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# OVERVIEW OF HEALTH TIPS

## What are Fitness Captains?

Fitness Captains are athletes on a sports team who lead their team in activities related to fitness and a healthy lifestyle. Fitness Captains can use their leadership and communication skills to encourage and empower fellow athletes to be healthy and fit on all Special Olympics teams.

Fitness Captains will work closely with their coaches to make sure health and fitness is a key component of the sports experience by participating in these leadership roles:



Teaching Healthy Habits



Leading Warm-Ups and Cool-Downs

## What are Health Tips?

As a Fitness Captain, you are expected to share a health education tip at each training session. You should teach healthy habits that improve fitness and sports performance. Health Tips are small but useful pieces of advice that can help you and your teammates make healthy choices. They should be brief, only 2-5 minutes.

When possible, make the health tips interactive! You can engage your teammates by:

- Asking them questions
- Allowing different members of your team to answer
- Providing examples
- Giving them a goal and check-in with their progress at the next training session

## When Should I Share Health Tips with my Team?

You might want to share a health tip during water breaks or cool-down stretches. Make sure you talk to your coach about the best time to share a health tip at your sports practice!

## Practice Makes Perfect!

Considering practicing your Health Tip before your training session. Ask a mentor, friend, family member to listen and give you feedback before you share the tip with your teammates.



**Be Confident:** Practice reading your tip many times. Do not feel like you must memorize your tip. It is okay to read it from a piece of paper or a device.



**Emphasize Words:** Your voice is a powerful tool. You can use pauses between sentences, don't speak too slow or too fast and use your voice to emphasize words.



**Watch your Body Language:** Using your body movements can be an effective tool for adding emphasis and clarity to your words. Consider your facial expressions, eye contact, and body movements when speaking.



**Keep Calm:** You can always pause and re-start the word or phrase if you are feeling nervous or made a mistake. Take a deep breath – you can do this!



**Visual Aids:** You can bring visual aids, like your Fit 5 Guide or photos, to help you when you present your Health Tip. This may help your teammates remember what you said.



## Can I Create my Own Health Tips?

Yes! Here's a blank template for you to use when preparing your Health Tips. You can reuse this outline every time you make a new Health Tip.

<b>Topic:</b> _____	
When will you share your tip?	
What do you want your teammates to know?	
What do you want them to do?	
Health Tip (3-4 Sentences)	



## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Throughout your sports season, you can refer to this guide for Health Tips and resources to share with your teammates! Below is a description of what to expect each week and how to use the information:

1. **Health Tip Category:** This is the topic of the Health Tips. It is underlined.
  - Example: Four Parts of Physical Activity
2. **Tips to Share:** These are ready-to-share tips on the health topic
3. **Additional Resources and Photos:** These are resources like pictures and videos that relate to the weekly health education topic. You can use these resources to help share information!




# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY HEALTH TIPS

## Four Parts of Physical Activity

### Tips to Share:

1. You can become a better athlete by enjoying physical activity outside of your sports practice. There are many ways to be physically active. **Certain exercises can help you improve the skills needed for your sport.** All exercises work your body in different ways. To stay healthy, you need to incorporate these four different types of exercises: **endurance, strength, flexibility and balance.**
2. **Incorporating different types of exercises into your routine can help you perform better at practices and competitions! Try using the Fit 5 Fitness Cards and Videos,** which have different exercises for all four parts of physical activity.
3. To stay healthy, you need to incorporate these four different types of exercises: endurance, strength, flexibility and balance. **Endurance is the ability of your body to keep moving for long periods of time.** Endurance might also be called aerobic fitness, cardiovascular fitness, cardio. The goal is to do an endurance activity for at least 30 minutes, 5 days per week. **What are some examples of endurance exercises?**
4. To stay healthy, you need to incorporate these four different types of exercises: endurance, strength, flexibility and balance. **Strength is the ability of your body to do work.** Try to do strength exercises 2-3 days each week, for up to 30 minutes. **What are some examples of strength exercises?**

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5. To stay healthy, you need to incorporate these four different types of exercises: endurance, strength, flexibility and balance. **Flexibility is the ability of your body to move easily in all directions.** The best way to get flexible is to stretch every day! Being flexible makes it easier to do sports skills and helps prevent injuries to your muscles and joints! What are some examples of flexibility exercises?
  6. To stay healthy, you need to incorporate these four different types of exercises: endurance, strength, flexibility and balance. **Balance is the ability of your body to stay upright or stay in control of your movements.** Balance helps you to stay in control when you are playing sports and helps you to avoid falls. Try to do balance training 2 -3 days each week for up to 15 minutes. What are some examples of balance exercises?

## Progression and Intensity

### Tips to Share:

1. Physical activity guidelines recommend at least **150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity.** Moderate intensity is exercise in which you can talk comfortably, while vigorous activity is one in which your heart will beat fast and talking will be difficult. To reach 150 minutes, consider exercising for 30 minutes a day, 5 days per week recommendation.
2. One way to **measure your workout intensity is doing the Talk Test.** If you are working out hard, you should not be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath.



## Exercising in Colder Weather

### Tips to Share:

1. **Outdoor exercise is good for your body and mind**, no matter the time of year. As the seasons change from winter to spring, you might notice that the weather is also changing. **It's important to be prepared to exercise in different weather conditions so that you stay safe and prevent injuries.**
2. **Layer Up!** Wear multiple layers to keep you warm. Skip active wear made from cotton, which soaks up sweat and holds in moisture. **You can remove layers as your body heats up.**
3. **Protect your extremities. Fingers, ears, nose, and toes are affected most by chilly temperatures.** To keep your extremities from freezing, wear a hat or headband and gloves or mittens. You can always take them off and tuck them in a pocket if you get warm. Thick socks also help.
4. **Drink water. The body's thirst signals might be delayed in colder temperatures**, but you are still losing fluids through sweat and breathing in lower temperature. Remember to drink water before, during and after your workout.

## Exercising in Warmer Weather

### Tips to Share:

1. **Stay hydrated.** When we exercise in warmer weather, we sweat more to keep our body cool. However, **the more you sweat, the more water your body loses.** Remember to drink water before, during and after your workout.
2. **Ease Up.** Exercising in warmer weather can be difficult and exhausting. **It's okay to take your workout slower** and gradually get used to the heat.





3. **Avoid being in direct sunlight during the hottest part of the day** and exercise in the cool morning or evening. In the heat of midday, take cover under shade, wear UV protective sunglasses, wear a wide brimmed hat or visor, sun protective clothing and apply sunscreen.
4. **Avoid being in direct sunlight during the hottest part of the day** and exercise in the cool morning or evening. In the heat of midday, take cover under shade, wear UV protective sunglasses, wear a wide brimmed hat or visor, sun protective clothing and apply sunscreen.
5. **Wear light-colored, lightweight clothing.** Dark colors absorb the heat, which can make you feel as if you're wrapped in a warm blanket. Heavyweight, tight-fitting clothing will also heat you up. Keep clothing loose and light. **More air will be able to circulate over your skin, keeping you cool.**

### [Additional Resources and Photos](#)



# HYDRATION HEALTH TIPS

## Signs of Dehydration

### Tips to Share:

1. Your body needs water to keep it working properly. **If you lose too much water without drinking more, your body and mind won't work as well.** This is called dehydration. Drink enough water throughout the day to stay healthy, hydrated and perform at your best. **Your goal with Fit 5 is to drink 5 bottles of water per day.**
2. Drinking the right amount of water is important for your health and can help your sport performance. **Did you know that dehydration of 1-2% of your body weight can decrease your sport performance?** You lose water every day when you go to the bathroom, sweat, and even when you breathe. If you lose too much water without drinking more, your body won't work as well.
3. Don't wait until you are thirsty for a drink – drink water before, during and after your workout or sport practice. **It is important to watch out for the signs of dehydration, especially in hot weather:**
  - You feel thirsty
  - You are tired or sluggish
  - You have a headache
  - Your mouth is dry
  - Your urine is dark yellow or brown



## Healthy Beverage Choices

### **Tips to Share:**

1. Your body needs to stay hydrated to keep it working properly. There are many beverage options available, but some of them are healthier choices than others. Water is the best choice to stay hydrated and perform your best. You can think about beverage choices like a stop light:
  - Sodas, energy drinks and sports drinks are NOT good beverage choices. This is your RED light.
    - Sodas, energy drinks, and sports drinks have extra sugar and can make you gain weight. Energy drinks and many sodas also have caffeine. Caffeine does not help you stay hydrated.
  - Moderate amounts of low-fat milks and 100% fruit juice are also good choices in small amounts. This is your YELLOW light.
  - Water is the best choice for a beverage! This is your GREEN light.
    - Drink water every day! If you like flavored drinks, try sparkling water or add a few pieces of fruit into your water bottle.

## Additional Resources and Photos



# NUTRITION HEALTH TIPS

## Eat the Rainbow


### Tips to Share:

1. Healthy eating is important to both your health and fitness. This means **eating a variety of foods that give you the nutrients you need** to properly fuel your body. **It keeps your body and mind healthy, and increases your sport performance and recovery.**
2. **A healthy diet includes foods from all the different food groups.** If, for example, you just eat only fruits and vegetables, your muscles will be weak. If you never eat vegetables, may get sick a lot.

Save junk food like desserts, chips and sodas for special occasions. If you eat too much sugar, it may give you a boost of energy initially but then you'll crash and feel tired and sluggish soon after.

Make half of your plate fruits or vegetables. Fill the other half with foods like whole grains, dairy and protein.

3. **Here are some ways to eat more fruits and vegetables:**
  - Eat a fruit a day with lunch
  - Make half your plate fruits and vegetables every day. Have a salad for lunch
  - When you want crunchy foods, eat apple slices, little carrots, celery sticks and snap peas
  - Make a fruit smoothie with low-fat milk or low-fat plain yogurt for dessert
  - Try fruits and vegetables mixed into your meals, instead of as a side



4. **Eating well helps you both on and off the field. It keeps your body and mind healthy, and increases your sport performance and recovery.** It keeps the body and mind healthy by:

- Giving your body the energy to be active and function well
- Helping your body to grow and repair itself
- Helping the body to fight infections and illness

Healthy eating can increase your sports performance and recovery by:

- Giving you more energy
- Strengthening your muscles and bones
- Improving your focus

5. Fruits and vegetables give your body important vitamins, minerals and energy needed for good health. They provide energy for your sports performance. **Eat the rainbow of colors** – mix the red, green, orange and yellow foods.

## Healthy Snack Ideas

### Tips to Share:

1. Snacking is a great way to make sure you are **full of energy. It is important to keep your snacks healthy.** Make sure you have a healthy snack 2-3 hours before your workout, and 2 hours after your workout! Here are a **few ideas for tasty snacks** that are packed with fruits and vegetables:

- Apples and your favorite nut butter (peanut, almond, sunflower)
- Low-fat unsweetened yogurt with berries
- Low-fat cottage cheese with tomatoes
- Carrots or peppers dipped in hummus
- Celery with peanut butter and raisins



## Perfect Portions


### Tips to Share:

1. Healthy eating is important to your health and sports performance. **Eat what your body needs and watch the amounts of food you put on your plate. A fun way to remember portion sizes is comparing them to the size of sports equipment.** The size of sports equipment on the left is about the same size as one serving of the foods on the right [*use Perfect Portions graphic*].
2. Here are some other tips to help you **eat mindfully and maintain portion control**:
  - Use smaller plates and bowls
  - Limit distractions during meals
  - Keep extra food off the table
  - Eat slowly
  - Stop eating when you are full

## Pre-Competition Meals

### Tips to Share:


1. A **pre-competition meal** should give you **the energy you need to perform** and prevent hunger during the competition. It also provides you with the **extra water you need to avoid dehydration**.
2. Before competitions, **avoid fatty foods** like potato chips, fried food and sweets. These will take longer to digest and do not provide you with enough immediate energy.

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3. **The timing of your meal is important so that your body has enough time to digest the food.** If your body doesn't digest the food in time, you might feel sick during your competition. The time it takes your body to digest food is:
    - 3-4 hours to digest a large meal
    - 2-3 hours to digest a small meal
    - Less than 1 hour to digest a small snack
  4. **Be sure to eat foods you like and usually eat before competitions. Your pre-competition food should be high in protein and carbohydrates.** If your competition or workout starts within an hour or less, try eating:
    - Greek yogurt (without added sugar) and fruit
    - A low-sugar, high protein snack bar
    - A piece of fruit, such as a banana, orange or apple and a piece of cheese

## **Strong Bones**

### **Tips to Share:**

1. Our bones support us and allow us to move. There are many things we can do to keep our bones healthy and strong! **Weight-bearing and resistance activities are best for your bone health.** Try some of the Fit 5 Fitness Cards and videos for strength!
2. **So many foods can help you build healthy bones:**
  - Dairy foods like cheese, yogurt and milk
  - Dark green vegetables like broccoli, kale and brussels sports
  - Seafood like salmon, tuna and shrimp

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3. Our bones support us and allow us to move. There are many things we can do to keep our bones healthy and strong! Vitamin D, calcium rich foods and dark green veggies **help build and keep your bones strong**. This can prevent fractures, and prevent muscle pain and weakness.

### [Additional Resources and Photos](#)





# WORKOUT READINESS HEALTH TIPS

## Tips to Share:

1. Getting yourself ready to exercise can **make a big difference** in how that workout or game goes. Having the right clothing, supplies and equipment, and warming up before exercise helps prevent injuries have a better workout. Use the **Workout Readiness Checklist** to help you be fully prepared!
2. Being ready for your workout doesn't stop at stretching. It's also important to make sure you are wearing **proper clothing and shoes** for the activity you are going to, as well as being **properly hydrated and fueled**. Don't forget to consider the weather, too!
3. Warming up for 5 minutes before exercising helps **prevent injuries. Regardless of the sport, every warm-up should include aerobic activity followed by dynamic stretches.** Aerobic activities are whole body movements like jogging in place that will increase the heart rate. Dynamic stretches consist of active, controlled movements that take body parts through a full range of motion. Some examples are arm circles and leg swings.
4. Dynamic stretches are active controlled movements that take your body through a full range of motion. These are better than traditional/static stretches in the warm-up because the body temperature and heart rate stay elevated. They will help prepare your muscles for exercise, so it's important to focus on the muscles you will be using.

## [Additional Resources and Photos](#)



# COOL-DOWN AND RECOVERY HEALTH TIPS

## Cool-Down Routine

### Tips to Share:

1. When you finish your workout, practice or sport session is complete, **you should always cool-down.** It is just as important to have a good cool-down as it is to have a good warm-up. A good cool-down allows the body to gradually return to a state of rest. A typical cool-down includes light aerobic activity followed by static stretching.
2. **A typical cool-down includes light aerobic activity followed by static stretching.** The aerobic activity should gradually decrease in intensity/difficulty. It could be a short jog/walk at 50% intensity with some static stretches. Static stretches are done in place should be held for 30 seconds or more.
3. Here are some tips for static stretching after your workout:
  - Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds
  - Stretch both sides
  - Stretches should not be painful
  - Each sport places stress on different muscles and joints, so try to focus on the major muscles that you used during your workout.
4. After you cool-down, it is important sure to refuel and rehydrate. Follow the **Post-Workout Routine checklist** for more tips!



## Sleep, Rest and Recovery

### Tips to Share:

1. After a workout, **your body needs sufficient time to repair and refuel** the muscles worked during exercise! Sleep and rest days can boost help recovery, focus and motivation, which makes it possible to bring your best self to any physical activity you choose.
2. Doing 30 minutes of medium to hard physical activity 5 days a week is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. It is also important to give your body time off each week from exercise and **get 7-9 hours of sleep every night. Check out the Healthy Sleep Tips and Healthy Sleep Checklist on how to improve your quality of sleep, rest and recovery.**
3. After a workout, **your body needs enough time to repair muscles used during exercise.** Sleep and rest days can boost help recovery, focus and motivation, Having two active rest days during the week and getting enough sleep every night **boosts energy, focus, motivation and performance.** This makes it possible to bring your best self to any physical activity you choose.

### [Additional Resources and Photos](#)