

SCHOOL OF STRENGTH

COACHES PLAYBOOK



Special
Olympics



HELLO COACHES!

Fitness should be a part of every practice. This playbook includes easy games that will get your athletes excited about working out and help teach them the importance of fitness. Use these with the School of Strength workout videos found at [SpecialOlympics.org](https://www.specialolympics.org). Encourage your athletes to work out with these videos regularly and track their progress in their Fitness Tracker.



WWE SUPERSTAR BECKY LYNCH

WARMING UP

A proper warm-up prepares your athletes' muscles for activity. Aerobic activity and dynamic stretches are best for warming up. Make sure you warm up for 5-10 minutes before every exercise session.

ACTIVE PRACTICE

Plan your practices in a way that reduces downtime and maximizes physical activity. This helps keep your athletes engaged and improves their opportunities for fitness.

CONDITIONING

Use this playbook for fun twists on conditioning. Devote 10–15 minutes of each practice to a conditioning session. Different exercises help athletes in different ways. Strength exercises decrease the risk of injuries, and help athletes jump, kick, throw, and move higher, farther, and faster. Endurance exercises increase stamina and energy, and help your athletes get through longer and more challenging practices and competitions.

COOL-DOWN

Cooling down helps decrease the risk of injuries and soreness after practice. Find good cool-down exercises with the Fit 5 Flexibility cards and videos. Make sure you cool down for 5-10 minutes after every exercise session.

BEYOND PRACTICE

Your athletes need support and encouragement in order to reach the adequate levels of physical activity for health benefits and sport improvements. The Fit 5 recommends being active for 5 days per week. Each section in this playbook includes homework ideas. Use these to encourage your athletes to develop good fitness habits at home. Have them use the Fitness Tracker as a way to document their extra activities and track their progress. Reward athletes by providing praise and reinforcement for staying physically active on non-practice days.

NUTRITION & HYDRATION

Nutrition and hydration are important to being a healthy athlete. Good nutrition and hydration can improve athlete focus, energy levels, and recovery. The School of Strength offers additional resources for families and caregivers to improve these elements at home. As a role model to your athletes, you can do your part to reinforce these messages and model positive behavior too. Remind them that food is fuel, and healthy food fuels healthy bodies. Water is always the best drink choice, so encourage your athletes to stay hydrated with water at practice and at home.

Supplement these materials with the Fit 5 Guide for easy tips to share at practice.

Thank you coaches for everything you do!
— *Your friends at Special Olympics*

FLEX YOUR FLEXIBILITY

Stretch and move with your athletes to boost their flexibility and get them warmed up for a hearty workout session. Let your athletes know that these exercises help keep their bodies flexible and protect them from hurting themselves during their workouts.



SPELL YOUR WORKOUT

Put the athletes in charge! Have them choose words (like their name or favorite animal) and spell them. Then do the dynamic stretch or exercise associated with each letter. If you're not sure how to do one, check out the School of Strength Videos or Fit 5 cards for reference.

Spell a word (try your name) with the exercises below!

A	Quick Punches	N	Leg Swings
B	Straight Leg Raises	O	Quick Punches
C	Arm and Leg Raise	P	Bounce and Balance (in place)
D	Bounce and Balance (in place)	Q	Bounce and Balance (back and forth)
E	Leg Swings	R	Standing Rotation
F	Arm Rotations	S	Half Kneeling Chops
G	Single Leg Stance	T	Single Leg Stance
H	Half Kneeling Chops	U	Arm Rotations
I	Arm and Leg Raise	V	Bounce and Balance (back and forth)
J	Walking on a Line	W	Arm and Leg Raise
K	Arm Rotations	X	Arm Rotations
L	Bounce and Balance (in place)	Y	Half Kneeling Chops
M	Leg Swings	Z	Single Leg Stance



HOMEWORK

Ask your athletes to use this worksheet to spell their name before they go to bed twice this week. Remind them to list all the exercises they do in their Fitness Trackers.

FLEX YOUR FLEXIBILITY

ZOO STRETCHES

Warm up or cool-down with these stretches based on some favorites from the animal kingdom!

Warm-Up Stretches



Crab Walk

Sit down on the ground. Put your arms behind your back and walk backwards using your arms and legs. Walk for 30 seconds.



Inchworms

Start in a plank position. Walk your feet up to your hands until your body forms an arch. Now walk your arms forward until you're back in a plank. Repeat 5 times.



Duck Walk

Lower your body into a squat, holding your hands straight out in front of you for balance. Staying in the squat, walk backwards for 20 paces, then forward to return to your original starting spot.

Cool-Down Stretches



Butterfly Stretch

Sit on the ground with the bottoms of your feet touching each other. Let your knees fall towards the floor. Your feet should be close to your body. Sit tall and lean forward over your feet. You should feel a stretch on the inside of the upper part of your legs. Hold for 30 seconds.



Calf Stretch

Stand next to a wall, facing it. Put your hands against the wall at shoulder height. Put one foot in front of the other. Bend your elbows and lean in toward the wall. You will feel a stretch in your calves. Keep your hind knee straight and your hips forward. Make sure your heels stay on the ground. Switch your feet and repeat the stretch, holding for 30 seconds.

HOMEWORK

Ask your athletes to do one flexibility exercise every evening and write down which exercise they did in their tracker. At your next practice, ask everyone to give an example of one they liked.

IGNITE YOUR ENDURANCE

Get your athletes excited about endurance exercise with these fun games that will get them sweating and smiling. Let your athletes know that these exercises build healthy hearts and lungs, which will help them play their favorite sports for longer.

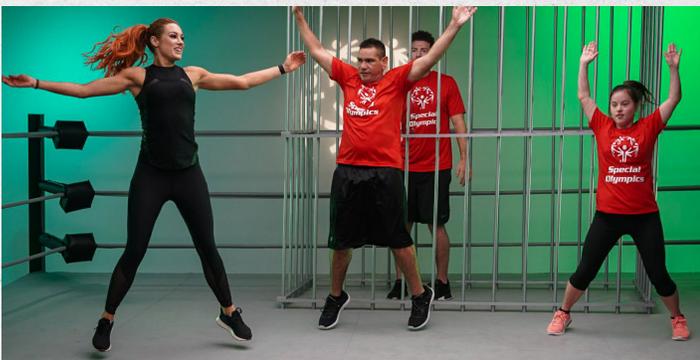


FLIP A COIN WORKOUT

Add a little luck to your athletes' workout. Have them flip a coin to decide what exercise you'll do next. Flip your coin 4 times per set. Try to do 3 sets, with a 30 second break between each set. Use the chart below to get started:

Coin Flip	Heads	Tails
1st	30 Seconds of Victory Laps	30 Seconds of Mountain Climbers
2nd	30 Seconds of Quick Punches	30 Seconds of Jumped Up Jacks
3rd	30 Seconds of Jumping Jack Squats	30 Seconds of Frog Jumps
4th	30 Seconds of Forward Jacks	30 Seconds of Side to Side Hops

Refer to your School of Strength videos and Fit 5 Fitness Cards to see how to do each exercise. Modify the number of exercises to fit the athletic ability of your participants.



HOMWORK

You don't need a gym to exercise. Take the stairs instead of elevators or escalators. Instead of hanging out with a friend at home, go on a hike together. Get off the bus a stop early, and walk the extra distance. At your next practice, have each person tell the group one thing they did that week to sneak in extra exercise!

IGNITE YOUR ENDURANCE



VICTORY LAPS REMIXED

Start by playing upbeat music while your athletes jog in place and then gradually move to doing high knees. Periodically, pause the music. Let them know that when the music stops, they stop. When the music starts playing, they begin again. See who can stop and then start the fastest. Try to play for 10–15 minutes. This one will have everyone laughing!



HOMEWORK

Ask your athletes to go on two 10-minute walks or jogs between practices this week. Try setting up a group chat via text or social media to help keep everyone motivated.

GET SCHOOLED ON STRENGTH

Get your athletes pumped up for strength exercises. Let them know that these exercises build muscles and bones, which makes their bodies healthy and strong.

STRENGTH SCAVENGER HUNT

Cut out these cards, and hide them around the room. Task your athletes to find all the cards. If they find a card, they get to lead the group in doing that exercise. Have them repeat each exercise 2–3 times, focusing on correct form. Whoever collects the most cards wins!

No printer? No problem. Take turns having your athletes pick a number between 1 and 5. Then have everyone do the exercise associated with that number.

1	2	3	4	5
30-Second Plank Hold	10 Curl-Ups	10 Straight Leg Raises (per leg)	10 Chair Squats	10 Shrugs
Hold your body off the ground with both hands, like you're about to do a push-up. Keep your stomach tight and your back straight.	Lie flat on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Reach your arms towards your knees, then lower yourself back down.	Balance against a wall or chair. Slowly lift your leg up in front of you as high as it can go. Then slowly lower it back down again.	Stand in front of a chair with your arms straight out in front of you. Bend your hips and knees until you are seated in the chair. Now stand up, using only your legs.	Stand tall with your arms down by your side. Hold small weights (or water bottles) in your hands. Shrug your shoulders towards your ears. Hold, then lower back down again.
				

HOMWORK

Ask your athletes to do a plank (or modified plank) for 30 seconds or a set of 10 wall push-ups two nights this week. Encourage them to set an alarm or alert on their phone to remind them.

GET SCHOOLED ON STRENGTH

CRAB SOCCER

This twist on soccer works out your triceps and hamstring muscles. You'll need a larger space, like a gymnasium or big open room, and a soccer ball or other lightweight ball. Divide the athletes into two teams. Set up two cones at each end of the space to act as goals. Have the athletes sit down on the ground, put their arms behind their backs and walk using their arms and legs. All moving must be done in this position. Using only their feet they must pass the ball to each other to try to score. Play for 15–20 minutes. Whichever team scores the most goals wins!



HOMEWORK

You don't need weights to work out at home. Challenge your athletes to do 2 sets of 2 sets of Overhead Presses, Side Arm Raises, or Reverse Flys at home using water bottles.



Find in-depth instructions for each exercise at resources.specialolympics.org/health/fitness/fit-5-page.

BOOST YOUR BALANCE

Get your athletes excited for balance exercises with these balance games. Let your athletes know that balance helps them stay in control of their bodies, which will help them stay upright and avoid falls.

INSTRUCTOR SAYS

Have athletes take turns being the instructor! Let them choose from different balance exercises listed on the card and call them out as the class mimics what they do. Switching from exercise to exercise encourages athletes to pay attention to see how well they can match what the instructor is doing.

Exercises:

				
Bounce and Balance (in place)	Walk the Line	Half Kneeling Chops	Leg Lifts	Bounce and Balance (back and forth)

Reference the School of Strength Video #4 to see how to do each exercise.



HOMEWORK

Set up a group text or message. Ask your athletes to perform a balance exercise each morning this week when they wake up, and then text the group what exercise they did. No matter which exercise they choose, ask them to do it for at least 1 minute. Don't let them forget to write it down in their Fitness Trackers!

BOOST YOUR BALANCE



WALK THE MAZE

Why settle for walking a line? Create a maze of tape and get your athletes to walk it. Lay down x's where they have to bounce and balance 5 times before they can keep walking.

Reference the School of Strength Video #4 to see how to do these exercises.



HOMEWORK

You don't need a medicine ball to do a half kneeling chop. Challenge your athletes to pick any lightweight household object to do half kneeling chops with between now and your next practice (water bottle, can of soup, soccer ball, basketball, etc.). Have them take a picture and bring it to your next training session. Whoever does chops with the wackiest object wins.