



INTRODUCTION TO HEALTHY HABITS

Lesson 1: Take Care of You

Athletes who take care of themselves feel better and have more energy for sports and everyday life. In this lesson, athletes will learn what healthy habits are and ways to build more healthy behaviors into their routine.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Athletes learn about different healthy habits and their benefits.
- Coaches and parents/caregivers support athletes to identify one thing that they will do support their health.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- None

LESSON OUTLINE

20 MINUTES TOTAL	DESCRIPTION
3 minutes	Welcome and Gather
11 minutes	Healthy Habits Challenge
3 minutes	Athlete Question of the Day
3 minutes	Closing



WELCOME AND GATHER (3 minutes)

Invite athletes to walk with a partner and discuss their morning routine until everyone arrives.
What is something you do to get your day off to a good start?

To begin the lesson, call everyone in with your designated signal.

Once athletes are gathered, introduce the Fitness through Sport lesson of the day.

Today's lesson is called 'Take Care of You!' Healthy habits are things that we do to take care of bodies and feel our best. For example, washing our hands stops us from spreading germs that can make us sick.

What are some things you do to take care of your body?

Note to Coaches: Despite severe need and higher health risks, people with intellectual disabilities (ID) are often denied health services and have a shorter life span than the general population. This lesson is designed to create awareness for athletes and their families about the importance of regular screening and self-care practices.



HEALTHY HABITS CHALLENGE (11 minutes)

Purpose: Highlight different ways that athletes can practice self-care.

Directions:

- *We are going to see how much we know about healthy habits – or things we can do to take care of our bodies!*
- Decide if you will discuss as a team or in partners.
- Read the habit and benefit, and then share the challenge.
- Allow time for pairs to discuss or ask athletes to raise their hand. Consider a time limit if needed to keep the athletes focused.
- Modify the challenges, as needed. Skip topics that may not be relevant or appropriate for your athletes.

HABIT	BENEFITS	CHALLENGE
Eat at least 5 fruits and vegetables every day	Immunity: this helps fight off colds, keeps eyes and skin healthy, strong, heart muscles and bones	List as many fruits and vegetables as you can.
Exercise at least 30 minutes every day	Heart health, mood, energy, strength, speed, endurance, flexibility, disease prevention, obesity	List as many different sports or activities as you can.
Get regular check-ups and attend Special Olympics Healthy Athlete Screenings	<p>MedFest: Regular physical exams by a physician can ensure you don't have any medical conditions that could make you sick.</p> <p>Fit Feet: It is important to have the right shoes and socks to prevent foot and ankle pain.</p> <p>Healthy Hearing: Hearing exams can help discover possible ear and hearing problems.</p> <p>Opening Eyes: Eye exams will help determine if you need special glasses, sunglasses or goggles for your sport.</p>	<p>List as many different types of health care practitioners that you can think of. A practitioner can be anyone who helps us when we are sick or injured or have something wrong with part of our body. (examples — modify for your region)</p> <p><i>Eye: Optometrist</i> <i>Foot: Podiatrist</i> <i>Eating: Dietitian or nutritionist</i> <i>Teeth: Dentist</i> <i>Ear: Audiologist</i> <i>Sports Injury: Physiotherapist, Athletic Trainer</i></p>
Get at least 7 hours a sleep each night	<p>After a workout, your body needs sufficient time to repair and refuel the muscles worked during exercise! Sleep and rest days can help your body recover, give you focus and motivation, which makes it possible to bring your best self to any physical activity you choose.</p> <p>A good night's sleep will help your brain absorb everything you learn each day.</p>	<p>List things you can do to help you get a good night's sleep:</p> <p><i>Limit screens</i> <i>Relax</i> <i>Routine</i> <i>Avoid caffeine</i> <i>Cool, dark room</i> <i>Exercise</i></p>
Practice good personal hygiene	<p>Personal hygiene is how you keep your body clean and stops you from getting sick and spreading germs.</p> <p>Germs from sweat can also build up in our clothes so it's important to wash workout clothes regularly as well.</p>	<p>List ways to prevent germs from spreading.</p> <p><i>Wash hands after using the bathroom</i> <i>Wash hands before eating or preparing food</i> <i>Don't touch your face/eyes</i> <i>Shower after sweating</i> <i>Change out of sweaty clothes</i> <i>Wash workout clothing</i></p>
Take care of your oral health	Taking care of your teeth prevents cavities and keeps your teeth and gums strong. It also prevents diseases, such as cancer and heart disease! More information can be found here .	<p>List ways to take care of your teeth.</p> <p><i>Brush</i> <i>Floss</i> <i>Check ups</i> <i>Avoid sticky, sugary foods</i></p>



ATHLETE QUESTION OF THE DAY (3 minutes)

What is one healthy habit you already do? What is one that you would like to add?

- Introduce the [Weekly Habit Tracker](#) for keeping track of their healthy habits.



CLOSING (3 minutes)

Thank the athletes for their participation and effort. **Share a strategy that worked for you when adding a new healthy habit to your routine.**

Reminders:

- [Homeplay: Healthy Habits Scoreboard](#) — *In this Homeplay activity, you will answer questions to find out how well you take care of yourself! You can also ask a parent/caregiver or friend to complete it with you, and discuss ways you can support each other to stay healthy.*
- Share feedback and praise for effort and healthy habits you observed.

Coach Reflection:

- What worked?
- What did not work? What can be done differently?

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- [Homeplay: Healthy Habits Scoreboard](#)
- [Oral Health and the Body](#)
- [Healthy Athletes](#) — check with your local Special Olympics office to find out where your athletes can access these free health screenings and education.