exercises (mix of flexibility, endurance, and strength). After the groups perform the first exercise, add another exercise for them to complete until the full list has been exhausted. Challenge the groups to remember the sequence and perform the exercises with the proper form.



Lesson 7 – Interval Training, Changes to the Body and Recovery

Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objectives: (1) Define exercise recovery and explain why it's essential for physical progress and injury prevention. (2) Reflect on the impact of recovery habits.

Equipment: High 5 Cards

Estimated Set-up Time: 5 minutes

Activity A (5-6 minutes): Core Exercise Practice

"We are going to start our fitness session today with a core strength exercise. You can choose one core exercise to do for 1 minute. You are going to do the exercise for as many seconds as you can and take a short 5 second rest when you need to.

Start again

after you recover. Try to challenge yourself."

"You can choose to do a 1) Spiderman, 2) Bicycle Crunch or 3) Seated Opposite Elbow to Knee"

Activity B (5-10 minutes): Exercise, Your Body and Rest

You'll see three questions for discussion below. Use these prompts to connect fitness concepts to interval training. Choose one or more for a quick discussion before beginning the training (interval instructions are below prompts). After the discussion, using the four exercises from lesson five, your students will perform interval training, 30 seconds of work and 30 seconds active recovery.

- Question: "Do you notice your heart beating faster when you exercise?" ○
Explanation: "As you move, your heart works harder to pump blood to your muscles so they can keep moving. In interval workouts, your heart beats faster during the hard parts, then slows down during rest to help you recover."
- Question: "Do you know why your heart beats faster and you breathe harder when you exercise?" ○ Explanation: "When you exercise, your body needs more oxygen to fuel your muscles, so your heart pumps faster and you breathe harder to deliver that oxygen. In interval workouts, this happens during the intense parts, and during rest, your heart slows down to help you recover."
- Question: "How does taking short breaks during an interval workout help you perform better?" ○ Explanation: "Rest in interval training gives your muscles and heart time to recover, so when you start the next intense interval, you can work at full effort again."

Interval Instructions : Choose 3-5 High 5 level one or two endurance exercises.



Prompts:



"We are going to practice our endurance exercises again, but this time we are going to work for 30 seconds and then do an active rest for 30 seconds."

"Active recovery is when you perform low-intensity movements or a different type of exercise during the rest periods, rather than stopping completely."

"After you do the endurance exercise for 30 seconds you will do your core exercise from the beginning of the class for 30 seconds. This keeps strengthens your muscles while allowing your heart rate to recover for the next high-intensity exercise."

Unified Teammate Support

If there are a range of cognitive abilities, consider assigning small groups or pairs and giving appropriate questions to each group/pair.

Make It Fun!

Wrap up the interval training with a game of Sharks and Minnows, Recovery Edition. Choose 2-3 students to assume the role of "sharks" and the remainder of students will be "minnows". The minnows should start at one end of an enclosed space and position the sharks in the middle of the space. On your queue, challenge the minnows to cross the space to the opposite end without being tagged by a shark. Each round should last approximately 1-2 minutes. After each round, the sharks and minnows should perform a recovery exercise. Rotate roles amongst the students.



Lesson 8 – EMOM (Every Minute on the Minute)

Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objectives: (1) Identify the benefits of EMOM training and the differences between EMOM and other training formats. (2) Demonstrate proper form for 4–6 exercises in an EMOM workout.

Equipment: High 5 Cards

Estimated Set-up Time: 5 minutes

Activity A (2-4 minutes): Introduce the High 5 Side Lunge



“Today we are going develop skills to perform a High 5 Side Lunge. If you already know how to do a High 5 Side Lunge, you will have the opportunity to improve and challenge yourself.”



“Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and put your hands on your hips.”

“Take a big step out to the side with your right foot and keep your left leg straight.”

“Bend your right knee so that it is over your ankle, and lower into the lunge. Press through your heel and bring your foot back to the original position.”

Activity B (5-6 minutes): Side Lunge Exercise Modifications



“Now that you know how to perform a High 5 Inchworm, let’s keep practicing so you feel comfortable trying it on your own!”



“If you can perform a High 5 Side Lunge and would like to keep practicing it, you can do

2x10

on each side.”



“If you feel confident in your High 5 Side Lunge and want to challenge your balance, you can try a High 5 Side Lunge with a leg lift. Do 2x8 each leg.”



“If you would like to strengthen your lower body without doing a High 5 Side Lunge, you can do 3x10 Seated Adductor Leg Lifts.”

Exercise Progression:
Side Lunge w/ Knee
Up



Starting Exercise:
Side Lunge



Alternative:
Seated Adductor Leg
Lifts

Activity C (4-5 minutes): Every Minute on the Minute



"To get the benefits of exercise, you need to challenge your body. Today, you'll challenge yourself with an EMOM workout. It's normal for your heart to beat fast, your muscles to get tired, and to sweat a bit, that's your body adapting!"

Instructions: Use a variety of strength and endurance level 1 or 2 High 5 cards, focusing on exercises like side-to-side hops, sumo squats, jumping T's, and side lunges, which allow for set repetitions. Consider your students' abilities when choosing exercises, break into small groups if needed, or let students pick from a provided list.

"Now we are going to do an EMOM workout (Every Minute on the Minute), meaning you have 1 minute to complete each exercise, and any time left in the minute is your rest."

"In the first minute, you'll do 20 (Jumping T's). If you finish in 30 seconds, you get to rest for the rest of the minute. When the second minute starts, you'll do 15 (Sumo Squats). In the third minute, you'll do 30 (Side to side hops), and for the fourth minute, you'll do 10 (Side lunges each leg)."

Para-Educator/Unified Teammate Support

Assign an exercise to each pair of Unified Teammates to lead for the class, with one student demonstrating the High 5 exercise and the other an alternate version (e.g., modified jumping jacks or sit to stand) so the rest of the class can follow the exercise that they choose.

Make It Fun!

Conclude the EMOM training session with a game of "EMOM Knockout". Each minute, students must complete a set number of reps (e.g., 10 burpees). If they finish early, they rest. If they fail to complete the goal number of reps within the minute, they're "knocked out" (sent to a recovery zone) to complete a cool-down exercise. Continue until one student remains.



Lesson 9 – Supersets/Food & Hydration

Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objectives: (1) Understand the role of food and water in ensuring the body functions properly. (2) Identify examples of foods from different food categories.

Equipment: High 5 Cards, High 5 Guides, Nutrition Printables (Appendix F)

Estimated Set-up Time: 10 minutes

Activity A (2-4 minutes): High 5 Side Lunge and High 5 Shrugs



“Today, we’re going to start by reviewing High 5 Side Lunges and introduce High 5 Shrugs using a training technique called Supersets. A superset means doing two exercises back-to-back without resting in between. You can target the same muscle group (like bicycle crunches and Spiderman) or different ones (like High 5 Shrugs and High 5 Side Lunges) to increase intensity and save time.”



Let’s start with the High 5 Shrug. Stand or sit with your feet shoulder width apart and your arms relaxed at your sides. Shrug your shoulders up toward your ears and pause. Lower your shoulders down to the starting position.” (demonstrate)

“We’re going to do 12 High 5 Shrugs, followed immediately by 8 reps of High 5 Side Lunges on each side (the version you chose from last class).”

Activity B (10-15 minutes): Fuel Your Body Superset Challenge

Before beginning the activity, discuss that carbohydrates provide quick energy that helps keep us moving during physical activity. Foods like grains, fruits and vegetables are sources of carbohydrates. Protein helps repair and build muscle after physical activity. Foods like dairy, legumes/beans, seafood and animal products are all good sources of protein. Healthy fats are the primary fuel for light to moderate intensity exercise and are valuable during endurance activities. Healthy sources of fat include avocados, nuts and seeds.

“I’m going to call all out a type of food and you will need to determine if it is a Carbohydrate, Protein, or Healthy Fat. You will perform a superset of exercises to indicate your answer (write them down or project them). Remember a superset is two exercises performed back-to-back with no rest.”

Suggested Prompts:





Carbohydrates: 5 High 5 Side Lunges and 10 High 5 Shrugs (oatmeal, bananas, whole grain rice, corn)

Protein: 10 High 5 Bicycle Crunches and 10 High 5 Spiderman each side (pinto beans, cottage cheese, eggs, salmon)

Fat: 10 High 5 Plank Shoulder Taps and 10 High 5 Jumping Wall Taps (avocado, cashews, olive oil)

Unified Teammate Support

Offer students the option to perform just one exercise in the superset if the pace of switching exercises or type of exercise is difficult for them.

Educator Exercise Science Tip

Muscular strength and coordination are crucial for performing motor skills like moving our bodies or objects. These two elements work together to make movements strong and accurate. Developing both helps children perform various physical activities energetically and proficiently, encouraging lifelong physical activity.

Make It Fun!

Alternative to Activity B: "Build a Plate Challenge"

Students race to build a plate with carbohydrate, protein, fat, and hydration sources. Assign each student to a nutrition category. Students must find a peer that was assigned a different category. Once a team is formed (one carbohydrate, one protein, one healthy fat, and one liquid), each member leads their team through an endurance or strength exercise.

****TIP:** Use nutrition printables in Appendix F to remind students of their nutrition categories**



Lesson 10 – Supersets

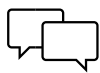
Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objectives: (1) Define a superset and explain how it differs from traditional strength training.

Equipment: High 5 Cards

Estimated Set-up Time: 5 minutes

Activity A (2-4 minutes): Introduce the High 5 Lunge



"Today we are going to develop skills to perform High 5 Forward Lunges by performing Stationary Lunges. If you already know how to do Stationary Lunges, you will have the opportunity to improve and challenge yourself."



"Start by standing in a split stance with your right foot forward and left foot back, keeping your feet about shoulder-width apart for balance. You will stay on the ball of your foot/toes on the back leg."

"Lower your body by bending both knees until your front thigh is parallel to the ground and your back knee almost touches the floor. Push through your front heel to return to the starting position without changing your stance."

Activity B (5-6 minutes): Lunge Exercise Modifications



"Now that you know how to perform a High 5 Inchworm, let's keep practicing so you feel comfortable trying it on your own!"



"If you can perform Stationary Lunges and would like to keep practicing, you can do 2x8 lunges on each side"



"If you feel confident in stationary lunges and want to try High 5 Forward Lunges, start with feet together, and hands on your hips. Take a big step forward with your right foot and bend both knees so that your left knee is almost touching the ground. Do 2x8 on each leg."



"If you want to practice balance and pushing through your front heel rather than toes, you can do 3x8 Kneel-to-Stands, where you start kneeling and stand up one leg at a time, then return to kneeling without banging your back knee on the ground."

Exercise Progression: Forward Lunges



Starting Exercise:
Stationary
Lunges



Alternative 1:
Kneel-to-Stand



Alternative 2:
Seated Leg Extension
Pulses



"If you'd like to strengthen your legs while seated, you can do 3x10 Seated Leg Extension Pulses, focusing on squeezing your leg muscles each time."

Activity C (10-15 minutes): Superset Workout in Pairs



"To build strength and fitness, you need to push your body a bit more each time—whether it's doing more reps, lifting heavier, or holding a position longer. Today's superset workout will be a chance to see how much more you can do! If it feels tougher than usual, that's good—it means your muscles are working harder, which is how you get stronger over time!"

Each pair of Unified Teammates will complete both exercises in each superset twice (two sets per exercise) before rotating to the next station. Multiple pairs may be working at each station simultaneously; ensure pairs take turns and maintain adequate space for safety and ease of movement.

Superset Station 1:

- Teammate A: 8 Forward Lunges each side
- Teammate B: Square Jumps until Partner is done

After completing it twice, rest for 30 seconds before moving to Superset 2.

Superset Station 2:

- Teammate A: 8 Side Lunges each side
- Teammate B: Fast Feet until Partner is done

After completing it twice, rest for 30 seconds before moving to Superset 3.

Superset Station 3:

- Teammate A: 8 Side Lunges each side
- Teammate B: Fast Feet until Partner is done

After completing the stations, ask students if station 3 felt more difficult because the superset worked the same muscles in each exercise.

Unified Teammate Support



Use rest times to briefly review proper form. Adjust rest times if needed based on students' fitness levels.

Educator Exercise Science Tip

Youth with disabilities face a higher risk of health problems like diabetes and heart disease due to lower rates of physical activity and increased screen time. Similarly, adults with disabilities are less active and have higher rates of chronic diseases, which is why building healthy habits early can help youth stay active and lower these risks as they get older.

Make It Fun!

End Activity C with a "Superset Showdown". Students complete a superset every minute (e.g., 10 push-ups + 10 lunges). If they finish early, they rest. If they don't finish in time, they must go to the recovery zone for the remainder of the activity. Repeat with different combinations of exercises. Ensure that students are performing the exercises with the proper form rather than rushing to get through them as quickly as possible.



Lesson 11 – Push Ups and Teammate Challenge

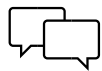
Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objective: Set a personal goal related to improving teamwork, patience, or communication while exercising with a peer.

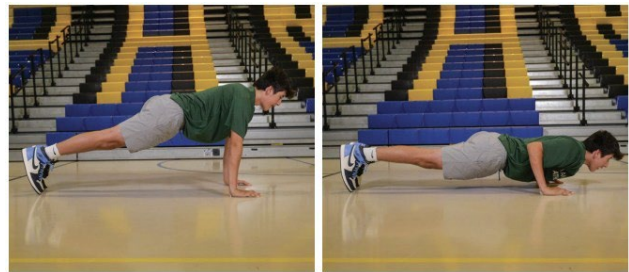
Equipment: High 5 Cards

Estimated Set-up Time: 3-5 minutes

Activity A (2-4 minutes): Introduce the High 5 Push Ups



"Today we are going to develop skills to perform a High 5 Pushup by performing a Wall/Incline Push-Ups. If you already know how to do Wall/Incline Push-Ups, you will have the opportunity to improve and challenge yourself."



"Find a place along the wall or bench. Put your hands on the wall or bench with your shoulder in line with your wrists."

"Keep your body in a straight line from head to heels by using your core muscles. Bend your elbows and lower your chest toward the surface. Do not reach with your head."

Activity B (5-6 minutes): Push Up Exercise Modifications



"Now that you know how to perform a High 5 Inchworm, let's keep practicing so you feel comfortable trying it on your own!"



"If you can perform a Wall or Incline PushUp and would like to keep practicing it, you can do 3x8 with a 30-second rest in between."



If you feel confident in your Incline Push-Ups and want to try a High 5 Push Up, you can move to the floor and do 3x8, with a 30-second rest in between."



"If you would like to strengthen your upper body without doing push-ups, you can do 3x10 Seated Shoulder Presses."

Exercise Progression:
High 5 Push Ups



Starting Exercise:
Wall/Incline
Push Ups



Alternative:
Seated Shoulder
Presses



Divide the class into pairs of Unified Teammates. Each pair receives a set of High 5 cards.

One Teammate in each pair picks a card, decides the number of repetitions (e.g., 10 squats, 15 ski jumps), and then goes to challenge another pair to complete the same exercise.

Both pairs do the two exercise together, cheering each other on.

After finishing the second exercise, both pairs separate and find new pairs to challenge.

Unified Teammate Support

Assist pairs with choosing exercises and exercise variations that match their skill levels.

Educator Exercise Science Tip

Youth with disabilities can often do more than expected and can learn new skills, though they typically have lower fitness levels and higher fatigue. You should tailor programs to include brief, low- to moderate-intensity activities with rest periods, gradually increasing intensity over time.



Lesson 12 – Reflection and Fitness Goals

Lesson Objectives, Equipment, Estimated Set-up Time

Objectives: (1) Reflect on the successes of your work with High 5 resources. (2) Identify 1-2 fitness related goals that you can strive to reach in the future.

Equipment: High 5 Cards and Guides

Estimated Set-up Time: 5-7 minutes

Activity A (10 minutes): Small Group Workouts

 "Today, we're going to use what we've learned to create our own small group workouts! You can choose a focus—strength, flexibility, or endurance—based on a fitness goal or sport you want to improve in. At that station, you'll pick a level and do all the High 5 exercises in the deck for 30 seconds each. Encourage your group and work hard!"

Set up three areas (strength, flexibility, endurance) and have multiple cards to ease implementation and reduce confusion.

Activity B (10 minutes): Reflection and Goal Discussion

"Let's reflect on what we've accomplished using High 5 cards and how you can continue to improve your fitness and set personal goals."



Use the questions listed below for a group discussion. Prompts are ordered in the sample learning progression at the bottom of this activity.

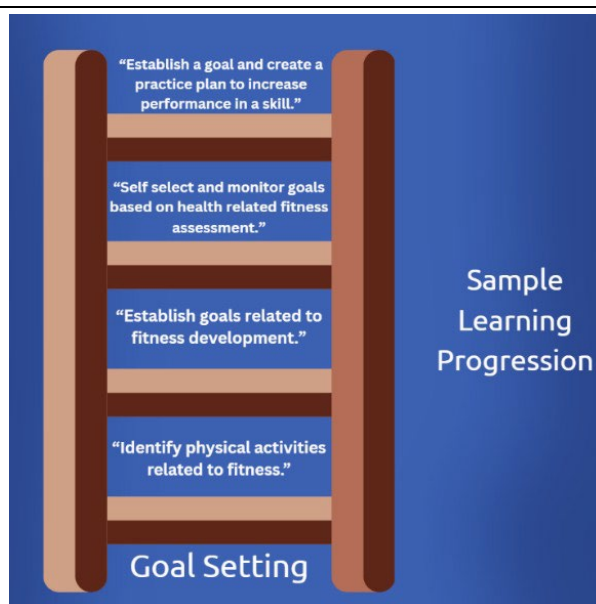


Prompts:

1. "Which High 5 exercises did you enjoy the most, and how did they make your body feel?"
2. "Think about a few High 5 exercises that help with endurance, strength, or flexibility. Can you tell me how each one helps your fitness, like building strong muscles or making your heart healthier?"
3. "What's one High 5 exercise or activity that you'd like to get better at? Is it related to endurance, strength, or flexibility?"
4. "If you want to improve a specific High 5 exercise or a skill in another sport you enjoy, what small steps could you take each week to get better?"
5. "Looking back at the High 5 lessons, which area of fitness—endurance, strength, or flexibility—do you want to continue working on and why?" How would improving in this area help you in other activities or sports you like?"



6. "How can you practice the exercises you learned from the High 5 Lessons at home to involve your whole family in your fitness journey? What activities are you most excited to try with your family members?"
7. "What strategy will you use to monitor your progress? Would you use a fitness log, keep track of your High 5 card exercises, or ask a friend to help you stay on track?"



Educator Exercise Science Tip

Physical activity is a powerful way to boost cognitive function in youth. Studies show that regular exercise can improve memory, attention, and overall brain function in individuals with and without intellectual disabilities.

Make It Fun!

End the reflection session with a game of Fitness Charades. Break students up into evenly numbered groups. Students must act out their favorite High 5 exercise, exercise category, and a benefit associated with physical activity. The student's peers must guess the name, category, and benefit of the exercise. Repeat until each student has the chance to perform.



Appendix A: Strength Exercise Progressions and Modification Options

This section includes Level 1, 2 and 3 strength exercises.

Curl Up (Level 1)

Difficulty Modification-Assisted Curl-Up:

Provide students with assistance by allowing them to use their hands to push off the ground slightly as they curl up or by anchoring their feet under a stable object.

Progression-Sit-Up:

Instruct students to lie on their back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Have them cross their arms over their chest or place their fingertips behind their ears. Guide them to engage their stomach and lift their entire upper body off the ground, reaching towards their knees in a controlled motion. Once they reach an upright seated position, they should slowly lower back down to the starting position.

Alternate Exercise- Seated Abdominal Contractions (for students with neck discomfort or those with an inability to lie on the ground):

Have students sit upright in a sturdy chair with feet flat on the floor. Instruct them to place their hands on their abdomen, take a deep breath, and as they exhale, contract their abdominal muscles, pulling their belly button towards their spine. Hold the contraction for 3-5 seconds, then relax.

Arm and Leg Raises (Level 1)

Difficulty Modification- Arm or Leg Raises:

Have students begin by raising only one arm or one leg at a time while keeping the other limbs on the ground for stability. Instruct them to raise their arm or leg, hold briefly, and then lower back down with control.

Progression -Same Side Arm and Leg Raises:

Instruct students to raise their right arm and right leg together, maintaining balance and control.

After holding briefly, they should lower back down with control.

Alternate Exercise-Seated Arm and Leg Extensions:

Have students sit upright in a chair with feet flat on the floor. Instruct them to extend one leg straight out while reaching the opposite arm forward. After holding briefly, they should



return to the starting position and repeat on the other side. This alternate exercise is suitable for students who have difficulty kneeling or balancing.

Plank Hold (Level 1)

Difficulty Modification-Knee Plank:

Have students begin by performing the plank on their knees instead of their toes. Instruct them to keep their body in a straight line from their head to their knees, with their core engaged and back flat.

Progression-Forearm Plank with Alternating Leg Lifts:

Instruct students to lower down onto their forearms rather than hands, keeping their body in a straight line. To increase the challenge, they can lift one leg slightly off the ground, hold briefly, and then alternate legs, maintaining core stability throughout the exercise.

Alternate Exercise- Seated Resistance Hold:

Have students sit upright in a chair with their feet flat on the floor. Instruct them to hold a light weight with their arms extended straight out in front of them at shoulder height, keeping the arms parallel to the floor. Guide them to engage their core muscles and maintain an upright posture while holding this position. Hold for 10-30 seconds, then relax. This alternate exercise is suitable for students who have difficulty kneeling.

Squat (Level 1)

Difficulty Modification-Sit to Stand:

Have students sit on the edge of a chair with their feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Instruct them to stand up using their leg muscles, keeping their body weight right around where their shoes are tied. Then, guide them to slowly sit back down, maintaining control throughout the movement.

Regression-Wall Squats:

Ask students to stand with their back against a wall, feet shoulder-width apart and positioned about two feet away from the wall. Instruct them to slowly slide their back down the wall by bending their knees, lowering their body until their thighs are parallel to the floor or as low as comfortable. Ensure their knees stay aligned with their ankles, not extending past their toes. Hold the squat position for 5 seconds, then press through their heels to slide back up the wall to the starting position.

Alternate Exercise-Seated Leg Extensions:



Students will sit in a chair with feet flat on the ground. Instruct them to lift one leg, extending it straight out in front of them. Ensure their leg is fully extended, with the knee straight but not locked. Hold the extended position for 2-3 seconds, focusing on engaging the quadriceps. Then, guide them to slowly lower their leg back to the starting position, controlling the movement as their foot returns to the floor. Repeat with the other leg. This alternate exercise is suitable for students with limited joint mobility or non-weight bearing.

Plank Hold with Straight Arm Raise (Level 2)

Difficulty Modification-Wall, Incline, Knee, or Full Plank:

Have students stand facing a wall with their hands placed flat against it at shoulder height. Instruct them to walk their feet back slightly, creating a diagonal line with their body. They should engage their core and hold the position, ensuring their body remains in a straight line from head to heels. This can also be done with hands on a bench or floor with shoulders above the wrists.

Progression - Forearm Plank with Reaches:

Instruct them to perform the plank on their forearms and, while maintaining the position, lift and extend one arm forward to tap the floor in front of them. Alternate arms while keeping the hips stable and core engaged.

Alternate Exercise-Seated Core Hold:

Have students sit upright in a chair with their feet flat on the floor and hands gripping the sides of the chair. Instruct them to lean back slightly while keeping their back straight and core engaged, lifting their feet an inch or two off the floor. They should hold this position while maintaining a straight back, simulating the engagement of the core muscles in a plank. This alternate exercise is suitable for students unable to do the exercise on the ground.

Knee Push-Ups (Level 2)

Difficulty Modification-Incline Push-Up:

Have students perform push-ups with their hands placed on an elevated surface like a bench or wall. Instruct them to keep their body in a straight line from head to heels, engaging their core and maintaining proper form as they lower their chest toward the surface.

Progression-Full Push-Up (on Toes):

Instruct them to start in a plank position on their toes, with hands directly under their shoulders and body in a straight line from head to heels. Have them bend their elbows to



lower their chest toward the ground, then push back up to the starting position, maintaining core engagement and proper form throughout.

Alternate Exercise-Seated Shoulder Press:

Have students sit upright in a sturdy chair with their feet flat on the floor. Instruct them to extend their arms out to the sides and bend their elbows at 90 degrees, so their hands are at shoulder height. Guide them to press their arms upward until they are fully extended overhead, then slowly lower their arms back down to the starting position. Ensure they engage their core to maintain a stable posture throughout the exercise. This alternate exercise is suitable for students who cannot perform a push-up with a rigid core or if they are non-weight-bearing. *resistance/dumbbells optional

Side Leg Raises (Level 2)

Difficulty Modification-Knee Bent Side Leg Raises:

Have students lie on their side with their bottom leg bent for stability and their top leg slightly bent as well. Instruct them to lift their top leg upward, keeping it slightly bent, and then slowly lower it back down with control.

Progression-Standing Side Abduction Pulses:

Have students stand upright with their hands resting on a wall or chair for balance. Instruct them to lift one leg straight out to the side, keeping the leg extended and toes pointing forward. Once they reach the top of the movement, they should perform small, controlled pulses by lifting and lowering the leg slightly. Repeat on the other side.

Alternate Exercise-Seated Clamshell:

Have students sit upright in a sturdy chair with their feet flat on the floor and knees bent. Instruct them to place their hands on their knees and press their knees outward against their hands, creating resistance. Hold the position for a few seconds, then relax. This exercise focuses on the outer thighs and hips, providing a seated alternative that still targets similar muscles. This alternate exercise is suitable for students with limited hip range of motion or those unable to stand or lay on the ground.

Backward Lunges (Level 2)

Difficulty Modification-Kneel to Stand:

Instruct students to start by kneeling on the floor with one knee up and the other knee down. Have them press through the front foot to stand up, bringing the back foot forward to meet the front foot. Then, guide them to step back into the kneeling position with control.



Regression-Stationary Lunges with Optional Balance Support:

Have students start in a split stance with one foot forward and the other foot back, keeping the front foot flat on the floor and with weight on the ball of the back foot. Instruct them to bend both knees, lowering their body straight down until their back knee is just above the ground. They can use a wall or chair for balance if needed. Once they reach the bottom of the movement, guide them to push back up to the starting position.

Progression-Forward Lunges:

Instruct them to stand upright and take a step forward with one leg, lowering their body until both knees are bent at 90 degrees. Ensure that the front knee stays above the ankle. After reaching the bottom of the movement, they should push through the front heel to return to the starting position.

Alternate Exercise-Seated Leg Extension Pulses:

Have students sit upright in a sturdy chair with their feet flat on the floor. Instruct them to extend one leg straight out in front of them, keeping the leg straight and toes pointing up. Once the leg is fully extended, guide them to perform small, controlled pulses by lifting and lowering the leg slightly. Repeat with the other leg. This exercise targets the quadriceps and helps to build lower body strength without the need to stand or bear weight.

Side Plank (Level 3)

Difficulty Modification-Forearm and Knee Side Plank:

Have students start by lying on their side with their forearm directly under their shoulder and their knees bent at a 90-degree angle. Instruct them to lift their hips off the ground, keeping their body in a straight line from their head to their knees. Guide them to hold this position while maintaining core engagement and balance.

Progression-Side Plank with Leg Lift:

Have them perform a side plank and then lift the top leg while maintaining the side plank position. Instruct them to keep the leg straight and control the movement, focusing on maintaining balance and core stability.

Alternate Exercise-Seated Rotations:

Have students sit upright in a sturdy chair with their feet flat on the floor. Instruct them to cross their arms over their chest or hold a light object in front of them. Guide them to engage their core and slowly rotate their upper body to one side, then return to the center, and rotate to the other side. This exercise targets the obliques and core, providing a seated



alternative that still focuses on core stability and strength. This alternate exercise is suitable for students whose shoulders or wrists hurt during side planks or are unable to be on the ground.

Wall Sit Hold (Level 3)

Difficulty Modification-Wall Squat (Sliding Back Down the Wall):

Have students stand with their back against the wall, feet shoulder-width apart. Instruct them to slowly slide their back down the wall into a squat position, then slide back up, maintaining control throughout the movement.

Progression-Wall Sit with Arms Raise:

Instruct them to raise and hold their arms overhead or in front of them while maintaining the squat position.

Alternate Exercise - Seated Leg Extensions:

Have students sit in a chair with their back against the chair and feet flat on the ground. Instruct them to extend one leg straight out in front, hold briefly, then lower it back down. This alternate exercise is suitable for students who are non-weight bearing or have knee discomfort squatting.

Hip Bridge (Level 3)

Difficulty Modification-Hip Bridge with Wider Feet and Hands on Ground:

Have students lie on their back with their feet wider than hip-width apart and hands flat on the ground. Instruct them to lift their hips off the ground, engaging the glutes and lower back, while maintaining balance with the wider stance.

Progression-Single-Leg Hip Bridge:

Students can progress to lifting one leg off the ground while performing the bridge. Instruct them to keep their hips level.

Alternate Exercise-Seated Abduction:

Have students sit upright in a chair with feet flat on the floor. Instruct them to press their knees outward into their hands (placed on the outside of their knees).

Squat Jumps (Level 3)

Difficulty Modification-Squats:



Instruct them to stand with feet shoulder-width apart, bend their knees, and lower their hips as if sitting back into an imaginary chair. Stand back up, engaging the core and glutes.

Progression–Deep Arms Up Squat Jumps:

Instruct students to lower into a squat position holding their hands behind their heads. They should go as low as they can and explosively jump upward. Have them land softly, immediately going into the next squat, focusing on maintaining control and depth.

Alternate Exercise - Seated Leg Extensions:

Have students sit in a chair with their back against the chair and feet flat on the ground. Instruct them to extend one leg straight out in front, hold briefly, then lower it back down. This alternative exercise is suitable for students who are non-weight bearing or have knee discomfort squatting.



Appendix B: Sample Learning Progression Explained & Key Messages

The Benefits of Staying Active-

Key Messages: (1) Recognize that regular physical activity is good for their health. (2) Explain the benefits of physical activity. (3) Identify ways to be physically active. (4) Discuss the benefits of physically active lifestyles as it relates to young adulthood.

Your Heart in Action-

Key Messages: (1) Identify the heart as a muscle that gets stronger with physical activity. (2) Identify location of pulse and provide examples of activities that increase HR. (3) Demonstrate knowledge of HR and describes its relationship to aerobic fitness. (4) Apply heart rate concepts to ensure safety and maximize health-related fitness outcomes.

Changes to the Body and Recovery-

Key Messages: (1) Recognize physiological changes in their body during physical activities. (2) Recognize and explain how physical activity influences physiological changes in their body. (3) Examine how rest impacts the body's response to physical activity. (4) Apply the knowledge of rest when planning regular physical activity

Food & Hydration-

Key Messages: (1) Recognize food and hydration choices that provide energy for physical activity. (2) Describe the impact of food and hydration choices on physical activity. (3) Explain the relationship among nutrition, physical activity and health factors. (4) Identify snacks and food choices that help and hinder performance, recovery and enjoyment during physical activity.

Flexibility, Warmups, & Cool Downs-

Key Messages: (1) Recognize importance of stretching before and after physical activity. (2) Identify the need for warm-up and cool-down relative to various physical activities. (3) Apply knowledge of stretching, warm-up, cool-down, flexibility, and endurance activities. (4) Design and implement a plan that applies knowledge of flexibility training exercises.

Fitness Goal Setting-

Key Messages: (1) Identify physical activities that contribute to fitness. (2) Establish goals related to enhancing fitness development. (3) Self-select and monitor goals based on self-selected health-related fitness assessment. (4) Establish a goal and create a practice plan to improve performance of a self-selected skill.



Appendix C: Terminology

Active recovery – a rest period that involves performing low-intensity movements or a different type of exercise, rather than stopping completely.

Core exercise - any exercise that involves the use of the stomach muscles and back muscles in a coordinated way. Core exercises are designed to strengthen and stabilize the trunk and hip muscles that surround the spine and pelvis.

Intellectual disability - a condition characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Intellectual functioning refers to general mental capacity such as learning and reasoning. Adaptive behavior refers to the conceptual, social, and practical skills learned and performed by people in their daily lives. These limitations begin early in development, typically before age 22.

Progression: Adjusting an exercise to make it more challenging or complex, allowing students to advance in their skills and fitness levels. Progressions help meet individual needs, enabling each student to experience success as they grow.

Difficulty Modification: Modifying an exercise to make it easier or more accessible, ensuring that all students can participate meaningfully. Regression allows students to practice at their own level without feeling discouraged. It recognizes that everyone's fitness journey is unique, and moving back in difficulty can be a valuable step toward inclusion and personal growth.

Sets x Repetitions – in many of the lessons, you will see two numbers expressed like an equation such as 3x12 or 2x10. These numbers represent exercise sets and repetitions (reps). The first number refers to sets and the second number refers to reps. So, 3x12 means that students should complete 3 sets of 12 repetitions of an exercise.

Unified programming - a program that includes activities for students of all abilities. In the case of this resource, Unified means students with and without disabilities coming together on equal terms with ample and appropriate support through fitness activities.

Unified teammate – a student peer with or without a disability who provides reciprocal support to another student. A teammate is not a tutor, but an equal partner in an activity.



Appendix D: High 5 Lessons Complementary Resources

Educator Guide: [High-5-Educators-Guide.pdf](#)

Caregiver Guide: [High-5-Caregivers-Guide.pdf](#)

Ages 15-21:

Cards: [High5Cards 15-21](#)

Guides: [High5Guide 15-21](#)

Video Links

- Level 1 Flexibility – (Heel and Toe Walks, Standing Hip Circles, Cross-Body Shoulder Stretch, Large Step with Reach): <https://youtu.be/omqUWz3Qy-o>
- Level 1 Endurance – (Fast Feet, Butt Kickers, Duck Walks, Side to Side Hops): https://youtu.be/7rqg1er_Kqc
- Level 1 Strength – (Donkey Kicks, Spiderman, Shrugs, Sumo Squats): <https://youtu.be/A47ADuwW-mw>
- Level 2 Flexibility – (Arm Circles, Straddle Stretch, Leg Swings, Fire Hydrants): <https://youtu.be/rIP2kqgUjxA>
- Level 2 Endurance – (Jumping T's, Square Jumps, Advanced Fast Feet, Side Skaters): <https://youtu.be/v-FOeyTapoY>
- Level 2 Strength – (Jumping Wall Taps, Bicycle Crunch, Plank Shoulder Taps, Side Lunges): <https://youtu.be/ZuluttCGydc>
- Level 3 Flexibility – (Upper Back Stretch, Crossover Toe Touch, Open and Close the Gate, Lunge with Twist): <https://youtu.be/Av7r9abUWjl>
- Level 3 Endurance – (Scissor Jumps, Star Jumps, Mummy Shuffle, Burpees) <https://youtu.be/MDJb2uX2wp4>



High 5 Resource Webpage QR Code:



Appendix E: Additional Resources

The following links to additional Special Olympics resources may be helpful to educators.

- Sport Specific Warm-Up/Cool-Down Resources: (For more information or to access the full list of Special Olympics' sport specific warm up and cool down resources please visit: [Sports & Coaching](#))
 - Athletics:
 - Warm Up: [Athletics WU](#)
 - Cool Down: [Athletics CD](#)
 - Sport Specific Example: Basketball
 - Warm Up: [Basketball WU](#)
 - Cool Down: [Basketball CD](#)
- [Special Olympics Unified Schools](#) – SO learning portal with a variety of courses:
 - [Introduction to Unified Champion Schools for Educators](#) (Description: A course that allows learners to experience real-life implementation examples of each of the SOUCS components and gain resources for building and championing Unified Champion Schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.)
 - [Global Unified Schools Teacher Training](#) (Description: Intended for a global audience, this course provides a basic overview of best practices for implementation of Special Olympics Unified Champion School programming.)
 - [Building Inclusive Communities Through Unified Champion Schools](#) (Description: A brief and engaging information tool to build awareness of the Unified Champion Schools strategy and its power to spread inclusion from schools to the larger community through the impact of its three components and inclusive engagement of youth, educators and families.)
- [Special Olympics Unified Sports®](#) - resources for inclusive sports or fitness programming to assist individuals who are just beginning to learn about how Special



Olympics Unified Sports can become part of the Unified Champion School strategy at their school.

Appendix F: Nutrition Cut-Outs

These images support the implementation of Alternative Activity B (Meal Match Up) in Lesson 9. Print these images out and distribute them to participants in accordance with activity instructions.



Water



Proteins



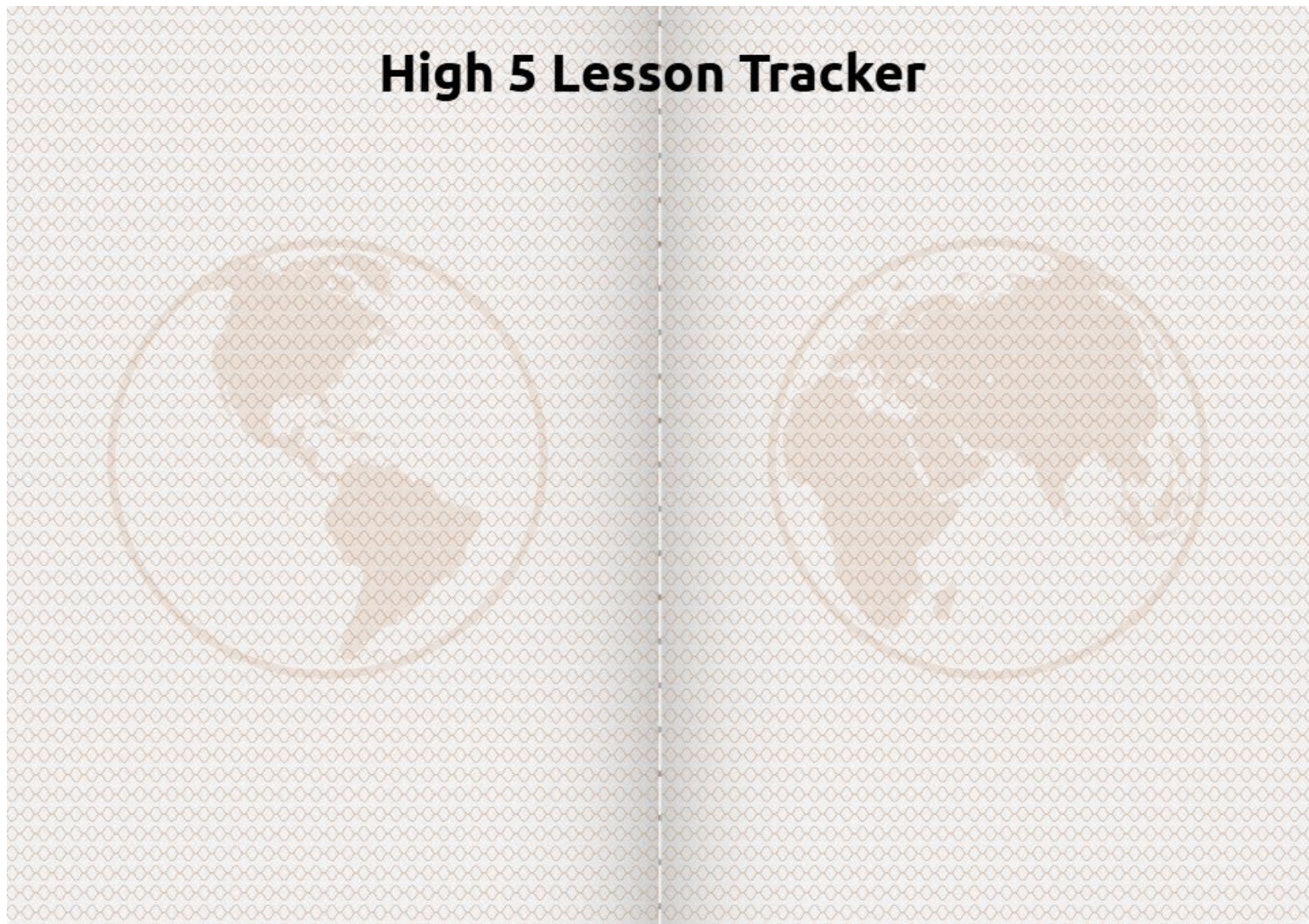
Carbohydrates



Appendix G: Lesson Progress Tracker & Badges

The printables below are High 5 Lesson Plan Trackers and Stickers. The stickers can be cut out by students upon the completion of a High 5 Lesson, and glued or taped to the Lesson Tracker to monitor a student's progress towards their fitness goals.

High 5 Lesson Tracker





High 5 Lesson Badges

