

Part Two: Practice

APPLYING WHAT IS LEARNED

At Special Olympics, we believe that sports can teach us all important lessons. When we train and strive for a goal, it teaches us to dream. When we struggle, it teaches us determination. When we win, we find joy. And if we lose, we can find the strength to try again.



INTRODUCTION

Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED: Practice offers opportunities to apply the background, inclusive teaching strategies and best practices presented in **Learn**, to introduce fundamental movement and specific sports skills for soccer, basketball and track & field, in a fully inclusive physical education program that supports individualized instruction and ensures fun, safety and success for every student.

WHY PRACTICE?

Oxford Dictionaries defines practice as “**the actual application or use of an idea, belief or method as opposed to theories about such application or use,**” and “**repeated exercise in or performance of an activity or skill so as to acquire or maintain proficiency in it.**”

Therefore, practice provides a time and place for improving skills through repeated application of what is learned. The goal is to become proficient, and even exceptional, at what is “practiced” through discipline and focus, experimentation with new techniques, modifications to form and process, and of course, continued practice.

Through practice, students gain confidence, inspiration and a sense of accomplishment when the learning is accessible and fun, and the teaching is encouraging and paced appropriately to ensure that prerequisite skills are successfully mastered before moving ahead to the next level.

Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED: Practice is built on a differentiated learning approach. Students progress along a continuum of skill advancement that is based on developmental ability, not on an age or curriculum timeline. Progression benchmarks, adaptive tips and coaching charts are provided to assist physical education teachers in determining if, and when, a student is ready to move on to the next level.

Practice transitions students from Fundamental Movements to Sports Skills Development in a flexible format, preparing them to **Play** sports for recreation and competition, and to enjoy fitness for life. The format offers a variety of approaches to each skill so that every student experiences ongoing success and improvement through continued learning, from kindergarten through high school, in school and in the community.



EACH SKILL AREA INCLUDES:

Description. Identifies the essential skill components that will be developed.

Activities. Contains select activities designed to be accessible and provide a range of ability levels to help students develop the skill. Each activity includes the equipment needed, a description of how to conduct the activity, and a variation as another idea to add to the activity.

Suggested Skill Progression. Suggested performance benchmarks at a Basic, Proficient and Advanced level.

- Basic level describes components of the skill that may be emerging or missing as the student develops the skill.
- Proficient level describes the essential skill components that are present to perform the skill successfully.
- Advanced level describes more complex components that may be present in a student who has a higher skill level and can perform the skill in a variety of situations.

Teaching Tips for Success. Provides strategies and suggestions for adaptations and modifications for helping students participate in the activity and develop the skill.

USE THE TEACHING-LEARNING CYCLE: EVERYONE SUCCEEDS, EVERY ACCOMPLISHMENT IS CELEBRATED

When teaching is inclusive, success is measured individually and according to ability. Accomplishments are equally rewarding for the student who stays at the same level and makes continuous progress, as for the student who advances from basic skills to proficiency with ease. Continuous assessment allows for setting achievable goals so that all students can experience accomplishment at the level of their ability. In an Inclusive Physical Education program, every accomplishment is celebrated!



PRACTICE:

Fundamental Movements

Fundamental Movements introduces movements that are essential to learning how the body moves and are also foundational to most sport skills. In this section, students experience activities that will help develop these fundamental skills while also interacting with others and having fun learning. The activities are appropriate for elementary age students who are in an inclusive, adapted or combine physical education class.

STUDENTS DEVELOP FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

Manipulative Skills – These are skills that move an object or ball by projecting it into space or absorbing the force as in catching. Many physical activities use manipulative skills and they are basic to many sports.

- Throw – Overhand and Underhand
- Underhand Roll
- Catch
- Kick
- Bounce/Dribble
- Strike with hands or an implement

Balance – Balance is the foundation for all motor skills and is needed for success in learning sport skills.

- Static – balance in a stationary position.
- Dynamic – balance while moving.

Locomotor Skills – These are skills where the body travels from one place to another in the space. They are basic to participating in all physical activities and many are basic to participation in sports.

- Walk
- Run
- Gallop
- Hop
- Jump – Vertical and Horizontal
- Slide
- Skip
- Leap



COGNITIVE SKILLS – These are skills that are used to process information. They represent knowledge, understanding, evaluating, analyzing and remembering.

- Follow directions
- Identify names of equipment
- Understand concept of a team
- Understand activity vocabulary such as team, boundary, goal, score, players, positions or target
- Communicate ideas and knowledge about the activity
- Understand and follow safety and activity rules
- Understand and follows start and stop signals
- Stay focused on activity
- Solve movement problems
- Set goals for improvement
- Remember a sequence of actions or directions
- Apply corrective feedback
- Demonstrate knowledge by explaining or showing a skill or idea
- Make choices
- Apply knowledge of a skill and uses it in an activity

SOCIAL SKILLS – These are skills students use to communicate and interact with others, participate in an activity with others and to communicate their ideas, needs, feelings and preferences.

- Take turn/wait patiently for a turn
- Ask for help
- Share equipment and space
- Cooperate with a partner, group or team
- Use equipment appropriately
- Demonstrate persistence
- Try new activities
- Listen to positive and constructive feedback
- Respect others feelings, ideas and abilities
- Accept consequences for behavior choices
- Demonstrate fairness and honesty
- Listen to the ideas of others
- Take responsibility for actions
- Take leadership as well as follow
- Encourage and help others



MANIPULATIVE SKILLS

These are fundamental skills used in most sports and physical activities. In this section the following manipulative skills are included:

- **Throw – Overhand and Underhand**
- **Underhand Roll**
- **Catch**
- **Kick**
- **Bounce/Dribble**
- **Strike with hands or an implement**



THROW

Throwing is the act of propelling a ball or other object forward. It is a fundamental skill used in daily living and for many sports, including baseball, softball, tennis and field events such as shot put and javelin. Throwing and catching go hand in hand since often practicing one requires doing the other.

OVERHAND THROW

Description: The overhand throw involves coordination of the whole body to throw a ball or object. For a successful throw, the student also uses eye-hand coordination, strength and balance. The goal of the overhand throw is to project a ball or object forward, across the space and toward a target.

Activities

Activity: Over the Line

Equipment: One ball and one poly spot for each student. A rope tied across the space or between two volleyball standards on a diagonal, with one end high and one end lower. The diagonal rope allows students to choose a height to throw over so they can achieve success.

Description: Students stand on their poly spots, which are placed 5-10 feet away from the diagonal rope where they choose a height for their throws. On the teacher's signal, the students throw their balls over the rope. They pick up their poly spots, go under the rope, retrieve their balls and repeat their throw from the other side of the rope. Students continue to practice throwing from each side of the rope and they can change the height for their throws.

Variation: Students can start close to the rope and on each throw move their poly spots back by one foot to challenge the power of their throws over the rope.

Activity: Wall Targets

Equipment: One ball, one poly spot and one wall target for each student or each pair of students. The wall targets can be different sizes of paper taped to the wall, a hoop taped to the wall or laminated pictures of letters, numbers, cartoon characters or shapes.

Description: Students place their poly spot at a distance they choose from the target. They practice the correct technique for the overhand throw while aiming at the wall target. Students can choose to adjust the distance for their throws. If students are in pairs, they alternate turns.

Variation: Students can choose to throw at different targets in the space. The targets can be placed at different heights on the wall.



Skill Progression

Basic

- Opposition is not used in the throw and the elbow and hand are held close to the body
- The ball or object is projected downward instead of forward
- The throwing hand is not established and the student switches frequently

Proficient

- The non-throwing side of the body faces the intended target and the ball or object is held in the throwing hand first outstretched (the T position) then with the elbow at a 90 degree angle, hand near the ear
- The hips and shoulder rotate while the non-throwing side foot steps forward
- Weight is transferred from the back foot to the stepping foot to initiate throwing action
- The follow through release occurs with the throwing arm moving diagonally across the body
- Focuses on the intended target

Advanced

- Throws accurate, hitting close to or on the target
- Throwing action is consistently correct and ball or object is thrown with force
- Ball or object can be thrown for near and far distance

Activity: Knock It Off

Equipment: One ball or short 2 foot foam noodle and one poly spot for each student or pair of students. Twelve to fifteen cones of different sizes, chairs or cardboard boxes as supports for objects placed on top to knock off. Objects to knock off the cones, chairs or boxes can be a ball, bowling pin, Frisbee, small box, a balloon taped to the support, a stack of beanbags or any other light weight object that can be used as a target.

Description: Students place their poly spot at the preferred distance from the stand with the knock off items. They take turns using an overhand throw to knock off as many items as they can. Peer partners can take turns putting the items back on the stand.

Variation: The teacher can set a time limit for students to see how many objects they can knock off using the overhand throw from a designated distance. Students can throw in teams or from different distances and locations.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Focus on correct technique before accuracy.
- Practice the technique without a ball or object.
- Students can start facing the target with the front of their body to practice the elbow up and step forward before adding the preparation and follow through parts of the throw.
- Use poly spots to show where the foot steps forward on the throw.
- Use cues, such as "Elbow Up," "Step and Throw" and "Eyes on target."
- Emphasize the "Preparation T" shape, the action "Elbow in L" shape and "Follow through X" shape.
- Use a tactile prompt, a light touch on the student's throwing hand and opposite foot to emphasize opposition.
- Use a variety of ball sizes, textures, weights and colors to fit the student's grip.



UNDERHAND THROW

Description: The underhand throw is used to project a ball or object a short distance for a sport like bocce or a farther distance such as a softball pitch. The student uses opposition, balance and eye-hand coordination.

Activities

Activity: Hit the Spot

Equipment: Twelve to fifteen poly spots or paper plates, two to three beanbags for each student, one long rope to form a large circle or use a painted circle that may already be in the space.

Description: Poly spots or paper plates are arranged randomly inside the circle. Students stand outside the circle and throw their beanbags using the underhand throw and aim for a poly spot or paper plate. For a challenge, students stand at varied distances from the circle or change their place around the circle.

Variation: Numbers or letters can be marked on the poly spots or paper plates and students can add up the points for their throws or use the letters to spell a word.

Activity: Bucket, Box or Bag Toss

Equipment: Twelve to sixteen small plastic buckets, small cardboard boxes, paper bags or use a combination of all three items. One beanbag or foam ball for each student, and one poly spot or tape mark for each bucket, box or bag. Arrange the items around the perimeter of the space with a poly spot or tape mark to designate where the students stand to throw the ball or beanbag.

Description: Students stand on the poly spot or tape mark and use an underhand throw to throw their ball or beanbag into a bucket, box or bag. They can only move to another bucket, box or bag when they have successfully thrown the ball or beanbag into the bucket, box or bag.

Variation: Buckets, boxes or bags can be marked with letters or numbers. Students can see if they can throw to specific letters to spell their names, or if numbers are used they can add up the numbers for a total score.

Activity: Hoop Target Throw

Equipment: Four balls or beanbags and two hoops for each pair of students.

Description: Students place their hoops 10-20 feet apart flat on the floor. Each student stands by his hoop. First, one student throws his ball or beanbag towards his partner's hoop. Each student has two tries with the two balls or beanbags. Then, they switch roles and the partner throws his balls or beanbags into his partner's hoop. Students get a point if their beanbag or ball lands in the hoop. Students then switch sides as they retrieve their balls or beanbags and repeat, taking turns to throw the balls or beanbags into the opposing hoop.

Variation: Students can add another hoop to provide two targets or add another beanbag or ball.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Remind students to step with the opposite foot and aim at the target with the throwing hand.
- Use a variety of balls and objects with different weights, textures, sizes and colors so students can easily grip their ball.
- Have students point to the target before they throw to reinforce aim.
- Students can start close to the target and as accuracy and technique improve they can move farther away from the target.



Skill Progression

Basic

- The throwing hand is not established and the student switches frequently
- Opposition is not consistently used in the throw
- The release is upward instead of forward toward a target
- Uses two hands to throw ball

Proficient

- Opposition is used consistently. Steps forward with foot opposite throwing arm, knees bend as ball is released
- Starts with arm behind body and swings smoothly downward and forward to release ball or object
- Follows through in the direction of the target
- Body faces direction of the throw, shoulders face target
- Focuses on the target and accuracy is near or on target

Advanced

- Underhand throwing technique is consistent and throwing motion is a smooth action
- Accuracy is close to or on the target consistently
- Underhand throw is successful to targets at varying distances and heights



UNDERHAND ROLL

Description: The underhand roll uses opposition to roll a ball on the ground or floor toward a partner or a target. This skill is used in bowling, bocce or for a kickball pitch.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Use demonstration and emphasize a low knee bend on the release.
- Provide a low hurdle or tunnel to define space and direction, and to emphasize the roll.
- Student can practice underhand roll technique without a ball to practice opposition and a low release.
- Use visual aids.

Activities

Activity: Roll and Bowl

Equipment: Two to three plastic bowling pins or empty one liter soda bottles, one ball and one poly spot for each student. The ball should be easy to grip with one hand.

Description: Students set up the bowling pins or bottles against a wall. The pins or bottles can be side-by-side, one in front of the other or spaced apart. Students place the poly spots at a distance of their choosing and practice rolling the ball at the target. When the targets are knocked over, students reset the targets and take another roll. Each time the pins or bottles are set up, the students can choose a different arrangement.

Variation: Add more bowling pins or bottles to make different arrangements. One idea is for two pins or bottles to be spaced apart halfway between the poly spot and the pins or bottles used as targets. The student rolls the ball so it goes between the spaced pins or bottles and then toward the target.

Activity: Partner Cooperative Rolling

Equipment: Two cones and one foam noodle. Cones and the noodle can be any size available. The foam noodle is placed across the top of the cones to form a bridge. One ball for each student, any size.

Description: Students stand about 3-5 feet back on each side of the bridge. The goal is for students to roll the ball under the bridge to reach their partner. Students continue to roll the ball back and forth to see how many times they can roll without hitting the bridge.

Variation: Each student has a ball and the partners simultaneously roll their two balls under the bridge without the balls hitting or hitting the bridge.

Activity: Team Rolling Fun

Equipment: Four balls of various sizes for each group of five to six students. One poly spot for each student.

Description: Students are organized into groups of five to six and form a large circle. They each stand on a poly spot. One student starts with the ball, calls the name of a group member and rolls the ball to that student. Then, this student calls another student's name and rolls the ball to her. This continues until everyone has had an opportunity to roll the ball. Next, a second ball is added, so two balls are rolled, then a third and a fourth. The goal is to keep all four balls rolling and not let them go out of the circle.

Variation: The circle can be enlarged to use more space and to increase the force of the roll. Students can also establish a repeatable rolling pattern so the ball is rolled to the same person each time.



Skill Progression

Basic

- A back swing is not used and palm does not face the target
- Opposition is not consistent for each roll
- Ball bounces or ball is released up like an underhand throw

Proficient

- Front of the body faces the target, opposition is consistently used and knees bend on the step and release
- Rolling arm swings backward and then forward with palm of rolling hand facing the target
- Focuses on the target
- Ball rolls along the ground or floor smoothly
- Releases low to the ground or floor and moves toward the target

Advanced

- Opposition is used consistently on every roll
- Ball stays low to the floor or ground and aim is accurate
- Underhand roll can occur at different distances with a force adjustment for distance
- Ball rolls in a straight pathway toward target



CATCH

Description: When students catch a ball, they visually track it as it approaches their hands using eye-hand coordination, balance and strength. The force of receiving a ball is absorbed by a slight bend in the hands and arms.

Activities

Activity: Scarf Toss

Equipment: One lightweight scarf for each student (juggling scarves or lightweight material in squares).

Description: The teacher directs the student to perform the following sequence of tosses and catches:

1. Use throwing hand to toss the scarf high into the air and catch it as if floats down.
2. Toss and catch the scarf with non-throwing hand.
3. Toss with one hand and catch with the other hand.
4. Toss the scarf and let it float down almost to the floor and catch it before it lands on the floor.
5. Toss the scarf up and out in front of the body and move under it to catch it.
6. Toss the scarf up as high as possible and jump up to grab it.

Variation: Ask students to create a new way to toss and catch the scarf. They can toss the scarf, spin around and catch or try to toss and catch two scarves.

Activity: Partner Roll, Throw, Catch

Equipment: Three different size balls for each set of partners. These can be tennis balls, foam balls (small or large), beach balls (small or large), playground balls or sports balls, such as a soccer ball, basketball or volleyball.

Description: Partners start 5-8 feet apart facing each other. One partner selects one of the three balls and uses an underhand roll to his partner. The partner catches the rolled ball and uses an underhand throw to give the ball back to his partner, who catches the thrown ball. Then the roll, catch, throw, catch pattern is repeated four to six times. Next, the second partner chooses a different ball and starts with a roll to the first partner repeating the same sequence of roll, catch, throw, catch. Partners alternate choosing a ball and starting the pattern.

Variation: Students can change the tempo of the rolls and throws, add an overhand throw and increase the distance between the partners.

Activity: Catching Surprise

Equipment: A box filled with different objects that can be caught such as beanbags, foam Frisbees, stuffed animals, foam shapes, balls of different textures, sizes and colors, small foam rings, balls made of crunched up newspaper with tape to hold them together, rubber chickens, fish or other animals or balloons. Fill one box with five to eight different objects for each group of four to six students.

Description: Students are organized into groups of four to six. They stand in a single file line. One student stands 5-8 feet away facing the line and is the underhand or overhand thrower. The box is next to the thrower. The thrower picks an object from the box, throws it to the first student in the line, who catches the object and throws it back to the thrower and then goes to the end of the line. The thrower catches the object and places the object back in the box. Next, the thrower selects another object and throws it to the second student in line, who catches the object, throws it back to the thrower, and goes to the end of the line. This activity continues until the thrower has thrown to all students in the line. Then, one of the students switches to be the new thrower. The thrower surprises the catcher by selecting different objects out of the box. Each student takes a turn as a thrower.

Variation: The thrower can change the distance and height of the throw. The thrower can also project the object with a roll or bounce instead of an underhand or overhand throw.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a suspended ball attached to a basketball hoop or held by the teacher and swing the ball lightly towards the student to catch.
- Use a light weight foam ball and toss to student using an arched pathway.
- Use verbal cues, "Hands up" or "Eyes on the ball."
- Roll a ball to a student so she has time to track the ball into her hands.
- Have student practice an underhand self toss and catch with a foam ball.
- Let the ball bounce before the catch for more time to track the ball.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Ball is trapped with hands and arms against the chest
- Student loses focus of the ball and misses the catch

Proficient

- Reaches with hands and arms towards ball and absorbs ball force with a slight arm bend
- Ball is caught by hands only
- Eyes track ball into the hands
- Fingers point up for a ball coming from a high level
- Fingers point down for a ball coming from a low level

Advanced

- Moves toward a ball to catch when needed
- Catches a ball from different heights and distances



KICK

Description: The kick is performed with different parts of the foot, primarily with the toe and instep (laces). Eye-foot coordination, balance and strength are used to complete kicking a stationary ball, or a ball rolling toward or away from the student. The kick skill also includes controlled dribbling.

Activities

Activity: Goal Kick

Equipment: Two plastic bowling pins or empty one liter soda bottles, two poly spots and one ball (size can vary) for each student or pair of students.

Description: The pins or bottles are set up like a goal. Students can choose the goal size. One poly spot is placed 10-15 feet from the goal and a second poly spot is placed 5 feet from the goal. The student stands on the first poly spot and lightly rolls the ball towards the second poly spot, then runs to kick the ball into the goal before the ball reaches the second poly spot. Partners alternate turns.

Variation: One partner can roll the ball for the other partner as a challenge to run and kick the ball into the goal.

Activity: Ready, Set, Everyone Kick

Equipment: One playground size (8.5 inches) ball, one poly spot and one beanbag for each student.

Description: Students line up in one even straight line across the space. They place their balls on the beanbags to keep them from rolling. Students then take a number of steps backward, based on their age; six year old students take six steps backward, ten year old students take ten steps backward. On the teacher's command, "Ready, Set, Kick" all students, at the same time, run and kick the ball as hard as they can. Then on a second command, "Retrieve your ball" students retrieve their balls, place them back on the beanbags and wait for the teacher to signal for the kick. The second command is not given until everyone has made contact with the ball and kicked it forward. Kicks can be repeated as many times as the teacher designates.

Variation: The teacher can signal for the kick and, starting at one end of the line, one student runs and kicks. They continue this until everyone in the line has had turn to kick. Then, a second command is given for students to retrieve their balls.

Activity: Cone Touch Dribble

Equipment: Fifteen to twenty cones placed at random in the space. One ball for each student. Ball sizes can vary from tennis ball size to playground ball size.

Description: All students begin with a ball at their feet at one end of the space. On the teacher's signal "Go," students dribble their ball keeping it controlled and close to them as they move through the cones without touching a cone with their ball. They receive ten points if they can dribble without their ball touching a cone. On a second turn, students start with ten points and each time their ball touches a cone they lose one point.

Variation: Students switch ball types with another student and try the activity again. Another way this activity can be performed is for students to try to have their ball touch as many cones as possible, gaining one point for each touch.



Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a stationary ball before advancing to a moving ball and place a poly spot to mark where the non-kicking foot is placed.
- Student can walk up to kick the ball before running.
- Use a hanging suspended ball (soccer trainer) to practice making contact.
- Use a foam ball instead of playground ball or soccer ball.
- Practice kicking motion without a ball.
- Mark the ball to show the spot to make contact.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Takes eye off the ball and misses making contact
- Stands to kick a stationary ball
- Uses light energy and ball rolls only a few inches

Proficient

- Uses a rapid continuous walking or running approach to the ball
- Non-kicking foot is placed next to the ball or slightly behind
- Uses back swing on kicking leg before contact
- Makes contact with the toe or instep consistently on a stationary or moving ball
- Maintains eye contact with the ball
- Uses a straight leg follow through
- Maintains balance consistently on each kick
- Can use small controlled kicks (soccer dribbles) to move the ball

Advanced

- Directs kick toward a space or target with consistent accuracy
- Ball is kicked with force for distance
- Ball can be kicked forward and lifted up in the air
- Ball is kicked with inside and outside of the foot in addition to toe and instep
- Student can kick a stationary ball or a ball moving toward or away from him
- Student can use small controlled kicks (soccer dribbles) to move the ball, and combine with a larger kick



BOUNCE/DRIBBLE

Description: The ball bounce, also called a dribble, requires eye-hand coordination, strength and balance to control the ball. The student consecutively pushes the ball with one or two hands at waist level with control. The bounce can be in a stationary position or traveling in the space.



Activities

Activity: Bouncing Tricks

Equipment: One playground ball (8.5 inches) for each student.

Description: Present some of the following bouncing challenges and then let students create their own ball bouncing tricks:

1. Bounce with one hand while walking in a circle. Switch hands and go the other way.
2. Bounce while kneeling down, sitting down and lying down. Can you continue to bounce as you get back up on your feet?
3. Bounce while walking backward in a straight, curvy or zig zag pathway.
4. Bounce with one finger, two fingers, your elbow and the back of your hand.
5. Bounce using this pattern: Right - Right, Left - Left, Right - Left, Right - Left.
6. Create you own bouncing ball trick. Practice for control and then teach your trick to another classmate.

Variation: Student can add a second ball and bounce two balls for a trick, or collaborate with a partner to create a partner ball trick.

Activity: Hoop Bounce

Equipment: One hoop and one playground ball (8.5 inches) for each student.

Description: Students perform the following bouncing challenges as directed by the teacher:

1. Stand inside your hoop and bounce the ball. How many you can do?
2. Stand inside your hoop and bounce the ball outside your hoop. Can you bounce the ball all the way around the outside of the hoop?
3. Stand outside of your hoop and bounce the ball inside your hoop. Can you slide sideways around the outside of the hoop while bouncing the ball inside the hoop?
4. Stand outside of the hoop and alternate bounces, one inside the hoop and the next outside the hoop while you walk around the outside of the hoop.
5. Walk around the space bouncing the ball between the other hoops without touching a hoop. Can you try this running? Sliding sideways? Galloping? Skipping?
6. Walk around the space bouncing the ball and when you arrive at another hoop, do three bounces inside the hoop and move to another hoop. Can you try this running? Sliding sideways? Galloping? Skipping?

Variation: Add skill combinations to challenge students such as, stand inside the hoop, do a self toss and catch and two bounces. Try tossing the ball higher each time and adding bounces while staying inside the hoop.

Activity: 1-10 and 10-1 Bouncing Challenge

Equipment: One playground ball (8.5 inches) basketball or other foam ball that bounce for each student.

Description: Students are organized into partners or groups of three. They stand facing each other all stationary. The first student bounces the ball one time, the second student bounces the ball two times, the next three times, next four times. Once they reach ten bounces, students reverse the order and subtract one bounce on each turn.

Variation: Partners or the groups of three can simultaneously do the one to ten bounces and the ten to one bounces.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Bounces and catches with two hands
- Slaps ball with palm instead of pushing with fingertip pads
- Bounces one or two times, loses control and ball rolls away
- Ball is bounced too lightly and does not reach waist level

Proficient

- Contacts the ball with one hand, bounce is at waist level
- Pushes with fingertip pads consistently
- Bounces with right and left hand
- Bounces in a stationary position without losing control
- Bounces a ball with control while walking forward
- Ball contacts floor in front of and slightly outside of the foot on the same side as the hand that is bouncing the ball

Advanced

- Bounces with control while walking, running, sliding, galloping and skipping
- Bounces the ball switching from the right to left hand
- Bounces the ball low and fast with control
- Bounces objects using different pathways
- Bounce passes to a partner with accuracy

Teaching Tips for Success

- Have student practice bouncing a ball on a mini trampoline.
- Hold the ball and have student press his finger tip pads on the ball to feel the pushing action of the bounce.
- Use a hoop, tape mark or poly spot as a floor target for the bounce.
- Use verbal cues, "Push with fingers" and "Eye on the ball."



STRIKE WITH HANDS OR AN IMPLEMENT

Description: Striking involves eye-hand coordination, agility, balance and strength. The skill can be performed with the hands, as in volleyball or handball, or with an implement such as a racket, paddle, bat, golf club or hockey stick.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a balloon or lightweight beach ball for hand or implement striking because it will move slower to allow more time for visual tracking.
- Place a ball on a tee or cone or use a suspended ball for batting before hitting from a pitched ball.
- Use larger balls in a variety of colors to increase focus and contact success.
- Check for correct hand placement on the implement.
- Practice striking with light and strong force for both hand and implement striking.
- Practice the striking movement with hands or an implement without a ball.

Activities

Activity: Make a Goal

Equipment: Two cones, two poly spots and one of the following: golf club, paddle or hockey stick for each student or pair of students. A ball, such as a tennis ball, plastic hockey puck, small Frisbee used as a puck, foam ball of any size or ping pong ball. All the implements need to be the appropriate length and weight for the student's age and ability. Using implements made of foam can increase safety and success. Remember to set safe distances when using implements to avoid other students being in the way of those striking with the implement.

Description: Students set up goals using the cones. They decide to make a small goal 1-3 feet wide, or a larger goal 4-8 feet wide. One poly spot is placed 3-4 feet from the goal and the second poly spot is placed 6-8 feet from the goal. The ball is placed on the poly spot farthest from the goal. Students use light strikes to move the ball toward the goal (like dribbling in hockey) and when they reach the poly spot closest to the goal they use a strong strike to hit the ball into the goal. When completing the activity with a partner, the partner stays near the farthest poly spot and takes a turn after the first partner has completed the goal.

Activity: Paddle/Racket Strikes, Ups and Downs

Equipment: One racket, or paddle, one ball or balloon and one poly spot for each student.

Description: Students learn the correct grip for the racket or paddle. They begin striking a tennis ball, foam ball (that bounces) or balloon (note students who have latex allergies) down to the floor and try to stay near their poly spot. Students continue to strike the ball or balloon as they walk around the space between the other poly spots and return to their poly spot. Next, students strike the ball lightly up with the paddle or racket. This is more challenging for students to control. Offer balloons to students to increase success.

Variation: Add cones or other objects, randomly placed in the space at different widths for students to walk around as they perform the down or up strikes with the paddle or racket. You can also have students step over or under objects or walk backward as an additional challenge.



Activity: Over and Under the Net

Equipment: One volleyball net tied on a diagonal with one end higher than the other, but with a space under the lowest end. One large foam ball or lightweight volleyball for each pair of students.

Description: Students are organized into pairs. Students are on opposite sides of the net facing their partner. One partner sends the ball over or under the net by striking it with one or two hands. Then, the partner strikes the ball back either over or under the net or she can catch the ball before striking it back to her partner. Students call, "Over" or "Under" before they strike the ball so their partners can anticipate a high or low ball.

Variation: Assign students to one side of the net. One side begins to strike the ball on the teacher's call, "Over" or "Under." Students retrieve any ball and wait for the teacher's next call. All students perform the over or under strike on the teacher's command.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Loses focus on the ball and contact with the hand or implement is not consistently made
- Hand position on the racket, paddle, hockey stick, bat or golf club is not correct and impacts the ability to successfully hit a ball
- Not able to move in the space to meet the ball with hands or the implement

Proficient

- Correct hand position on the implement is consistent
- Consistently focuses on the ball as it meets the hands or implement
- Weight is transferred from the back foot to the front foot during the strike with an implement and with the hand in handball and in the volleyball serve

Advanced

- The strike can be aimed at a space or another player with success
- Appropriate force is applied for long and short distances
- Follows through after the strike with an implement
- Side body orientation is used for striking with a bat, paddle, golf club, racket or hockey stick
- Swing for striking is smooth and implement makes contact consistently



BALANCE

Description: Balance is the foundation for all motor skills and is needed for success in learning sport skills. A soccer player needs good balance to make a strong and targeted kick, as does a track athlete jumping for distance. Throughout the day, good balance influences a student's performance in many school and life skills, such as getting on and off the bus or sitting in a chair.

This section focuses on two different types of balance; static and dynamic. Both static and dynamic balance are used in all locomotor and manipulative skills. Static balance is maintaining a balance in stationary position, while dynamic balance is maintaining balance while moving. Balance and body strength are integrated as students perform all motor skills.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Demonstrate the activity while providing verbal directions.
- Allow students to use stationary objects for support, such as a chair, the wall or the teacher's hand.
- Use a visual target as the focus to stabilize balance. The target can be a color spot on the wall, a picture held by the teacher or a stuffed animal.
- Allow students to hold their arms out to the side to assist with stabilizing their balance.
- Use verbal cues, such as "Head up," "Look at the target" and "Stay tall."

STATIC BALANCE

Activities

Activity: Can You?

Equipment: None

Description: Ask student to perform a variety of movements that require static balance. Can you:

1. Stand with feet together with hands on hips, shoulders or your head?
2. Stand with feet together with arms straight out to the side, straight up or one arm up and one arm out to the side?
3. Stand on toes (balls of the feet and toes) with hands on hips, shoulders or on your head?
4. Stand on toes (balls of the feet and toes) with arms straight out to the side, straight up or one arm up and one arm out to the side?
5. Stand with one foot in front of the other (heel of front foot touching the toe of the back foot) with hands on hips, shoulders or on your head? Try this again with the other foot in front.
6. Stand with one foot in front of the other (heel of front foot touching the toe of the back foot) with arms straight out to the side, straight up or one arm up and one arm out to the side? Try this with the other foot in front.
7. Stand on the right foot and then on the left foot with hands on hips, shoulder or head?
8. Stand on the right foot and then on the left foot with arms straight out to the side, straight up or one arm up and one arm out to the side?

Variation: Try all of the above balances looking to the right and left, looking up and down and with eyes closed.

Activity: Number Balance

Equipment: 8.5 inches x 7 inches index cards each with a number from one to six.

Description: Show the students a card with a number and ask them to do a static balance using that number of body parts. For example, when the number four is shown, the students can balance on two hands and two feet and stay still for a count of four.

Variation: Students can be in pairs and together they balance on the number of body parts. For example, if the number four is called, one student can use three parts and one student can use one part.

Activity: Balance Twister

Equipment: Use a Twister game or poly spots with four different colors (red, blue, yellow, green). Arrange the poly spots in lines within a 5 feet x 5 feet square.

Description: Call out a hand or foot and a color, and the students place that body part on that color. For example, "Right hand red," then add another body part and color, "Left foot green." Continue to call out color and body parts as students practice static balance positions.

Variation: Use the students' favorite colors instead of those suggested. Have students call out the hand, foot and color.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Walks up or down stairs one step at a time while holding a hand or a railing
- Walks forward on a line that is straight or curvy and steps off to the side two or three times
- Walks forward or stands on a low height balance beam with support
- Balances standing on one foot for one to three seconds

Proficient

- Walks up or down stairs one step at a time without support
- Walks forward on a line without stepping off to the side
- Walks forward and sideways on a low height balance beam without support
- Balances standing on the right foot and the left foot for four to seven seconds

Advanced

- Walks up or down stairs using alternating steps without support
- Walks forward, sideways and backward on a line without stepping off
- Walks forward, sideways and backward on a low height balance beam without support
- Balances standing on the right foot and the left foot for eight to ten seconds



DYNAMIC BALANCE

Activities

Activity: Freeze Dance

Equipment: Music and player with speakers.

Description: When the music starts, students use a locomotor movement to travel around the space (teacher or students can make the suggestion). When the music stops, the teacher or the students call out a balance position that is held for a count of three, four or five. For example, balance on two hands and one foot for four counts, or balance on one foot for three counts.

Variation: Hold up a card with a number, a card with words of body parts or pictures of body parts instead of calling out the number.

Activity: Walk the Line Beanbag Pick Up

Equipment: Lines on the floor (use existing lines or make lines with tape or chalk). Beanbags placed at random on the lines. Hoops or buckets placed at random near the lines.

Description: Students walk on the lines and pick up a beanbag and balance the beanbag on their head, shoulder, elbow, wrist or palm and continue to walk to a bucket or hoop and drop the beanbag in the hoop or bucket. Continue until all the beanbags are in a bucket or hoop.

Variation: Students can toss the beanbag into a bucket or step over the bucket then drop the beanbag in.

Activity: Rocking it Out

Equipment: None

Description: Students stand with feet shoulder width apart. They begin to shift their weight to the right foot and slightly lift the left foot up. Then they shift their weight to the left foot and slightly lift the right foot up. They continue to shift their weight from right to left lifting their foot up higher each time. Use this phrase to add a challenge, "Rock, Rock, Rock and Stop." For an additional challenge, students can walk forward or backward in the space and when the teacher calls, "Rock it Out" perform the rock, rock, rock and stop pattern.

Variation: Change the sideways rocking direction to forward and backward. Use only one or two rocks and then stop.



Teaching Tips for Success

- Keep the moving speed slow so student can balance and stop without falling down. As they become more successful you can increase the speed and ask them to hold the still balances longer.
- Make the width of the lines wider if the student continues to step off, or place the beanbags on a cone for an easier reach.
- Use positive feedback and cue words to motivate students to try their best. Use phrases, such as, "Great job staying up on your feet when you stopped." In this way you acknowledge that the student did well, but the phrase also tells them what they did well, so they know what action to repeat for continued success.





LOCOMOTOR SKILLS

These are fundamental skills used when a student travels from one place to another. They apply to all sport skills, such as running and dribbling a ball in basketball, leaping over hurdles, walking in a race or jumping for distance. Locomotor skills included in this section are:

- Walk
- Run
- Gallop
- Hop
- Jump – Vertical and Horizontal
- Slide
- Skip
- Leap

WALK

Description: In the walk, the heel touches first, followed by the ball of the foot and the toes. Arms move in opposition to the foot. When walking backward, the toes touch first.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Walks forward alternating weight from one foot to the other

Proficient

- Walks forward and backward with arms moving in opposition

Advanced

- Walks changing speed and direction

Activity: Imagine This, Let's Pretend...

Equipment: None

Description: The teacher calls out an image that requires students to walk using different qualities:

1. Pretend you are a giant walking through the woods. Take big high steps.
2. Pretend you are a tiny ant walking on the sidewalk. Take tiny low steps.
3. Imagine you are walking in a bowl of peanut butter. Go slow.
4. Imagine you are a robot walking down the street. Move slowly one foot at a time.
5. Pretend you are a walking bowl of wiggly Jello. Walk and wiggle.
6. Imagine you are walking up to a sleeping tiger. Take slow soft steps.
7. Imagine you are walking on a narrow curb and you don't want to fall off. Place one foot in front of the other.
8. Pretend you are a wind-up machine that can only walk forward or backward in a circle.
9. Pretend you are walking on a high tightrope. Take it slow and stop to balance.

Variation: Students can suggest a character or use a favorite children's picture storybook for ideas.

Activities

Activity: Race Walk

Equipment: Cones to mark a pathway, ropes placed on the floor in different shapes, painted floor lines or chalk drawn on sidewalk or blacktop.

Description: Students walk as fast as they can through a line of cones moving to the right or left of each cone. Students can also walk on the painted lines on the floor on long ropes placed in straight, curved or zig zag pathways, or on chalk lines drawn on the sidewalk or blacktop.

Variation: The teacher or student can signal "Go" and "Stop" while students race walk along the lines.

Activity: Walking Tag

Equipment: Beanbag or stuffed animal.

Description: Two or three students are designated as taggers. On the "Ready, Set, Start" signal the other students begin to walk within the identified boundaries, while the students who are the taggers use a beanbag or stuffed animal to tag a walking student. When a student is tagged he becomes the tagger. The beanbag or stuffed animal is held in the hand of the tagger so students know who is a tagger.

Variation: Use more taggers with a large group. Change the size of the steps to only large walking steps or only small walking steps.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Remind students to look where they are going when moving forward and to look behind, by turning their heads, when walking backward.
- To increase speed, swing the arms faster to support faster walking.



RUN

Description: When students run there is a brief time when both feet are off the ground as the body is moving forward. The arms move in opposition to the legs with the elbows bent. The non-supporting leg is bent approximately 90 degrees. The running stride is longer than a walking step.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Observe to make sure student's arms are not crossing the body midline.
- Practice running in place at different speeds and emphasize the 90 degree elbow bend.
- Use visual targets, pictures, flags or signs to remind students to look up as they run.
- Use cue words to reinforce correct technique such as, "Swing elbows" "Head up" "Look up" "Big steps" and "Run tall."
- Practice the "Take your Mark, Set, Go" phrase as students start each activity to practice how this phrase is used to start the race.

Activities

Activity: Cone Tag Run

Equipment: Ten to twenty cones of different heights or all the same height randomly placed in the space. Each cone has a letter, number or picture of a sport taped to it.

Description: On the "Go" signal, the teacher calls out several letters, numbers or types of pictures and the students run and touch the top of the cone and then run back to their starting place. Repeat this activity many times to work on speed, technique, agility and following directions.

Variation: Ask a student to call out a sequence of numbers, letters or pictures that runners need to locate, touch and return to the starting line.

Activity: Sports Freeze Tag

Equipment: Pinnies to identify the taggers, short foam noodle or a foam ball for each tagger to hold and use to tag the runners.

Description: Designate the boundaries of the game. Select two to four taggers, depending on the size of the group, and give each tagger a pinnie and a short foam noodle or foam ball. The taggers use the noodle or ball to touch a runner as the tag. When a runner is tagged, the runner freezes in a sport action pose. To become untagged another runner faces the tagged runner and high fives the tagged runner. Then the runner is unfrozen and continues in the game.

Variation: The runner who is unfreezing the tagged runner can replicate the sport action shape as a way to unfreeze the tagged runner. At this time no one can be tagged.

Activity: Red Light, Green Light

Equipment: Red sign with "Stop" printed on it, Green sign with "Go" printed on it.

Directions: Students start on one side of the space. When the green sign is held up and the call is "Go" they begin to run and when the red sign is held up and the call is "Stop" they stop. Continue with this procedure until students have reached the other side of the space.

Variation: Instead of a green or red sign, use a picture of a rabbit to indicate running fast and a picture of a turtle to indicate running slow.

Activity: Agility Hoop Run

Equipment: Cones, hoops.

Directions: Students are organized in pairs and line up at one end of the space. At the other end of the space is a cone. Each student holds a hoop. On the "Take Your Mark, Set, Go" signal, the first partner runs to the cone and places the hoop over the cone and runs back to high five their partner. Then, the second partner runs and places the hoop over the cone and high fives their partner. Then, the first partner runs to the cone and retrieves the hoop, high fives their partner and the partner runs to retrieve the second hoop. This activity can be repeated several times to build speed and endurance.

Variation: Use a relay baton to touch the cone and pass the baton to the partner. Repeat several times.



Skill Progression

Basic

- Runs using short strides, body does not have a slight forward lean
- Runs flatfooted instead of the toe and ball of the foot hitting the ground first
- Runs without arm opposition
- Runs in a shuffle motion and does not lift feet off the ground

Proficient

- Runs with longer strides and feet are briefly off the ground
- Uses arms in opposition, but elbows are not always at a 90 degree angle
- Runs using a variety of different pathways, such as straight, circular or combined pathways
- Runs using different speeds

Advanced

- Runs with arms in opposition and elbows at 90 degrees consistently, movements are smooth and continuous
- Runs with a fast speed, head up and focused on where he is going
- Runs with non-support leg bent at a 90 degree angle consistently
- Runs using a change of direction, speed and pathway



GALLOP

Description: The gallop is a basic skill where the “lead” foot leads, followed by a trailing foot. The lead foot steps forward with a bent knee and pushes off into the air and landing on the trailing foot. There is a brief period where both feet are off the ground. The right or left foot can be the lead foot.

Activities

Activity: Galloping Horses

Equipment: None

Description: On the signal to “Go” the students gallop with their right foot leading around the perimeter of the space until the teacher calls “Switch.” Then students gallop with the left foot leading until “Switch” is called again.

Variation: Teacher designates a specific number of right foot gallops, such as ten or twelve and then left foot gallops, such as eight or sixteen. Students can count out loud as they gallop.

Activity: Circle Gallop Dance

Equipment: Music, CD or iPod player. Use any music that is popular and fits a gallop rhythm.

Description: Play music after students learn the dance sequence. Students begin the dance standing in a large circle. The teacher calls out the cues for the following dance sequence:

Part A. Turn to your right, right foot leading forward for sixteen gallops.

Part B. Turn to your left, left foot leading forward for sixteen gallops.

Part C. Face the center and right foot gallop forward four times. Now left foot gallop backward four times.

Repeat Part A and B.

Repeat Part C with the left foot leading into the circle and the right foot leading backward out of the circle.

Repeat Part A and B.

Variation: Add arm movements to the gallops, or for Part C call a category for students to gallop in and out, such as all girls go in and out, all boys go in and out, everyone wearing red go in and out, everyone who has a dog or other categories.

Activity: Follow the Gallop Leader

Equipment: None

Description: Students are organized into partners or small groups of three or four. One student is the leader and gallops around the space. They can choose the pathway as well as their arm shape or movements, and the others follow the leader. For example, the leader gallops with the right foot and stretches her arms out the side. The partner or group members perform the same foot gallop and the same arm movements or shapes. After thirty seconds to a minute, the leader is switched.

Variation: The leader can add a Freeze into the gallop, where everyone stops in a frozen shape for a count of five.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Tell students to pretend that one foot is the leader and the other foot is trying to catch up or tag the lead foot.
- Use cue words such as “Big steps” or “Push up with feet”.
- The teacher and the student hold hands and gallop together to help the student feel the rhythm. This can also be done with a peer partner.



Skill Progression

Basic

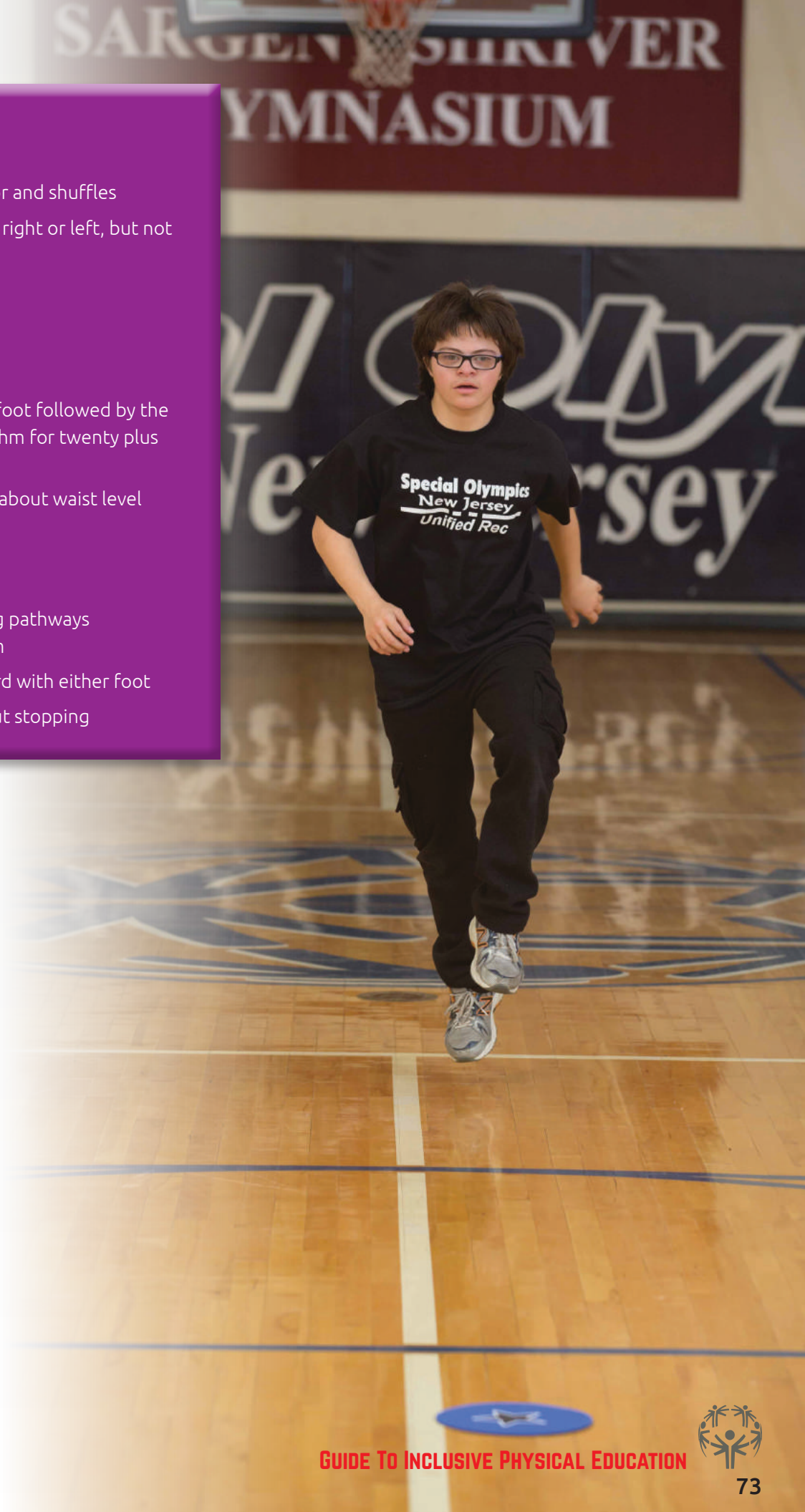
- Does not lift feet off the floor and shuffles
- Can only lead with either the right or left, but not both
- Rhythm is jerky, not smooth
- Arms hang at the sides

Proficient

- Steps forward with the lead foot followed by the trailing foot in a smooth rhythm for twenty plus feet
- Arms are bent at the elbows about waist level
- Right or left foot can lead

Advanced

- Gallops in the space changing pathways maintaining a smooth rhythm
- Gallops forward and backward with either foot
- Gallops changing feet without stopping



HOP

Description: The hop is on one foot. The takeoff and landing are on the same foot. The non-support leg is bent at the knee. The hop requires balance and strength to maintain an upright position.

Activities

Activity: Hoop Hop

Equipment: One hoop for each student or pair of students.

Description: The students use hopping to complete the following:

1. How far around the outside of the hoop can you hop? Try right foot, then left.
2. Show me how you can hop in and out of the hoop. How fast can you go?
3. Can you hop while turning inside the hoop?
4. Find a way to hold the hoop in your hand and bounce it while you hop.
5. Hop to another classmate's hoop on one foot and back to your hoop on the other foot.
6. Spin the hoop on end and as it gets low to the floor hop in and out.

Variation: Use different size hoops if available or use ropes on the floor in a circle shape.

Activity: How Many Hops?

Equipment: Beanbags.

Description: Students lightly toss the beanbag in front of them on the floor. They estimate how many hops they will use to reach the beanbag. Then, hop to see if they can meet their estimate. On each toss they can make the distance shorter or longer. An estimate or guess is made for each toss followed by the hops. Students can choose right or left foot or alternate.

Variation: Students can collaborate as partners to take turns tossing the beanbags, guessing and then together hopping to meet the guess.

Activity: Hop Pathways

Equipment: Poly spot markers or beanbags.

Description: Students make a floor pathway with the poly spots or beanbags that is curved, straight or a combination of both. Next, they hop on the pathway, one hop on each poly spot. If they are using beanbags they hop over the beanbags on the path. They can designate one rest stop along the pathway.

Variation: Students can collaborate with a partner or group of three and combine their pathways to make one big pathway.

Skill Progression

Basic

- The student cannot lift up off the ground or hops up on one foot, but lands on two feet
- Hops only one or two times on dominant foot and cannot hop on the other foot
- Non-support leg is straight and arms are down at sides of body

Proficient

- Takes off and lands on the same foot and the hop can be repeated for 10-20 feet
- Can hop on the right foot and the left foot for 10-20 feet
- Elbows are flexed and swing forward to produce force

Advanced

- Hops for a distance of 20 or more feet on each foot with arms bent to produce force
- Hops forward, backward and sideways
- Changes the height and length of the hop to hop higher and farther
- Easily changes the hopping foot





Teaching Tips for Success

- Use cues such as "Hop, same foot up and down" and "Swing arms for more force."
- Hold students hands or have them hold on to a chair for support to practice.
- Have the students spell the word, HOP and hop while they say each letter.



JUMP

Description: The jump is a two-foot takeoff and a two-foot landing. It can be used for height as in the vertical jump or for distance as in the horizontal jump. The student swings her arms to help propel her upward or forward.

VERTICAL JUMP

Activities

Activity: Wall or Ball Jump

Equipment: Wall, chalk to mark wall or ball suspended from a basketball hoop.

Description: The students stand near the wall, reach up and mark the wall with the chalk. Then students jump and use the chalk to mark the extended reach of the jump. Measure the height from the first chalk mark to the second. Or, suspend the ball about 1 to 2 inches above the student's reach and as he jumps he hits the ball with his hand. Raise the ball height 1 inch on each jump.

Variation: Use Post It notes or tape to stick to the wall instead of chalk. Student hold a small stick or paddle to hit the ball on the jump.

Activity: Bounce and Catch

Equipment: One – 8.5 inches playground ball for each students or pair of students.

Description: Students bounce the ball hard into the floor and then as the ball falls, they jump into the air and grab the ball. This is similar to a basketball rebound.

Variation: Use a different size ball or have a partner bounce the ball.

Activity: Jump the Spinning Beanbag

Equipment: Beanbag tied to a 6-8 foot rope.

Description: The teacher or a student swings the rope with the attached beanbag in a circle so the beanbag circles on the floor. The jumping student watches the beanbag circle and as the beanbag comes close, the jumping student jumps high over the moving beanbag.

Variation: Spin the beanbag at a slow and fast speed or use different size beanbags or a pillow attached to a rope.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a demonstration and emphasize the two-foot takeoff and landing.
- Use the cue, "Bend, Extend, Bend."
- Remind students to keep their heads up and reach with finger tips.
- Have the students practice jumping on a mini trampoline.

Skill Progression

Basic

- The two-foot takeoff and landing is not consistent
- Arms do not swing to propel the body upward
- Student loses balance on landing and takes extra steps

Proficient

- Consistently takes off and lands on both feet with deep knee flexion
- Arms swing backward, forward and reach up to propel body upward
- Uses a strong push with legs and full body extension between takeoff and landing

Advanced

- Strong takeoff and landing with two feet and full body extension is consistent on each jump
- Jump height increases with each jump
- Can add a turn between the takeoff and landing



HORIZONTAL JUMP

Activities

Activity: Frogs in the Pond

Equipment: Poly spots spread out at random in the space with different distances for jumping. Music, CD or iPod.

Description: Students start on a lily pad in the pond (a poly spot). When the music is on, students jump from one lily pad to another to see if they can jump across the pond. Emphasize using the two-foot takeoff and landing. When the music stops the frogs (the students) stop.

Variation: Students can jump over the lily pads instead of on the lily pad. Students can count how many lily pads they jump on before the music stops.

Activity: Jump the Brook

Equipment: Two long ropes, 8-12 feet. One rope is in a straight line and the other is at a 45-degree angle to form a "V" shape with a narrow and wide end. Or use tape to form the "V" shape. Add pictures of fish, turtles or alligators taped to the floor.

Description: Have students face the straight line rope and using a horizontal jump, jump over the brook to the opposite side. Students can choose different widths for each jump.

Variation: Create several brooks around the space with different wide or narrow angles. Students can jog or walk around the space and jump over the brook.

Activity: Jump the Snake

Equipment: One Long jump rope, 8-10 feet for every three to four students.

Description: Two students sit on the floor holding opposite ends of the rope. They begin to slowly wiggle the rope to represent a wiggling snake on the floor. The other students in the group take turns jumping over the snake. The rope holders switch places with the jumpers. Remind students to use a two-foot takeoff and landing.

Variation: The rope holders can change the tempo and make the snake move faster or slower, smaller or bigger. The rope always stays on the floor.

Skill Progression

Basic

- The two-foot takeoff and landing is not simultaneous
- Minimal flexion in both knees on takeoff and landing and no arm swing
- Low energy is used and the jump distance is a couple inches

Proficient

- Consistently takes off and lands on both feet with knee flexion
- Arms swing backward and forward to propel body forward
- Lands in a balanced position without extra steps

Advanced

- Full extension of body after takeoff, lands with strong knee bend
- Increases distance with each jump
- Arm swings are always coordinated with the jump for full power



Teaching Tips for Success

- Provide a demonstration and emphasize the knee bend and arm swing on the takeoff and landing.
- Remind students to look out for the landing spot.
- Have students practice jumping using a mini trampoline while holding both of the teacher's hands.
- Have students practice swinging the arms without the jump then add the jump with the arm swings.



SLIDE

Description: The slide is like a gallop performed sideways to the right or left. There is a lead foot and a trailing foot as in the gallop.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Provide a clear demonstration emphasizing the sideways direction.
- Ask student to “Push up higher” to gain height in the slide.
- Add arms out to the side to emphasize sideways directions.
- Keep head up looking forward to the sliding side. Use a visual target to keep focus up.

Activities

Activity: Slide and Follow

Equipment: None

Description: Students start in a random formation, facing the teacher. The teacher uses only hand signals to show which directions to slide. When the teacher points to the right, students slide right and then to the left and when the teacher points to the left. The students look up at the teacher for the hand signals and to know when to change direction. Add in a stop signal.

Variation: The teacher can slide facing the students and use the hand signals. A pattern can be established to slide eight to the right and eight to the left and then seven to the right and seven to the left and then six to the right and six to the left subtracting one slide each time until zero is reached.

Activity: Slide Around the Clock

Equipment: Cards with the numbers one to twelve set up in a large circle in the space like a clock.

Description: Students start by a clock number. The teacher calls out how many slides to the right or left and then asks a student what number they are near. For example, the teacher calls, “Everyone slide three times to the right, Sue, what number are you near?” “Okay now everyone slide five slides to the left, Arnold what number are you near?”

Variation: A student can stand in the center of the clock and call out the number of slides to the right or left.

Activity: Partner Mirror Slide

Equipment: None

Description: Assign students a partner. Students stand facing each other and one partner is designated as the leader. The leader points with her arm to the right or left and slides in that direction and the partner slides, at the same time, as if she were looking in a mirror. The leader can change directions when she wants to and the partner follows. Then the leader and follower switch roles.

Variation: The follower starts behind the leader and follows as if she were a shadow. In this way both students are facing the same direction.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Student has difficulty maintaining a consistent sideways direction
- Both feet do not leave the floor, size of slide is small
- Rhythm is not smooth and constant

Proficient

- Body is sideways with the right or left with shoulder leading or arms are out to the side
- Both feet leave the floor
- Lead foot takes a big step and is followed by the trailing foot in a smooth rhythm

Advanced

- Equal strength and rhythm in slides to the right and left
- While sliding in one direction, can turn and slide in the opposite direction
- Can change speed and size of the slide step



SKIP

Description: A skip is a combination of a step and then a hop on the same foot. The skip alternates sides. Arms move in opposition to the skip foot.

Activities

Activity: Skipping Cone Touch

Equipment: Ten to twelve cones of different sizes randomly placed in the space.

Description: Students start on one side of the space and skip across the space while touching the top of each cone they pass. Ask them to count how many cones they touched as they skipped across the space.

Variation: Students can skip in a circle around each cone they touch as they skip across the space.

Activity: Lions and Mice (Skipping Big and Small)

Equipment: Two different sounds. Use a whistle, a bell, a drum, hand clap or voice to call change.

Description: The students skip around the perimeter of the space and listen for the sound that signals to skip high with big strong skips as a lion skipping and listen for the sound that corresponds to a mouse skipping using small light skips. The teacher identifies the corresponding sound for the students so they know what sound goes with which type of skip.

Variation: Instead of skipping around the perimeter the students skip in their own pathway and as they pass another student they high five each other.

Activity: Skipping Scavenger Hunt

Equipment: Ten to twelve cards taped to cones or the wall, describing an exercise or a picture of someone doing an exercise, or a stick figure posed in different shapes. A pencil or marker is attached to the wall or cones near each card. One paper for each student listing the exercises, pictures or stick figure shapes.

Description: Students skip around the space locating the exercises, pictures or stick figure shapes listed on their paper. When they find a card, they perform the shape or exercise, mark it off on their paper and skip to find another exercise or picture. They continue until they have found all the exercises or shapes on their paper and marked them off.

Variation: Students cannot use the individual paper and the teacher can designate a time, such as two minutes to find and perform as many exercises or pictures as they can in two minutes.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Combining the step and hop on the same foot is difficult
- Step hop does not alternate in a smooth rhythm
- Arms do not swing in opposition to the skip foot

Proficient

- Step hop pattern alternates feet with smooth and continuous rhythm
- Arms swing in opposition to the skipping foot
- Skip can change speed and height

Advanced

- Student can maintain the skip with the arm swing consistently around the space
- Student can skip using different arm movements, such as alternating touching hips and shoulders or arms swing out to the side and swing crossing at chest level
- Student can skip backward, sideways and around obstacles



Teaching Tips for Success

- Use verbal cues to support movement patterns, say "Step hop, step hop."
- The teacher holds the students hand and skips alongside or skips in front of the student to demonstrate the skip so the student can follow.
- Use poly spots to mark a pathway for the student to step and hop on the right foot and step and hop on the left foot.



LEAP

Description: A leap takes off on one foot and lands on the other foot. Both feet are in the air in between the takeoff and landing. The arms swing in opposition to the landing foot. For example, if a student takes off by stepping on her right foot, then the left foot swings forward to be the landing foot.

Activities

Activity: Leaping for Fitness and Fun

Equipment: Spread out in the space, either in lines or in a random formation are: ten to twelve small hurdles, eight to ten beanbags, five to six small stuffed animals, six to eight individual jump ropes, six to eight small cones, six to eight hoops and/or ten to twelve small fleece balls. Music can be used to accompany the activity as a start and stop signal.

Description: On the start signal the students run and leap over as many different objects as they can. As they leap they can call out which foot is landing, right or left, or call out the name of the object they are leaping over. On the stop signal they point to all the objects they leaped over.

Variation: The teacher can designate a time, such as two minutes and as the students run and leap they count how many objects they were able to leap over in the two minutes.

Activity: Leaping Beanbag Relay

Equipment: One object to leap over, such as a cone or small hurdle and one beanbag for each group of four students.

Description: Students are organized into groups of four. Two students start on one side of the space and the other two students start across the space, opposite from the first two students. In the middle of the space is an object to leap over. One student starts with a beanbag in his hand. On the signal to "Go" the student runs, leaps over the object and when he reaches the other side he hands the beanbag to another student. This student then runs, leaps over the object while carrying the beanbag and hands it to the student in the opposite line. This back and forth relay type activity continues with each student taking a turn. The teacher can designate how many times the group repeats the relay run and leap.

Variation: Add two objects or more for the students to leap over.

Activity: Leap and Reach

Equipment: A ball is suspended on a rope from a basketball hoop or multiple balls are suspended from a rope stretched across two volleyball poles. A whiffle ball, foam ball or fleece ball can be tied with rope and attached to the hoop or rope stretched between the volleyball nets. The balls are high enough so student can leap, reach up with their hand and touch the balls.

Description: Students start a few feet away from the suspended ball. They run, leap and reach up with one hand to see if they can touch the ball as they leap.

Variation: Balls can be placed at various heights.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Student takes off and lands on the same foot while moving forward
- Student takes off on one foot and lands on the other, but does not elevate off the floor
- Arms do not swing in opposition to the landing foot

Proficient

- Clear take off on one foot and landing on the other foot with elevation
- Arms swing in opposition to the landing foot to produce balance and power
- Leap can be performed with either the right foot or left foot as the takeoff foot

Advanced

- Multiple leaps alternating right and left can be performed across the space
- Student can push up for height on each leap
- Student can transfer a forward leap to a sideways leap
- Student can combine a couple running steps with a leap



Teaching Tips for Success

- Demonstrate how the takeoff is on one foot with the landing on the other foot. Demonstrate in front or on the side of the student so she can match the foot for takeoff and landing.
- Add an object, such as a beanbag, stuffed animal or small cone as a target to leap over. The student can add a couple running steps and leap over the object.



PRACTICE:

Sports Skills Development

Practice: Sports Skills Development is built on a differentiated learning approach. Students progress along a continuum of skill advancement that is based on their developmental ability. The soccer, basketball and track & field activities here are based on this progression continuum. Ability levels are assessed regularly to gauge the effectiveness of activities and pace for further skill development and game play.

Practice presents a selection of skills and drills that can be used at the basic, proficient and advanced level for each sport.

EACH SKILL AREA INCLUDES:

A **Description** which identifies the essential skill components.

Activities. Select activities section several activities designed to be accessible and provide a range of ability levels to help students develop the skill. Each activity includes the equipment needed, a description of how students are organized and how to conduct the activity and a variation as another idea to add to the activity.

Suggested Skill Progressions at a Basic, Proficient and Advanced level. These skill progression levels can be used when observing a student performing the skill to see their level of ability and their ability to be successful at the current or next level.

- Basic level describes components of the skill that may be emerging or missing as the student develops the skill.
- Proficient level describes the essential skill components that are present to perform the skill successfully.
- Advanced level describes more complex components that may be present in a student who has a higher skill level and can perform the skill in a variety of situations.

Teaching Tips for Success which provide strategies and suggestions for adaptations and modifications for helping students participate in the activity and develop the skill.



SOCCER

Soccer is a widely accessible and affordable sport that offers a variety of benefits for students of all abilities. Playing soccer can be as simple as two people having a ball and an area to kick it around in. As one of the most versatile sports, soccer is popular on the playground, in the backyard and in the community as both a recreational and competitive sport. Playing soccer not only encourages fitness and sport participation, but also advances cognition and creates enjoyable opportunities for social interaction and developing friendships.

All of the soccer skills and drills in this guide can be implemented with basic sports equipment; soccer balls, soccer goals, pinnies, as well as cones/markers/poly spots. Additional equipment may be necessary in order to adapt some activities.

These soccer activities help promote and develop the following sport and team play skills:

MOTOR SKILLS

- Strength and Flexibility
- Balance and Agility
- Body and spatial awareness
- Aerobic fitness
- Timing
- Total body coordination
- Visual tracking
- Eye-foot coordination

COGNITIVE SKILLS

- Expressive and receptive language
- Listening, following directions and cues
- Following game rules
- Responding to starts and stops
- Identifying shooting and defending goals
- Understanding offensive and defensive play
- Sport specific terminology

SOCIAL SKILLS

- Peer interaction: making positive comments, cheering for teammates
- Teamwork, taking turns
- Communication with teammates
- Sportsmanship
- Focus on activity and team members



DRIBBLING

Dribbling is the skill of walking, jogging or running while keeping the ball close to your feet. The objective is to move the ball and player into open spaces, creating passing options for the player with the ball or allowing other players to move into open spaces while the ball is being protected. Keep in mind that the term “dribbling” may be confusing to some of your students and should be explained through language and demonstration. Always be sure that your students understand the vocabulary you are using before you begin the drills. Dribbling is a key component in soccer, therefore every player must have a basic understanding and ability.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Dribbles up the field while walking
- Dribbles forward, using the toe

Proficient

- Dribbles up field while jogging, using the insides of both feet
- Uses the sole of the foot to change ball direction

Advanced

- Dribbles up the field while running
- Uses the inside of the foot to quickly change direction and beats opponent
- Uses the outside of the foot to shield the ball from opponents and evades tackles

DRIBBLING ACTIVITIES

Ball/Toe Touch Warm Up

Comfort and familiarity with movement

Description: Students stand along a line or in a circle. Demonstrate the different ways of making contact with ball; inside, outside and laces or mid-foot. Practice with a stationary ball.

Dribbling Basics

Ball control and touch

Description: Students dribble the ball back and forth down a straight line. Instruct them to use “Light touches,” tapping the ball forward with each step. Encourage students to keep the ball as close to their feet as possible using the inside, outside and laces (top of the foot or mid-foot), while maintaining control.

Variation: Use cones or poly spots as start and stop points.

Dribble in the Square

Awareness and ball control in a confined space

Description: Use cones or floor tape to designate a large square play area. Students dribble the ball inside the square, maneuvering around one another. Encourage students to use both feet and change direction while looking up.

Variation: Use verbal cue, “Light touches” with outside, inside and laces to reinforce proper technique.

Cone Weave Drill

Agility and ability to dribble with change of direction

Description: Space out cones in a straight line. Students weave slowly through the cones without a ball, then with a ball when ready. Have them gradually increase their speed to jogging, then to running through cones while maintaining a controlled dribble.

Red Light/Green Light

Instruction following and dribbling control

Description: Students stand along a straight line. Use auditory and/or visual cues to signal “Green light!” Students start dribbling forward. Students should dribble with the ball close to their body. Use another auditory and/or visual cue to signal, “Red light!” Students immediately stop with the ball. Students who do not stop, must go back to the start line.



Teaching Tips for Success

- Use field lines or other markers to help students learn to dribble straight and under control.
- Use a light touch for control and keep the ball close, about 1-2 feet from body.
- Use balls in a variety of colors and sizes.
- Place tape on inside and outside of foot where it should make contact with ball.
- Emphasize looking at the ball and looking out on the field.
- Walking or jogging next to students while they're dribbling can help them understand proper pacing as they develop dribbling mechanics.
- Verbal cues can include "Light touches," "Head up" and "Look forward."
- Use volleyball floater ball.



Sharks and Minnows

Dribbling past defenders and tackling

Description: Position the students in a 20 x 25 feet, area. Designate two students as “sharks” and the remaining ones as “minnows.” Minnows dribble balls around the square, protecting their dribble from the sharks. Sharks try to gain possession and knock the minnows’ balls out of the square. If this happens, the minnow retrieves her ball and starts dribbling again. After a two-minute game, pick two new sharks. Play several rounds so all players have the chance to be a shark.

NASCAR

Following instructions and dribbling at different speeds

Description: Students start with a ball inside a designated area. Call out, “Ladies and gentleman, start your engines!” Students should tap the top of the soccer ball with the bottom of their foot ten times. Then call for:

- “First gear!” Students start dribbling the ball at a walk.
- “Second gear!” Students start dribbling at a fast walking pace.
- “Third gear!” Students start to jog while dribbling.
- “Fourth gear!” Students start dribbling as fast as they can while keeping control of the ball.

If two players “crash” into one another or their soccer balls touch, they must stop and high five to restart their engines and return to the game.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Adjust size and distance of the playing area based on students’ abilities and size of the group.
- Encourage students to experiment with the ball to help develop ball control.
- Practice changing direction. Walk, run, stop and restart all while dribbling.
- Once comfortable dribbling, encourage students to keep their heads up to view the field and players around them.
- Use peer partners to reinforce skills with students who need extra help.



DRIBBLING COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student cannot control ball when running

What To Do

Have student walk and dribble until he is comfortable, then slowly increasing speed to a light jog, then a run

Walk or jog next to student to establish pace

Practice in a smaller area defined by tape or markers

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student loses ball when moving to right and/or left

What To Do

Have student practice slowly dribbling around cones; increase speed as student develops better touch

Practice Ball Touch Warm Up drill

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Ball frequently gets away from student

What To Do

Slow down; relate pace to ability

Practice "light touches," using inside and outside of foot

Demonstrate looking up to see field and where the ball is going



SHOOTING

In soccer, the aim of the game is simple, score goals! Shooting is the skill of striking a ball, stationary or in motion, with your foot toward a target. To score goals, students need to develop both good shooting techniques and the confidence to take shots whenever they have a suitable opportunity.

SHOOTING ACTIVITIES

Stationary Shooting

Shooting technique and accuracy

Description: Demonstrate proper shooting form. Next, have students practice first without a ball. Once they show good technique, spread out several balls in a straight line 10-15 yards from the goal and line students up behind balls. The first student behind each ball walks up to the ball and shoots it at the goal. After shooting the first ball, have the students jog to back of the line. Replace the balls at the start line for the next group of students to shoot.

Variation: Increase difficulty by having the students jog or run to the ball, then shoot it.

Shooting a Moving Ball

Striking a moving ball, shooting technique, accuracy

Description: Place students in groups of five to eight, lined up facing the goal. Assign one student as ball roller. He slowly rolls the ball in front of the other students, who shoot the moving ball at the goal. Start by having students walk to shoot the ball, then jog, then run. Make sure proper form is used.

Variation: Advance drill by rolling the ball from behind the students and behind the goal. Increase the difficulty by increasing the speed of the rolling ball, adding a small bounce, increasing the distance from the target or decreasing the size of the goal.

Shooters and Shaggers

Shot accuracy, power and loose ball recovery

Description: Organize the students into teams of two. Each player rotates between the roles of shooting and retrieving balls for his partner. The ball retriever is called a "shagger." Organize an arc of about four or five cones, approximately 10 yards from the goal. The shooter from each team takes a shot from the first cone. The shagger retrieves that ball and passes it back to the shooter, who then moves on to the next cone to shoot. Once all the students have taken a shot from each cone, the shooter and shagger switch positions.

One vs. One to Goal

Dribbling, shooting, defensive positioning and tackling

Description: Create an appropriately sized playing field with goals on opposite ends of the field. Divide students into teams of three. Number the students "1" "2" and "3," or assign different colors. Student No. 1 from each team starts on the field, student No. 2 in goal and student No. 3 behind the goal as a shagger. The students on the field will play one vs. one for about a minute. Roll in spare balls if a ball goes out of play. Rotate the players so everyone has a chance to play at each position.

Variation: Different types of One-on-One games will be beneficial for students with advanced soccer skills.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Use larger ball or soccer trainer.
- Use peer partners to work with students needing extra help.
- When shooting, have students approach the ball slightly from the side instead of straight on.
- Encourage students to keep their head down and look at the ball when shooting.
- Keep in mind shooting accuracy is more important than power.
- Adjust distance from goal to encourage accuracy.
- Use poly spots as visual cue for when to kick ball.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Kicks in the general direction of the goal, but without consistency or power
- Kicks a stationary ball while stopped or walking
- Keeps eye on the ball only

Proficient

- Shoots with reasonable accuracy
- Shoots with the top of the foot to generate power
- Controls a moving ball before shooting
- Approaches the ball from the side, not straight on
- Kicks the ball with some confidence

Advanced

- Shoots consistently and accurately
- Shoots a rolling ball midstride
- Shoots under defensive pressure
- Shoots with the instep of the foot and follows through
- Demonstrates confidence and consistency



SHOOTING COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Backspin on ball when the shot goes high or wide

What To Do

Encourage student to strike the middle of the ball

Practice stationery shooting

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student has no power or accuracy when shooting

What To Do

Demonstrate and practice planting non-kicking foot next to ball

Make sure knee of kicking leg is in a V shape over the ball and then kick through the ball

Practice shooting form without a ball

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student consistently misses making contact with the ball

What To Do

Practice with a stationary ball

Use soccer trainer ball with color cues

Combine a dribble with a shot to maintain contact with the ball

Reinforce "keep eye on the ball"



CONTROL & RECEIVING

Control and receiving skills allow players to get and keep the ball so they can dribble, pass and shoot. Strong control and receiving skills enable students to develop good shooting techniques and the confidence to take shots. The body, excluding hands and arms, should be used like a cushion to collect or stop the ball so students can then take control of it. To be successful soccer players, students must learn how to control and receive a ball that is heading in their direction.

CONTROL & RECEIVING ACTIVITIES

Receiving with the Feet

Trapping and controlling a pass

Description: Demonstrate proper form for receiving a pass. Group students in pairs. Have one roll the ball toward the other. The student receiving the ball should stop the ball with proper form, and then dribble the ball back to the thrower. They continue taking turns as the roller and receiver.

Variation: Increase the speed with which the ball is rolled.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Novice players will usually react to a ball by kicking it rather than trying to control it.
- Use verbal cues, "Trap," "Control" and "Stop then tap."
- Demonstrate using the inside of the foot to bring a ground ball under control; body weight should be on the supporting leg with the receiving foot raised slightly off the ground.
- Have students practice raising their foot higher than the ball, then bringing it down in front of the ball to stop it.
- Students can exaggerate movements to get the feel of the correct technique.
- Break movement down and practice the individual elements first, and then combine to practice the whole technique.

Receiving a Bouncing Ball

Trapping and controlling from a bounce

Description: Align the students facing a partner. Demonstrate proper receiving of a bouncing ball. Have one student slightly bounce the ball to the other just below the knee. The other student or "receiver" collects, receives and controls the ball using his feet. Change positions.

Variation: Increase difficulty by increasing the distance and/or the height of the bounce.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Attempts to control ball by only using the foot to trap it, but without consistency or accuracy
- Waits for ball to come close, does not move to ball

Proficient

- Controls and stops a rolling ball with the inside of the foot
- Judges the ball speed both on the ground and in the air, and traps with the body

Advanced

- Chooses the correct technique and body surface to control the ball
- Dribbles, passes or shoots after receiving and controlling the ball

Receiving with Chest and Thigh

Aerial trapping and ball control

Description: Demonstrate the proper technique for receiving a ball from the air. Align the students facing a partner, designate one the thrower and one the receiver. "Throwers" gently lob a ball in the air above the waist. "Receivers" alternate using their chest or thigh to stop the ball. As it falls to the ground, they should trap and collect the ball with their feet and dribble back to the "thrower."

Variation: Increase difficulty by increasing the distance, speed and height from which the balls are lobbed.



CONTROL & RECEIVING COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Ball bounces away from student after receiving it

What To Do

Encourage the student to let the ball come and just as it is received, pull foot back slightly to "cushion" it

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Ball goes under student's foot

What To Do

Watch ball all the way to foot

Pair students for rolling and trapping drill

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Ball path has been misread and student misses the pass

What To Do

Encourage the student to keep his eye on the ball at all times

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student is unsure when choosing controlling body surface

What To Do

Have student shout which body surface she will use; pass the ball accordingly until player gets feel for best choice and technique



PASSING

Soccer is a team game. Playing as a team requires that each student be able to pass the ball well. Through passing, a team can quickly counterattack from defense, maintain possession in midfield and set up opportunities to score. Once the technique is learned, the key to good passing is repetition. Practicing these drills also fosters teamwork and friendships.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Passes the ball in the general direction of the target, mostly with the head down, but lacks accuracy
- Passes the ball in the general direction of target, but has difficulty controlling power (uses too much power or too little)
- Passes the ball with the toes, but not the inside, outside or instep of the foot (upper surface of the arched middle portion of the foot in front of the ankle joint)

Proficient

- Passes accurately to a teammate who is standing still
- Looks up from time to time to locate teammates
- Passes the ball with the instep of the foot
- Makes eye contact with the receiver while passing
- Begins showing confidence while passing

Advanced

- Accurately passes to teammates who are stationary or moving
- Dribbles and passes with the head up
- Adjusts passing speed/power appropriately
- Passes with confidence



PASSING ACTIVITIES

Partner Pass

Passing technique and control

Description: Demonstrate proper passing technique. Group students into pairs. Beginning at a close distance, have pairs stand directly across from one another, passing and receiving the ball with proper form. Increase difficulty by increasing the passing distance between the pairs. This is also a great warm-up drill for students at more advanced skill levels.

Passing to a Moving Teammate

Passing accuracy and speed judgment

Description: Pair students and have them face their partners. Demonstrate the moving pass, showing how the ball must be passed slightly in front of the moving teammate to create an accurate pass. Have students pass to their partners while walking back and forth between two cones. The partners receive and control the pass and then pass it back. After ten passes, have the students rotate positions.

Variation: Increase difficulty by having receiver jog or run back and forth on the line instead of walking.

Soccer Bowling

Passing accuracy and power

Description: Place five to ten cones in an area, spaced a few feet apart. Group students into teams of three to four. Have teams pass balls from outside the area toward cones, attempting to knock them down. A student in the middle can retrieve balls for the team. Keep time to see how long it takes to knock down all the cones, encouraging students to beat their previous time.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Remind students to always keep their eyes on the ball and check their aim before striking.
- Break down skills into steps, having students practice making eye contact before they pass.
- Help students gain a feeling for how much power they need to deliver the pass and the correct pace by practicing passing to targets at various distances.
- For students having difficulty, concentrate on passing first with the inside of their feet and gradually introduce using the outside.
- Practice kicking to a line or marker placed a few inches in front of marked stationary target.

Turning Cone

Passing while dribbling

Description: Divide students into teams of two or three. Align each team behind its own starting line or cone. Place the “turning cone” about six to fifteen steps away from the start. On the “Go” command, have the students dribble the ball out and around turning cone. Dribblers should then pass the ball back to the waiting teammate. To determine a winner, the teams can race against each other or the clock, or get points for each completed pass.

Teaching Tips for Success

- For students still having trouble passing while moving, have them practice passing at a stationary target while jogging/running.
- It may be helpful to return to control and receiving drills if students are having trouble making contact and passing with accuracy.
- Stress the idea of working with teammates; encourage students to talk to one another and work together as passer and receiver.

Guard the Castle

Teamwork, passing and defensive positioning

Description: Divide players into teams of four. One player on each team wears a pinnie and becomes “defender of the castle.” Place a ball on top of a cone in the middle of the playing area. This is the “castle.” The three other players pass the ball around to each other, attempting to knock the ball off the cone with a pass. Encourage students to pass to the other two teammates before trying to knock down the castle. Rotate students so each has a chance to be a defender and an attacker.

PASSING COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Ball goes in the air when student passes

What To Do

Show student correct place to contact ball (needs to make contact higher)

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student stumbles after kick

What To Do

Show student correct place to contact ball (needs to make contact lower)

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Ball goes to side of teammate

What To Do

Correct student's stance so non-kicking foot is next to ball and student is facing target

Practice kicking to a line or marker placed a few inches in front of marked stationary target



GOALKEEPING

Goalkeeping is the skill of protecting your goal from opponents. Goalkeeper is the only position in soccer where a player is allowed to pick up and throw the ball. A sound, confident goalkeeper does more than simply stop shots. He is a source of confidence for the entire team. The goalkeeper should be an advanced student who wants to play in goal and has the strength of character to be successful. Encourage everyone who wants to try goalkeeping. You cannot predict who will excel until they actually play the position. Also, it will give all players respect for how tough the position is, and the keeper's teammates will be less likely to blame him when goals are scored!

Skill Progression

Basic

- Gets behind line of the ball
- Scoops low balls with legs straight and together
- Gets both hands to the ball and brings it securely to the body

Proficient

- Maintains concentration when ball is away from goal
- Goes down on one knee to scoop low balls
- Secures high ball with both hands

Advanced

- Distributes ball using appropriate technique
- Lowers body center of gravity before diving
- Dives on side of body, not flat on stomach

GOALKEEPING ACTIVITIES

Receiving Low Balls

Goalie handling and throwing

Description: Demonstrate proper technique for receiving low balls, with hands forming an “M” with little fingers almost touching. Have the goalie stand in goal while a partner rolls a ball toward her. Show the goalie how to position her body behind the ball and use proper form and have her scoop up the ball with both hands. Have the goalie use an overhead throw to return the ball back to her partner. Increase roll speed and eventually kick the ball at the goal from different angles to increase difficulty.

Receiving High Balls

Goalie handling and catching

Description: Demonstrate proper technique for receiving aerial balls, with goalie's hands forming a “W” with thumbs almost touching. Have the goalie stand in goal while a partner throws the ball toward him. Show the goalie how to position his body behind ball and use proper form. Then, have him collect the ball from the air with both hands. Have the goalie use an overhead throw to return the ball back to his partner. Increase the speed of the throw and eventually kick the ball at the goal from different angles to increase difficulty.

Goalie Fundamentals

Reflexes, handling and catching

Description: Set up a triangle using large cones or flags, spaced 4 yards apart per side. Place a goalkeeper on each side of the triangle. Stand in the middle with several balls and go around the group working on basic goalkeeping fundamentals. Have the goalkeepers throw balls back to you once they have stopped it. Repeat the drill, but throw balls randomly to keep students thinking and mentally alert.

Variation: Have students take turns in the middle throwing balls at “Goalies.”

Teaching Tips for Success

- Goalkeepers need different skills from other players; speed off the mark, courage to dive on the ball and ability to throw and catch accurately.
- Goalkeeping can involve a lot of standing and waiting; coaches and partners can help new goalies maintain concentration when the ball is away from goal.
- Teach and encourage diving on the side of the body, not flat on the stomach; it's safer and increases the barrier in front of the ball.
- Demonstrate and practice “M” and “W” hand positions without ball and with stationary ball.



GOALKEEPING COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student distributes ball from too far back in the goal box

What To Do

Instruct student to move up to just inside the box before distributing the ball. Use marker or tape to mark the spot(s) student should move to

Have student count off three to five steps forward before distributing the ball

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student stands on goal line

What To Do

Encourage student to stand on goal line and then take one big step forward

Use markers to give visual cues for proper positioning

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Throwing ball out when not in right position

What To Do

Make sure when passing that the goalkeeper is in the middle of the goal area

Encourage goalie to "Pause and look" before she throws





BASKETBALL

Basketball offers fun and fitness as both an individual and team activity. With a ball and hoop, basketball can be played in a driveway or on a playground, by one or many players. As a sport, its reliance on teamwork makes it a great group activity. Like soccer, basketball not only encourages fitness and sport participation, but also advances cognition and creates opportunities for social interaction and developing friendships.

This section will introduce students to the basic skills necessary to play basketball. It's important to note that basketball can be a fast-paced and physically demanding sport. Some students may feel most comfortable remaining at skill development, rather than participating in game play. Offer modified game play opportunities and be sure to give students the flexibility and time to progress at their own pace.

These basketball skills and drills can be implemented in an area with basketball hoops or an area without hoops that has a flat, open surface where students can practice dribbling, catching and passing skills. They require basic sports equipment: basketballs, pinnies and cones, markers and poly spots.

The basketball activities in this section help promote and develop the following sport and team play skills:

MOTOR SKILLS

- Strength & endurance
- Jumping
- Body and spatial awareness
- Timing
- Visual tracking
- Hand-eye coordination

COGNITIVE SKILLS

- Expressive and receptive language
- Direction following
- Defensive vs. offensive play
- Game rules
- Quick decision-making

SOCIAL SKILLS

- Peer interaction
- Sportsmanship
- Teamwork, taking turns

PASSING & CATCHING

Passing and catching allow teammates to move the basketball around the court, with the final objective of putting a teammate in a good position to take a shot on basket. These skills combined are two of the most essential components of basketball. Since students need partners in order to work on passing and catching, teamwork is a critical part of mastering these skills.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Passes the ball using two hands from stationary position
- Uses a bounce pass with minimal distance and accuracy
- Uses a chest pass with minimal distance and accuracy
- Closes eyes or turns away when catching ball

Proficient

- Makes a two-handed pass to an intended target
- Makes a bounce pass to an intended target
- Catches a pass while stationary with consistency
- Keeps eyes open and on the ball

Advanced

- Passes the ball using a bounce or chest pass or overhand pass while moving
- Passes the ball at various distances to a partner while moving
- Passes the ball while moving with confidence and consistency

Target Chest Pass

Chest passing accuracy and strength

Create a target on the wall and have the students stand about 5-10 feet away, depending on ability. Students pass the ball with both hands from their chest. The ball should hit the target in the air. Taking a step forward while passing will give more power to the throw.

Passing with Movement

Ability to pass while moving in multiple directions

Pair students together based on ability level. Both students take sideways steps while passing and receiving the ball. This requires the students to constantly judge the distance the ball is traveling.

Variation: Increase difficulty by having the students take forward and backward steps.

Loose Ball Recovery

Instincts and coordination for retrieving loose balls while reinforcing passing

Place students in groups of three to five by ability and assign one to be the “Passer.” With other students in a line, the “passer” rolls or bounces the ball to the left or right of each student. Students move to get behind the ball and retrieve it. Then, pass the ball back to the “passer” and return to the start position. Give each student three to five attempts before moving to the back of the line. Switch passers so all students have a turn at retrieving the ball.

Shuffle Step Passes

Passing with movement, speed and accuracy similar to gameplay

Pair students based on ability and have them face each other about 10 feet apart. Students begin shuffling sideways down the court, while passing one basketball back and forth to their partners. Both bounce and chest passes can be used.

PASSING & CATCHING ACTIVITIES

Assisted Wall Bounce Pass

Bounce passing accuracy and strength

Students stand 5-10 feet from a wall, depending on ability. Have students bounce pass the ball off the ground toward the wall. Then, students take a forward step while passing to increase force of the throw. They can catch the ball as it bounces back, if needed. As they improve, students can catch their own bounce-backs.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a smaller ball or a ball with bells for students with smaller grip or vision challenges.
- Have students practice bouncing the ball on the ground and catching it as often as possible, or as a warm-up.
- Physically guide students through passing motion and reinforce trapping drills.
- Use pictures and other fun images as wall targets.
- Use a beach ball or lighter ball to begin passing if students seem afraid of the harder basketball.

PASSING & CATCHING COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student's chest pass is too soft

What To Do

Start with elbows close to body and push wrist and fingers through the ball
Try smaller/lighter ball (size 3 or junior size)

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student's bounce pass is too high and too slow

What To Do

Start with ball at waist and aim for a bounce spot closer to teammate
Partner with student and demonstrate correct height and force

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student's passes are off target

What To Do

First two fingers of each hand should be pointing to target/person at the end of the pass
Practice passing to target on wall

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student closes eyes while catching

What To Do

Begin passing while standing close to partner and take one step back at a time
Use beach ball or lighter ball so it is less intimidating



DRIBBLING

Dribbling is one of the most fundamental basketball skills. A player in possession of the ball must dribble in order to move around the court so all players must be effective dribblers to be successful at playing the game. Good ball handling requires good dribbling skills. It's not only important to learn how to dribble well, but a player must also know when and where not to dribble. Becoming a good dribbler will require much practice, good fundamentals and high confidence, so when teaching dribbling, always be prepared to bring a student back to the basics. When teaching any skills and drills, consider the language and vocabulary. Dribbling is a term many students may not be familiar with. Begin with terms like bounce and tap and then introduce the term dribbling.

DRIBBLING ACTIVITIES

Stationary Dribbling

Ability to control and dribble basketball

Description: Give students a basketball to explore and play with independently. Let students feel the texture of the ball and what it is like to release it to a target. Show students how to hold the basketball with the pads of the fingers and not the palm of the hand. Have them practice and get a feel for the difference between holding with the palm and finger tips. Students' non-dominant hands can be used to guide the ball and the strong hand should be directly on top of the ball. Standing in place, students push the ball toward the floor with only one hand on top of the ball at a time. Then, students "dribble" to a target on the floor trying to hit it each time. Complete ten dribbles with the right hand, then ten with the left. Gradually encourage the students to use only one hand and to look up instead of at the ball while dribbling.

Alternate Hands 5-4-3-2-1 Dribble

Higher level of dribbling control and cognition

Description: Have students stand in place and dribble the ball five times with one hand. After the fifth dribble, have them bounce the ball across the front of the body to the other hand. Then, dribble the ball five times with the other hand. Instruct students to bounce the ball back to the first hand, then dribble four times without stopping. Repeat, each time doing one fewer dribble on each side.

Variation: Advance the drill by adding movement.

Dribbling with Movement

Controlling a dribble while moving in multiple directions

Description: Once students have mastered the skill of stationary dribbling with one hand in a fluid motion, introduce movement into the drill. Instruct the students to dribble the basketball while walking ten steps forward and ten steps backward or use cones and have students dribble to the cone and back.

Variation: Introduce side-to-side movement, such as a sliding or shuffle step.

Cone Weave

Dribbling with higher pace and spatial awareness

Description: Set up a series of cones in a straight line. Students line up and dribble the basketball while weaving in and out of the cones. When they reach the last cone, they turn around and complete the drill again. Have them first complete the drill at a walking pace, then gradually increase to jogging and running.

Dribble Freeze Tag

Dribbling with control and urgency while avoiding other players

Description: Select an area sized for the number of students participating. One student is designated "It." Each student must continually dribble within the selected zone. During this time, "It" will dribble around trying to tag other players. If a player loses the dribble, is tagged by "It" or steps out of bounds, they must freeze in place. A player can be unfrozen if another player dribbles the ball between their legs and controls it. All players are unfrozen if "It" loses control of her dribble. Play for 3 to 5 minutes or until all players are frozen.

Connect the Dots

Dribbling with control, precision and agility

Spread a variety of targets throughout the practice area, creating straight lines, slaloms and zigzags. Designate targets by number. Have students line up behind the starting line and dribble to each target, connecting the dots.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a larger, lighter ball or a ball with a hand placement guide.
- Use hand-over-hand, letting students put their hands on top of yours to feel the rhythm of dribbling, allow them to feel the roundness of the ball, dimples and weights, ask the students what the ball feels like.
- Students can wear a wristband to help differentiate right from left hand or dominant from non-dominant hand.
- Play dribbling games like red light/green light and freeze tag to help students become more comfortable with the ball.
- When dribbling, keep the ball at hip or waist height so it is easier to control.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Dribbles the ball at least three bounces in a row using two hands
- Dribbles the ball with one hand more than three bounces in a row while standing in place

Proficient

- Dribbles the ball with right then left hand more than three bounces in a row while standing in place
- Alternates the dribble between both hands more than three bounces in a row while standing in place
- Dribbles the ball while walking at least ten steps

Advanced

- Dribbles the ball while running at least twenty steps
- Dribbles the ball with either hand while moving in any direction
- Dribbles the ball using finger tips



DRIBBLING COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student pushes the ball too far out to make contact on the bounce and continue the dribble

What To Do

Have student start with dribbling in place, controlling the bounce and meeting it with hand

Use poly spot or marker to practice bouncing/dribbling to target on floor

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student watches the ball when dribbling

What To Do

Tell student to keep head up and look occasionally for the rim

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student takes too many dribbles

What To Do

Give the student a spot on the wall to focus on

Have student push the ball out from the waist more and run after it

Have student dribble while moving or dribble and slide

Demonstrate and dribble alongside to give sense of pace and timing

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student loses balance on the forward foot, causing the pivot foot to drag (travel)

What To Do

Tell student to hop before she stops and land with feet shoulder-width apart, with head up

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student dribbles too high or wide to control the ball when changing direction

What To Do

Practice the bunny hop

Practice dribbling at knee height; first stationary, then moving and changing direction

SHOOTING

Shooting is perhaps the most important skill in basketball and possibly the most challenging to teach. All the other skills are tools a team uses to get the ball and the players into position to score. A student cannot become a good shooter without good form, mechanics and practice, practice, practice! As often as possible, teach by modeling proper form, demonstrating shooting motion and correcting poor form immediately following a shot. If students can develop confident, accurate shooting skills, they will be harder to stop on the court.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Uses a two-handed overhand and underhand shot and hits the backboard
- Hits the backboard with a set shot

Proficient

- Makes a basket with a set shot
- Hits the backboard or rim on a layup attempt, using proper form
- Hits the backboard with a jump shot, using proper form

Advanced

- Makes a basket on a layup attempt, using proper form
- Makes a basket with a jump shot, using proper form
- Hits backboard or makes free throw or foul shot

SHOOTING ACTIVITIES

Pass to Shoot

Developing a sense for shooting; transitioning movement from passing to shooting

Description: Place targets at various heights on the wall. Have students line up about 5 feet from the wall and take turns “shooting” at the wall.

Variation: Students can also practice shooting over a rope or net that can gradually be raised higher.

Shoot to Self, Wall, Partner

Shooting with proper technique and power

Description: Show students proper shooting form and follow-through. Have them shoot ten shots up in the air to themselves, then ten to the wall or partner.

Teaching Tips for Success

- If possible, use a lower or adjustable basket with a backboard to help students build confidence in their shooting ability.
- Begin with smaller, lighter balls until moving to standard basketballs.
- Practice shooting form in pairs before moving to shooting at basket.
- Use poly spots or floor markers to assist with distance and positioning from basket for various shots.

One-Handed Set Shot

Shooting at the basket and better form

Description: Students line up close to the basket. Each student takes a turn shooting the ball at the basket with proper form. After each shot, demonstrate pointers for form improvements before sending them to the back of the line; rotate about three times. Then, have each student shoot three times in a row, giving more pointers when necessary.



Pass and Shoot

Shooting after receiving a pass

Description: Group students for as many hoops as you have in the gym. Line each group up under basket, facing one other student or teacher. The student/teacher passes to the first student, who will catch the ball and shoot it. Demonstrate improvements after each shot. Have students complete the drill as many times as possible.



Shooting Under Pressure

Shooting over a defender and following the shot

Description: Divide students into teams of two or three. Teams line up along the side or front of the basket. The drill starts when the shooter is passed the ball. Teach the shooter to step to receive the pass, get in proper shooting position, then take a shot. Coach or peer partner plays “Hands-up” defense to passively contest the shot. If a shot is missed, the shooter follows to get the offensive rebound and returns to the end of the line. Tally a team’s made shots and strive to improve the team’s score.

Teaching Tips for Success

- When shooting a layup, tell students to imagine there is a string tied from their shooting elbow to the same side knee; this may help them coordinate the mechanics of the shot.
- The basic movement of a layup is similar to a skip so have some fun practicing skipping.
- Use poly spots or markers to assist with proper placement for shooting and layups.

Layup Using Backboard

Taking a proper layup while moving toward the basket

Description: Demonstrate the proper layup form. Have students practice layups from two steps away from the basket without dribbling. Once the motion of the shot can be performed, have them practice approaching the layup from a walking dribble, gradually moving to a running dribble and from receiving a pass.

Two-Ball Layup or Power Up

Scoring low post with layups or shooting

Description: Place two basketballs on the floor, one on each block. Starting from inside the lane, have students pick up a ball and perform a proper shot or layup. After the shot, the students do the same with the ball on the other block. Each student will repeat this for 30-60 seconds. Have a peer partner rebound under the basket and put the ball back on the block after each shot. Keeping track of made baskets can help assess skill.

Rapid Fire Shooting

Shooting, rebounding, passing

Description: Place students in groups of three with one shooter, one rebounder and one passer. The shooter shoots the ball, the rebounder retrieves the ball and then passes to the passer, who passes the ball back to the shooter when she is ready. After the shooter takes five shots, everyone rotates.

Variation: Have shooter dribble one bounce, then shoot, increase bounces before shot, add stop and shoot, using a variety of shots and combinations to increase difficulty.



SHOOTING COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Mechanics are correct, but student still misses

What To Do

Watch to make sure student is keeping eyes on the target while shooting
Practice Rapid Fire Shooting with a focus on "spotting" the basket before shooting

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student lowers the ball while flexing the knees, lengthening the shooting stroke and making it easier to block the shot

What To Do

Remind student to keep the ball high and move only the legs during the down and up part of the shot

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student jumps at the end of the shot, drifts off balance and misses

What To Do

Have student work on jumping and landing on the same spot of the floor

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Shot is short of the basket

What To Do

Make sure student is using legs to start the shot and following through
Start with a lower basket, then move up

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student is slow to shoot after receiving a pass

What To Do

Have student practice being in a shooting position (knees bent) when receiving a pass, then immediately turning to shoot



REBOUNDING

Rebounding can be one of the most important factors in winning a basketball game. Offensive rebounding gives teams extra chances to shoot and defensive rebounding stops shot attempts from the offense. Unlike the other skills in basketball, attitude and confidence are the most important factors in rebounding. A good rebounder not only knows how to get into the right position, but is determined to do the best she can to get the ball and is aggressive enough to fight for it!

Skill Progression

Basic

- Attempts to catch a ball that is tossed in the air
- Attempts to catch a ball that rebounds off the backboard
- Tracks the ball as it is shot at the basket
- Turns to face the basket and takes ready position for rebounding

Proficient

- Catches a basketball that is tossed in the air
- Catches the ball after it rebounds off the backboard and bounces once on the floor

Advanced

- Moves to “box out” an opponent before jumping for a rebound
- Collects the ball, gains control and determines whether to pass or shoot



REBOUNDING ACTIVITIES

Jump and Grab

Learning the basic concept and motor functions of rebounding

Description: Group students in pairs. Have teacher or peer partner lightly toss a ball up and out of the student rebounder's reach. The rebounder should jump, grab the ball with both hands and place it under his chin with elbows out.

Teaching Tips for Success

- If possible, use a lower or adjustable basket with a backboard to help students build confidence in rebounding.
- Begin with smaller, lighter balls until moving to standard basketballs.
- Practice running and jumping to the basket without the ball to reinforce the movement.

Rebounding a Tossed Ball

Rebounding higher balls and balls coming off the backboard

Description: Group students into pairs. Have one peer partner toss the ball in the air above the other, who is the rebounder. The rebounders should take a step to the ball, jump and grab it from the air.

Variation: Toss the ball off the backboard or rim to give practical gameplay experience. Repeat three to five times per student.

Rebound with Outlet

Rebounding with opposition and looking for the next pass

Description: Divide students of similar ability into groups of three or four. One student will start as a shooter and the rest start as rebounders. The shooter takes a shot in front of the basket. After the ball is shot, the rebounders all attempt rebounding it. Whoever gets the ball must pass to a teacher or peer, who is waiting as an outlet pass. Repeat the drill until a student gets three rebounds. That student then becomes the next shooter, and the shooter becomes a rebounder.

REBOUNDING COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student keeps getting cut off from the rebound by opponents

What To Do

Advise student to locate opponents before focusing on the ball so she can position herself between the opponent and the basket

Set up and practice rebounding scenarios outside of game play at slower pace to point out what to look for

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student loses balance as people move around him near the basket

What To Do

Make sure student keeps feet apart enough to stay balanced and move off the balls of his feet

Practice repetitive jumping

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student has trouble holding on to a rebound

What To Do

Make sure student is grabbing with both hands as firmly as possible

Have students practice catching the ball off a wall



TRACK & FIELD

Track & Field offers a variety of accessible opportunities for students of all abilities to train and compete at their optimum level, as well as master skills that can lead to lifelong involvement in sports and fitness. Combining running, jumping and throwing into one discipline, track & field can serve as a building block for all other sports.

The activities here can be implemented with basic sports equipment; tape measure, stopwatch, batons, softballs, string and a long jump pit or long jump mat. Participation in track & field helps to advance the following sports and team play skills:

MOTOR SKILLS

- Proper form, mechanics and fundamental sport skills development
- Full body strength and agility
- Proprioceptive and kinesthetic body awareness
- Proper posture and core strengthening
- Balance, weight shifting
- Body and spacial awareness
- Coordination and full body movement
- Aerobic fitness
- Visual tracking
- Eye-hand, eye-foot coordination
- Jumping
- Timing

COGNITIVE SKILLS

- Following directions
- Expressive and receptive language
- Game rules
- Responding to starts and stops
- Distance, weights and measures

SOCIAL SKILLS

- Peer interaction
- Teamwork
- Sportsmanship





RUNNING BASICS

Mastering good running form takes many years, much practice and great patience. Although it seems instinctive, proper running requires purposeful, controlled movements that may not come naturally. Mastering these movements and combining them smoothly can be exceptionally challenging for many students, especially those with special needs. Running drills can place stress on knees, hips and other joints if students are not using proper form, therefore it is very important to adapt or modify drills when necessary.

Incorporate these drills as regular warm-up exercises or as part of other sports development drills to reinforce terminology, proper form and concepts such as speed, intensity and smooth motion.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Holds arms bent at waist, swing from elbow not shoulder
- Runs with feet wide apart or toes pointed outward
- Strides that are too short or exaggerated and too long
- Lands flat-footed or on toes slightly bent
- Runs with heavy feet
- Leans forward or backward, hunched shoulders
- Tight fists

Proficient

- Swings arms in opposition below waist
- Runs with short strides
- Runs with moderate to high knees
- Walks/jogs reasonable distance without tiring
- Maintains “running tall” posture, looks forward

Advanced

- Arms swing in opposition at hips, no crossing chest
- Mid-foot hits ground with light feet
- Eyes and face stay forward
- Runs with comfortable stride, not overextending
- Relaxed, movement is smooth and continuous
- Runs short distances without tiring



POSTURE ACTIVITIES

Puppet

Visualizing good posture

Description: Good posture helps make a runner more efficient and promotes a strong, confident and positive attitude. Have students stand in a circle. Instruct them as follows, “Close your eyes and picture yourself as a puppet controlled by a puppeteer with a string attached to your head. The string is holding your posture vertical and perpendicular to the ground. Keep your chest out. Head and torso are fixed and steady. Now, “Open your eyes.” Have them look at a point about 30 feet in front. Remind them to keep their hips and back erect, creating an overall “tall” posture. Now, have them walk around in a circle in “running tall” posture. Then, call out, “Slump!” Students drop chest, shoulders and head and continue walking in a slouched position. As they walk the circle ask them to think about how they are feeling. Do they notice the difference? Slumped posture restricts breathing. Can you see in front of you if you are slumped? Do you feel strong and confident when you stand tall?

Running Tall

Posture, form and stability

Description: Review and demonstrate “running tall” form: spine straight, shoulders down with a slight forward lean with head up so chin is parallel to the ground, looking forward, and with arms and hands are relaxed.

Break students into small groups. Set up two cones 10-15 feet apart for each group. Next, have students “walk tall” with beanbags on their heads from one cone to the other. When this is mastered, students increase walking pace with the beanbags on their heads. Then, students remove beanbags and jog/run with “running tall” posture from one cone to the other. Reinforce that this is the “running tall” position. Verbal cues can include, “Look forward” and “Back straight.” Take teachable moments to demonstrate not running tall when you see students leaning forward, backward and looking down.

Variations: Run a relay race with beanbags on heads; run in pairs with one student acting as the teacher providing verbal cues.

Tightrope

Balance and body awareness and control

Description: Good balance and the ability to eliminate counterproductive movements that waste energy are critical to gaining speed and endurance in running. Have students walk along a straight line on the floor, track or field or create a line with tape. Instruct them to take big steps along the line, kicking their leg up to reach the opposite arm. Have

them continue walking along the line hand to toe, moving slowly and maintaining balance for about 40-50-feet, and then jog back to the beginning of the line.

Variations: Have students reach opposite hand to toe toward the ground. Or, have students copy common movements that lead to inefficiencies as they walk along the “tightrope,” head bobbing, head shaking, body swaying, body twisting, knees and toes pointing inward or outward or hands angling inward.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Place a sticker on the back of each student and have them run in line directing their eyes at the sticker on the person in front of them, not at their feet or up in the air.
- Keep limb and trunk movement to the left and right to a minimum, point out hips and help students recognize when they are twisting.
- Use peer partners for students needing extra help. The ability to coordinate the arm swing with the leg movements takes much practice.
- Demonstrate “running tall” position frequently, emphasizing head up, and relaxed shoulders and arms.



ARM MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Beat the Drum

Arm movement control and accuracy

Description: Line students up in rows as if they are in a marching band. Ask them to imagine they have drums on their hips with the tops facing forward, not down. Demonstrate where the drums are and have the students show you the tops of their drums. Demonstrate good arm swing until all students have it. Then, while standing in place, have the students begin swinging their arms to hit their “drum.” Remind them that the tops of the drums are facing forward, not upward and the pinkies and outsides of the hands strike the drum face. As they swing their arms, clap in rhythm, count, “One-Two-One-Two” or play music. It may be helpful to demonstrate a few examples of bad form, where hands cross the middle or swing from side-to-side and miss the “drums.” Call out verbal cues like, “Stand tall,” “Soft shoulders,” “Loose fists,” and “Pump arms.” Assist students by holding up hands as targets for them to hit with each swing.

Variation: Increase difficulty by beating the drum while jogging.

Egg Toss

Relaxed hands, proper placement of palms

Description: Mark a starting line and finish line on a track, field or gym floor. Place students in groups of five to eight and have them line up behind a starting line. Give each group two plastic eggs. Demonstrate how to hold the egg with a relaxed hand and with the pointed end up to ensure that palms are always facing each other and not down. Have students run to finish line and back holding eggs and concentrating on keeping hands relaxed and palms facing inward with thumbs up. When students return to start line they pass eggs off to next student. Repeat until all students have turn.

Variation: Conduct drill using hard boiled eggs and look to see if egg shell cracks.

Arm Mode Crazy Course

Recognize and practice proper arm motion

Set up cones around practice area to create a crazy pattern. Make several courses, depending on number of students participating. Divide students up into groups behind each course. Students will take turns running through the course with their arms in different “modes.” First, demonstrate “stiff arms” mode where hands are “glued” to their sides, straight and with no movement as they run. Have students feel and discuss what it’s like to run without the movement

of their arms. Next, “relaxed arms” mode. Demonstrate relaxed shoulders and arms swinging lightly and naturally. Students run through course in relaxed arm mode and see where their arms go while relaxed. Stress relaxing the shoulders. Then, “pump arms” mode where students keep elbows bent at 90 degree angle and pump back and forth with all movement coming from relaxed shoulders. Elbows do not bend. Demonstrate and have students complete the course in “pump arms” mode. Students can repeat the three modes and discuss how each feels different and which one feels most stable and makes it easier to run.



LEG MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Fast Feet

Leg speed and strength

Description: Instruct students to take small steps and work on very fast leg action. Arms and feet move very quickly. Knees should bend only slightly, most of the movement is on and off the balls of the feet. Forward speed is not important. The drill can also be done in a stationary position.

Heavy Feet/Light Feet

Understanding the difference between heavy and light feet

Description: Students line up on one side of the gym. Instruct students to run to the other side of the gym like they have heavy feet. Verbal cues can include, “Plop,” “Stomp” and “Bricks on your feet.” Have them run back with light feet. Verbal cues can include, “Tip-toe feet” and “Feathers on your feet.” Tell students their feet should feel like springs. Visual cues such as a picture of a brick or feather can be used. Progress to using a start and change signal every 15-30 seconds, as they run from end to end, alternating between heavy and light feet.

High Knees

Running tall and range of motion

Description: The purpose is to lift the knee high while bouncing gently off the ground or track. Using a short stride, instruct students to bounce off toes and take an exaggerated high step, coming up onto the ball of the left foot while raising the right knee. Students should drive knees as high as possible with each stride, moving forward slowly with the exaggerated high knee motion and bouncing on opposite foot. There is no emphasis here on speed of movement, simply “running tall” and light and getting a good range of motion.

Marching

Running “tall”

Description: Think marching band! Students take a “running tall” position, a gallant form with a very slight forward lean. Have students begin by walking slowly forward on the balls of their feet using small steps, keeping heels off the ground. Their knees should come up high, with thighs parallel to the ground. Arms swing slowly and deliberately in rhythm with leg strides. Emphasize staying “tall” while rapidly lifting and driving down the knees in a coordinated movement.

Butt Kicks

Leg speed and strength

Description: Have students jog forward. With small strides, have them kick up each leg as high as possible so their back

heel hits, or comes close to hitting the buttocks with each step. Arms should be in a relaxed running action and knees low. Most of the movement should be with lower leg.

Variation: Increase the speed to make the drill more challenging.

Stop Light

Description: Tell students that each color signals a certain speed: slow, medium and fast. When you hold up the color for that particular speed, students will run in place at that speed. When they are running fast, they should be mostly on the balls of their feet.

Variation: Break the class into groups with a leader for each group.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Have student run straight at you to make sure that the shoulders stay parallel to ground and upper body is not twisting back and forth.
- Use poly spots or markers to show proper foot placement.
- Keep distances short; 60-70 feet at most.
- Encourage students to always run relaxed at every speed.
- When they become tired or are unable to maintain proper form, stop and let students rest; running when tired or with poor form may lead to injuries.
- Have students walk with quick steps on balls of feet to practice form and forefoot strike.
- Emphasize the foot striking the ground under the student’s body, not ahead of it.



RUNNING COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student is not running in upright position

What To Do

Remind student to picture a string, like a puppet pulling her up, and practice what she thinks that looks like

Do Funky Run and other fun activities that show the difference between good posture/form and poor posture/form

Create a visual target for students to look at, encouraging them to run with head up and eyes forward

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student is landing on heels not ball of foot

What To Do

Place tape on the ball of foot and have student walk to see what it feels like to hit the midfoot

Have the student walk with quick steps on balls of feet

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student is swaying arms and upper body side-to-side

What To Do

Demonstrate proper arm positioning while standing still

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student's shoulders are hunched with fists tight

What To Do

Have students run with squishy balls in hands

Do shoulder shrugs as warm up exercise to encourage student to relax shoulders



STARTS

A good start can make all the difference in any track event, regardless of the distance. At the beginning of a race, runners need to start out strong and fast. The shorter the race, the less time a runner has to reach full speed so a strong start can be the determining factor in winning. There are two components to being a good starter: reaction time and explosiveness.

There are two primary types of starts: the standing and the block start. We will focus only on the standing start. Refer to the *Special Olympics Athletics Sports Training Guide* for Block Start drills.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Stands behind start line
- Stays still in “Set” position
- Stops at finish line

Proficient

- Identifies power foot
- Bends front knee slightly, balancing weight on both legs
- Remains still in “Set” position
- Stands behind line, relaxed, power foot in front on ball of foot
- Pushes off with power foot using ball of foot

Advanced

- Stays low, using arms to drive body forward
- Holds 3-point start position
- Extends legs fully, driving arms and legs forward
- Pushes strongly off ball of power foot, swinging back arm forward

Start Commands

“On Your Mark” Command

Developing proper form

The “On your mark” command is used when students come to the starting line to begin the race. Students should stand behind the start line, relaxed with power foot in front. The toe of the back foot should be behind the heel of the front foot, about 7-10 inches apart. Encourage students to look up slightly, focusing about 6 feet ahead.

“Set” Command

Developing proper form

On the “Set” command, students must become as still as possible. Instruct students to bend front knees slightly (about 120 degrees), placing weight on ball of power (front) foot. The arm opposite the power foot should be held in front of students’ bodies, with a slight bend at the elbow. The other arm should be back, bent slightly just past the hip with the hand closed. Encourage and remind students to remain as still as possible.

“Go” Command

Developing proper form

On the “Go” command, starter’s pistol or whistle, instruct students to drive back leg forward, leading with the knee, swinging front arm back. At the same time, students should push strongly off ball of power (front) foot, swinging back arm forward forcefully. Encourage students to stay low, using arms to drive body forward.

STARTS ACTIVITIES

Finding the Power Foot

Developing proper form

Description: In this start, the student places “power foot” forward, pushing off with explosive force for strong launch. You can easily determine the “power foot” by having students pretend to kick a ball. The foot that is used to kick the ball is the back foot, or “quick” foot. The foot that is used to support the body is the front foot, or “power foot.”



On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!

Understanding terminology, purpose and timing

Description: Place students in pairs. Demonstrate first the position for “On your mark.” Have one student call out, “On your mark” and another find the position. Do the same with “Get set.” Next, combine “On your mark, get set,” and have students practice moving from one position into the other on the call of their partner. Reinforce the power foot when students are standing in the “Get set” position. Finally, introduce “Go!” and combine all three steps, having students push off their power foot to make their most explosive start.

Bounding

Leg strength and power

Description: Bounding drills are designed to develop the explosive leg power required to make a good start. Beginning from a slow jog, instruct students to leap forward and upward with a high knee lift. Have students alternate legs and concentrate on good form. Remind them to keep head up and drive arms upward, as this will help keep the whole movement together. Have students repeat for eight to ten steps on each leg and jog out of each repetition.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Be sure verbal cues are understood before beginning start drills.
- Use color signs; red, yellow, green as visual cues for “On your mark,” “Get set” and “Go!”
- Demonstrate proper push off and leg/arm positioning so students can gain a feel for when they are in position and when weight is in the right place.
- Colored shoe laces, stickers, etc. can be used to help students determine right from left, or to identify power foot.
- Practice verbal cues for starts often.

Stand-Up Start Drill

Creating an explosive start

Description: Have students stand in a “running tall” position with feet a comfortable distance apart and head, neck and hips in alignment. Instruct students to place power leg forward at the starting line, bending at the knee. In “Set” position, bend forward from the trunk and bring arms up in position opposite the legs. On command, whistle or gun, encourage students to drive down arms and legs, attaining maximum acceleration.

Partner Push Drill

Develops leg/knee power and strong arm thrusts

Description: The purpose of this beginning drill is to develop powerful and explosive knee drive and strong thrusting arm action. Students take the proper “Set” position. Stand in front of the student with hands on his shoulders. On command, the student pushes explosively at a 45 degree angle (not upright) into a fully extended position while the coach provides strong resistance and support.

3-Point Start

Creating an explosive start

Description: Students place the hand opposite the front leg on the track with the other arm bent back with hand at hip. The knee of rear leg is placed opposite front foot. Eyes should focus on the track just in front of feet keeping the head down. On the command of “Set” raise the hips above the head/shoulders. On “Go,” drive out, keeping the head low, and move into upright “running tall” position after four to five strides.

Crouch/4-Point Start

Creating an explosive start, especially for sprints

Description: The four-point start is most commonly used in sprinting. Have students get into a crouch position with both hands just behind the starting line. The front knee is over the start line and the back knee is placed on the ground next to the front ankle. The fingers form a bridge (on fingertips) behind the start line, with the thumbs pointing toward one another. The head and neck are in line with the spine. On the “Set” command, both legs extend so the hips are slightly higher than the shoulders. Students should be stable, remaining motionless until the “Go” command.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Demonstrate and assist students with getting a feel for how high their hips should be in the “Set” position.
- Use images or real pictures to show and reinforce positioning for three-point and four-point start.
- To help students stay in lane, set up a crooked lane and have students walk/run/jog while staying in their lane.
- Reinforce concepts of start and finish, have students practice racing to marked targets on your command and stopping on target.
- Place an additional marker about 20 feet from marked finish line so students can practice running through the finish and decelerating to a stop.

STARTS COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student jumps the "Go" command

What To Do

Reinforce verbal cues

Add visual cues along with the verbal cues, like a green flag or sign

Break start down into steps

Practice taking off and running to a target on the "Go" command alone

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student cannot hold the "Set" position

What To Do

Check to be sure student has the strength and flexibility needed to hold the positions. If not, modify the movements and reinforce those positions for that student

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student changes mind about which foot she wants to push off of

What To Do

Use ribbon or tape to identify student's power foot

Compare drive from each foot and show student which one was faster and stronger

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Makes a late start, stays too long in "Set" position

What To Do

Partner student with a peer and practice moving just from the "Set" position to "Go" on the peer's command

Use a flag along with the "Go" verbal command to see if the visual cue helps



SPRINTING

Sprinting is the art of applying speed and intensity to good running form. Power and coordination are the fundamental ingredients in the production of speed. Since a sprinter runs a short distance, a powerful start is critical to allowing the sprinter to reach maximum speed quickly in a race.

Speed is determined in two ways: how long the steps are (stride length) and how quickly they are made (stride frequency.) Foot strike refers to how the foot contacts the ground. A student controls speed by how much force is applied with each foot strike. The quicker the foot strike, the faster the student runs.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Identifies power foot
- Bends front knee slightly, balancing weight on both legs
- Performs a stand-up start
- Maintains upright posture with “running tall”
- Pushes off the track with balls of feet

Proficient

- Remains still in “Set” position
- Stands behind line, relaxed, power foot in front on ball of foot
- Moves foot backward under body upon landing
- Drives knees up so thigh is parallel (horizontal) to track
- Swings arms forward and back without rotating shoulders
- Performs a three or four-point start with some inconsistency

Advanced

- Stays low, using arms to drive body forward
- Pushes strongly off ball of power foot, swinging back arm forward
- Sprints under control for entire race
- Maintains good form while running as fast as possible
- Performs a three or four-point start in good form consistently



SPRINTING PHASES

Sprinting is broken down into four phases: start, acceleration, momentum maintenance and finish.

1. Start – Revisit Starts section.

2. Acceleration– the rate of increasing speed from the start.

The acceleration phase is achieved by driving or pushing with the drive leg. This requires a forward lean, directly proportional to the amount of acceleration. Remember that acceleration does not mean speed, it means the rate of increasing speed. As the drive leg is pushing, the free leg is also driving low and fast to place the foot under the body's center of gravity. With each step, speed increases until top speed is reached. Each leg is driven powerfully until it's fully extended. Vigorous arm action is helpful in maintaining balance, rhythm and relaxation.

3. Momentum Maintenance– maintaining the speed once it has been established.

The momentum maintenance phase is achieved by combining basic mechanics with the speed attained in the accelerating phase. The knees drive up high so the thigh is parallel to the track. Students need to maintain "running tall" posture, with slight forward body lean from ground, not from the waist. Arms swing forward and backward vigorously, without rotating shoulders or twisting at waste.

4. Finish – the finish phase starts as students approach the finish line and are usually running as fast as possible. It's important that students focus on maintaining good sprinting posture with normal stride action through the finish line. Practicing the finish and deceleration is necessary and can be fun. As they take the last stride, have students lunge forward and lean through the finish line, pretending that the finish is beyond where it really is to continue momentum and then gradually reduce speed to a jog and walk. A "deceleration zone" can be marked on the track with tape to give students a visual reference. Use the verbal cue "Lean through" as students approach the finish line. Demonstrate and practice deceleration separately as part of teaching this phase.

SPRINTING ON A CURVE

Runners lean inward around the curve, keeping feet parallel to the curve. Demonstrate and practice running on a curve using the verbal cue, "Lean in!"



Teaching Tips for Success

- Make practice fun and effective by playing sprinting games like red light/green light, capture the flag, tag or relays.
- Have students stand in a circle and practice "leaning in" and "leaning through."
- Have students exaggerate pushing their chests forward as they cross the finish line.
- Keep the focus on good form and doing personal best.
- Assess your students' endurance for sprinting; they should not tire or become exhausted trying to run too fast.



SPRINTING ACTIVITIES

Quick-Step Running

Develops quick leg action over distance

Description: Have students assume their “running tall” position. Students run in place, bringing heels up and under buttocks and then move out to running forward in medium-length strides with low knee lift. The upper body is tall and lifted with a slight lean forward. Head should be level and arms and shoulders relaxed. Students should maintain a smooth pace throughout the run and take walking lunges back to start.

Fast Leg Drill

Develops quickness in legs and arms

Description: Students stand along a starting line in the “running tall” position. On your “Go” command students should quickly alternate driving knees up (high knees) while pumping arms for about 10-15 seconds. Repeat three times. This is also a great warm-up drill for sprinters as they advance.

B-Skips

Develops quick leg action, drive up/drive down and consistency in proper foot strike

Description: Students start in “running tall” position. On your command they begin skipping, lifting knee high and extending their leg out in an almost exaggerated kick forward as if stepping over a hurdle. The foot is always toe up. Students remain on their toes with hips in a neutral position so the knee can reach its best height before the leg is extended out. Ensure they strike the ground on the ball of the foot and under their center of gravity to propel forward not upward. This leg extension is a great activity for stretching the hamstring. When finished, have them jog back to start. Alternate legs for three reps of ten to twenty-five skips.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Break movement into three parts: begin with regular skipping, then add high knees before combining all into one movement.
- Stand in front of the student and have the student run in place, hitting your hands with her knees, to demonstrate correct knee lift.
- Practice marching drills to reinforce high knees.

Basic Sprint

Develops proper sprinting form

Description: Students take “running tall” position at start line. Practice start commands using verbal and visual cues. Instruct students to sprint a certain distance (20-50 meters) and jog back to the start for a brief rest before running the drill again.

Variations: Make sprints longer, add more repetitions and work with the student to improve the stand-up start, as well as sprinting form.

Back-to-Front

Develops speed and endurance

Description: Divide students into groups of six to eight, based on ability. Instruct them to jog in a single file line. The last runner in the group sprints past teammates to front of the line to become the new leader. When the new student reaches the front of the line, the new last person sprints to the lead and so on. Continue for a specified time or distance, or until everyone has had the chance to sprint.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Emphasize that students must stay in their lanes during sprint races. Change designated lanes for reinforcement.
- Practice sprinting form on straightaways and curves.
- Have other students stand at finish line and call out, “Finish” when the sprinter crosses the line.
- Keep distances short (20-50 meters at most).
- Encourage students to always run relaxed at every speed, keeping body upright and arms loose.
- When they become tired or are unable to maintain proper form, stop and let them rest; running when tired or with poor form may lead to injuries

SPRINTING COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student's arms and shoulders twist and rotate while running

What To Do

Practice proper form while running in place

Have student sit on ground, legs stretched in front, and practice proper arm movement

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student is not running in upright position

What To Do

Make sure drive leg is being fully extended (push off)

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student is very tense with fists clenched, facial muscles scrunched, shoulders up high

What To Do

Practice running relaxed; emphasize proper breathing

Practice running with egg drill

Have student run with squishy balls in hands

Practice relaxation and breathing techniques

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student weaves in lane

What To Do

Have student practice running on lane line

Have student run behind or alongside peer partner

Use poly spots to create a more defined visual path



RELAYS

Relays allow track & field participants to come together as a team. Relay races are as much about skill as they are about speed. Relays combine the art of running fast with a baton and passing it from one teammate to the other, with precise timing, proper technique and above all, teamwork. Relay races involve three exchanges, with the fourth runner crossing the finish line with the baton. The most difficult concept to instill in relay participants is running away from someone while trying to receive something from that person, from that person within the exchange zone. The ultimate goal of the relay is to move the baton around the track and across the finish line in the fastest way possible. Incorporate relay passing into daily conditioning exercises.

RELAY BASICS

Selecting Relay Runners

Select your 4x100 meter relay runners based on their individual ability to exchange the baton smoothly, with speed, in addition to being strong sprinters. You may find that some students are better at handing off than receiving a baton. Place the students accordingly. The lead-off runner only has to hand off, but must be consistent at getting a strong and legal start. The second and third runners have to both receive and hand off the baton. The fourth runner only receives the baton, but must know how to effectively finish a race.

Roles for each Runner

1. **Lead-off:** Passes baton only. Gets the team out in front. Must be a fast starter, aggressive and strong, with good acceleration and balance. Can run the curve and stay in lane.
2. **Second:** Receives and passes baton. Keeps the team in the race, if the team is not in first place, the job is to get them there. Second is a very fast runner with ability to run strong straightaway and excellent speed and endurance.
3. **Third:** Receives and passes baton. Puts team in a position to win. Must be a strong runner, able to run well from behind, maintain a lead and build upon it and run the curve while staying in the lane.
4. **Fourth or Anchor:** Only receives baton. Secures the victory! Must be able to run well from behind or maintain a lead. Is most competitive runner with ability to catch and pass other runners and race to the finish.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Performs a stand-up start
- Holds baton in hand while running
- Sprints under control with “running tall,” erect posture, slight forward body lean from ground with some consistency

Proficient

- Runs the curve, staying in lane
- Passes and receive baton in exchange zone with designated technique
- Lunges forward and leans through finish line

Advanced

- All intermediate skills with good form and technique at increased speed, coordination and consistency
- Passes baton in exchange zone while running

Teaching Tips for Success

- **Demonstrate correct hand position for passing and receiving baton.**
- **Use foam rings to start if baton is difficult to hold.**
- **Start with standing exchange, then walking, then running.**
- **Demonstrate ready position for outgoing runner.**
- **Play games to help students become comfortable holding and passing the baton before introducing exchanges.**
- **Take as much time as needed practicing the exchange while walking and gradually pick up the pace.**

Holding the Baton

Instruct students to grasp one end of the baton with fingers around the baton and thumb lying on top of it. At first, it may be helpful to stick a piece of tape around the baton, indicating where the students should grasp it.

The Exchange

In beginning exchanges, the carrier has the baton in the right hand; the receiver accepts the baton in the left hand and immediately shifts it to the right. (Adjustments can be made for left-handed runners.) The risks are that students could drop the baton when changing hands and the shift may hinder running action.

In advanced exchanges, the receiver does not switch the baton from one hand to the other. It is recommended to teach students the advanced exchange wherever possible. The runners exchange as follows:

1. **First runner:** carries baton in right hand
2. **Second runner:** receives in left hand, carries in left hand and passes with left hand, stands closer to the right in the lane
3. **Third runner:** receives in right hand, carries in right hand and passes with right hand, stands closer to the left in the lane
4. **Fourth runner:** receives in left hand, carries in left hand, stands closer to the right in the lane

Up-Sweep (Palm Down)

The receiving runner's hand is placed with the palm facing behind her body and with the thumb and finger forming an upside down "V." The incoming student passes the baton in an upward movement into the receiving hand. Upon command from incoming runner, or when incoming runner hits predetermined mark, outgoing runner begins to sprint.

Down-Sweep (Palm Up)

To start, the receiving runner's hand is placed with palm facing down and with the thumb and fingers forming an upside down "V." With this pass, the outgoing runner runs to a predetermined spot in the exchange zone or responds to a verbal command. The arm is then extended straight back with target hand held high, nearly parallel to the track. The palm is now facing up, fingers slightly spread, and the thumb turned toward the torso. The incoming runner, while maintaining a normal sprint action, extends the baton and arm forward in a downward sweeping motion.



THE EXCHANGE ZONE

There are three exchange zones in the 4x100 relay and each is 20 meters long preceded by a 10-meter acceleration zone. See the graphic below for the location of each zone on a standard track. The receiver begins running in the acceleration zone, but the baton must be passed in the exchange zone. The key to this is coordinating the speeds of both runners. To gauge when the outgoing runner should begin running a “check mark” is placed on the track that gives a cue to the outgoing runner to begin running. The position of the check mark is based on the speeds of both runners. In order to pass the baton smoothly, the runners must match speeds. Many relays are won or lost in these zones, so drills to increase a team’s baton-passing efficiency are vital to success in the sprint relay.

Stepping into the Exchange Zone

The first runner begins with the baton. The receiver takes seven steps, then reaches back for the baton. Runners who will receive the baton in the right hand begin striding with the right leg, and vice versa. After counting seven steps, the receiver reaches back for the baton and the passer hands it over. The passer, who’s following, doesn’t count steps. As the receiver’s hand comes back, the passer should finish that stride then pass the baton. Passer and receiver can also use verbal cues as signals during the exchange. Again, make sure the receiver maintains proper form and doesn’t look back.

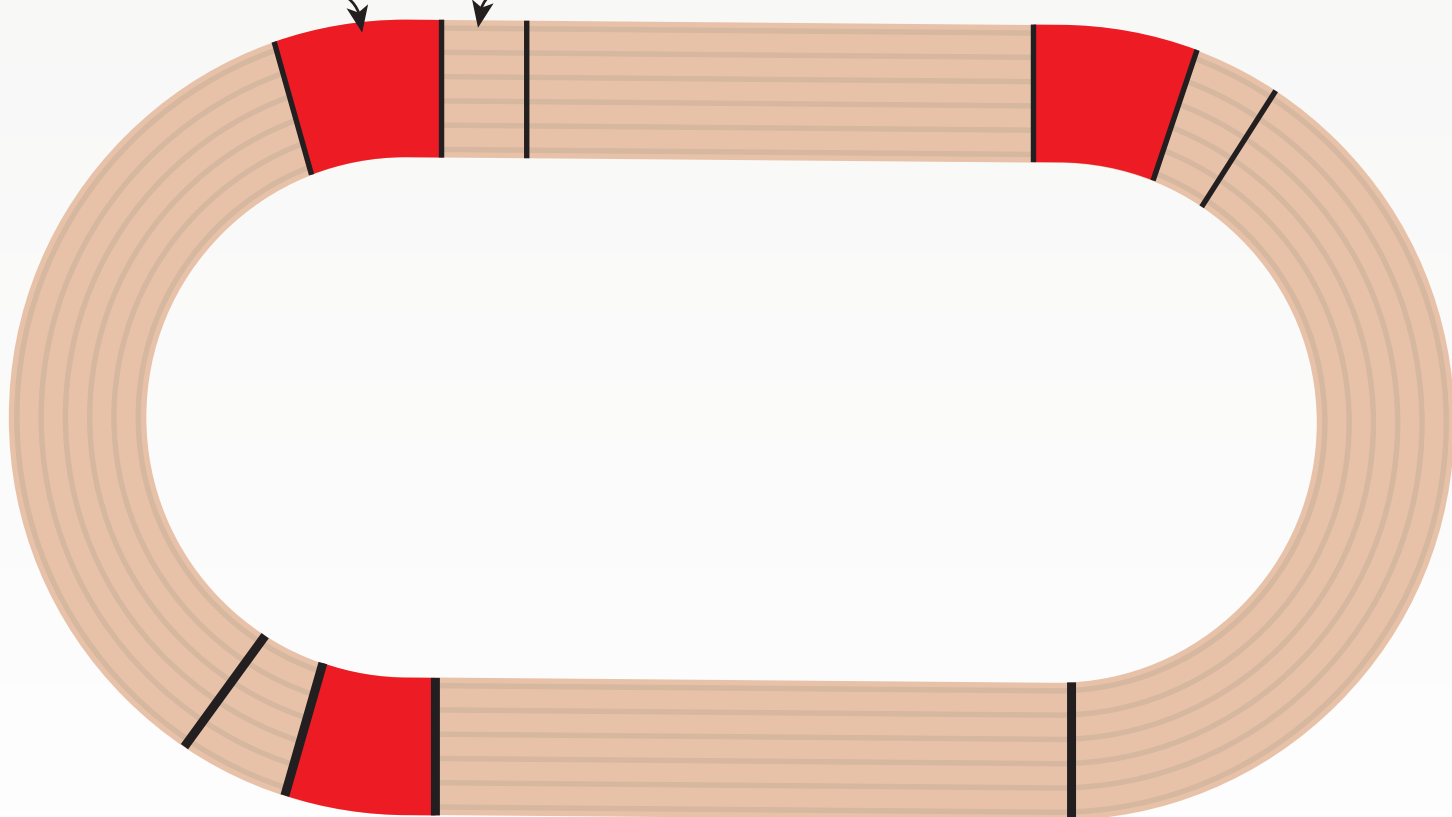


Teaching Tips for Success

- Start simple; have students walk through the zone, then run through the zone without the baton.
- Introduce the “check mark,” and let them become familiar with moving through the zone; next introduce the baton; walking through the exchange, gradually picking up pace.
- Emphasize making the exchange as quickly as possible.
- Mark off the exchange zones on the track with bright colored tape so students become familiar with the space.

Handoff Zone – 20m

Acceleration Zone – 10m



**START
FINISH**

RELAY ACTIVITIES

Light Touches Drill

Develops proper passing technique

Description: Divide students into relay teams. Students take staggered positions on track, as if running a relay, with the fourth leg runner in front of the third leg, who is in front of the second leg, in front of the first leg. Instruct the first leg runner to hold baton in their right hand and then pass them forward to the second legs, who should receive batons with their left hand, palm facing down and fingers and thumb creating an upside down “V.” The passing should continue until it reaches the fourth leg runner. Repeat.

Variation: Increase the difficulty by having the students walk while passing the baton.

Continuous Relay

Description: When students can pass the baton without dropping it while walking, introduce more speed. Place students into relay teams and have them take their relay positions on the track. Encourage the students to focus on proper form as the incoming runner passes to the next runner. Runners should remain where they finished while the baton is carried around the track. Repeat.

Variations: Increase the difficulty by advancing to a run, then a sprint, as well as increasing the distance of the relay, all while focusing on proper passing form and technique.



RELAY COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Passer drops the baton

What To Do

Practice with foam ring

Have the student work with a peer partner to practice hand-off while walking

Encourage passer to keep eye on hand of receiver

Make sure student is not gripping baton too tight

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Receiver drops baton

What To Do

Practice with foam ring

Make sure receiver maintains the right pace and doesn't speed up too soon

Encourage receiver to grip baton tightly once the exchange is made

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Students cannot make the exchange within the zone

What To Do

Revisit hand exchange drills, working separately on each skill

Focus on where student should be looking during the exchange as the passer and receiver

Mark exchange zone clearly, have students work in pairs on timing



LONG JUMP

Being able to jump fast, far and high is important in many sports. Jumping skills improve overall stability and core strength, as well as kinesthetic and proprioceptive awareness. Practicing the acceleration, control and consistency required to execute a powerful horizontal and vertical jump is not only fun, but reinforces skills for running, standing starts and sprinting.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Reaches, extending arms and upper body forward
- Bends knees and ankles, swinging arms backward, low past knees on landing
- Swings arms up and out toward landing area
- Back to front movement with arms on takeoff

Proficient

- Can spring forward off both feet
- Extends legs forward, leading with heels
- Keeps head forward to prevent falling backward
- Lands in pit or on mat, heels first
- Bends knees to absorb landing

Advanced

- Performs a three-to-nine-step stride approach
- Takeoff from board by extending takeoff leg
- Arches back to achieve hang position
- Extends legs, and reaches arms forward and back
- Hits the sand heels first with knees bent



LONG JUMP BASICS

The goal of the long jump is to leap as far as possible from a marked takeoff point. Long jump is divided into two separate events, the standing long jump and running long jump. Running long jump is a more advanced event.

There are three steps to teaching the long jump: approach, takeoff and in-flight, (step or hang style.) In-flight includes the landing. Allow students to become comfortable with each of the three steps and then combine them.

Always begin in the “Ready” position: student stands behind the board/line with feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointed out slightly. Chin is up and head straight. Arms extended in front of body and relaxed at sides. The back is straight and body leaning forward slightly.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Demonstrate ready-to-jump position to student as often as needed.
- Use verbal commands such as, “Ready!” and visual cues to help student assume “Ready” position.
- Practice jumping on bouncy surfaces, such as springboards or small exercise trampolines.
- Jump over a towel or two separated ropes on ground to improve distance.



STANDING LONG JUMP

Standing long jump is done from a stationary position and does not include the approach.

Takeoff

The takeoff is done by swinging the arms forward and low past knees, then up toward landing area. From “Ready” position, students bend knees and ankles and strongly swing arms back, then up and out with force as both legs drive and extend off ground. On the exhale, students spring forward off both feet at a 45 degree angle; using strong ankle and leg extension to create a powerful takeoff (thrust.) The toes leave the ground last.

In-Flight

In-flight, students extend their bodies with a slight arch to their backs and raise arms above head. Legs are brought under buttocks and then forward by bending 90 degrees at hips. The legs then extend forward, leading with heels and arms swing downward past legs. Remind them to keep feet parallel and slightly apart. Their heads should be forward to prevent falling backward or looking ahead of landing.

Landing

Students should extend heels forward to gain maximum length, with the momentum carrying them forward, and land in pit or on mat, heels first.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Have students practice landing after jumping off a box or springboard.
- Emphasize moving legs and arms on a vertical, or back-to-front plane to keep students’ momentum going forward.
- Place a mat or soft surface beyond the landing to encourage students to lean forward after landing.
- Introduce the skills by having students jump over a series of lines spaced increasingly further apart.
- Demonstrate two-foot takeoff emphasizing taking off from both feet.
- Remind students to land with “soft” (bent) knees.



STANDING LONG JUMP ACTIVITIES

Jumping

Description: To help students get a feel for the jumping movement and experience the sensation of leaving the ground, practice jumping on bouncy surfaces, such as springboards, small exercise trampolines or foam rubber. If students are having difficulty, pair jumpers and non-jumpers and have them face one another, hold hands and jump together.

Jumping Games

Develops powerful, explosive leg action

Description: Conduct jumping games to promote long jump skills. Here are a few examples:

- Play red light/green light using jumping instead of running
- Play a game of tag incorporating jumping along with running
- Play music and have the students jump when the music is on and freeze when the music is off
- Have students jump over a series of lines spaced increasingly further apart

Circle Jumping

Develops powerful, explosive leg action

Description: Place a series of ten to twelve hoops on the ground. Instruct students to jump from hoop to hoop. Initially place hoops close to each other, then set them progressively further apart to demand long-reaching strides and explosive leg action. Encourage students to bend knees and use a forward and upward swinging motion of the arms to help each jump.

Low Obstacle Leaps

Develops powerful, explosive leg action and spring in legs

Description: Create and place five obstacles about 3 feet apart. Instruct students to jump over the obstacles. Once students land, they immediately hop or bound over the next obstacle. Remind students to use arms to obtain height and distance over obstacles.



Teaching Tips for Success

- Demonstrate and emphasize the forward and upward swing of the arms to help each jump.
- Emphasize back-to-front motion to keep momentum going forward.
- Have students practice jumping over a towel or two separated ropes on ground to improve distance.
- Practice moving legs and arms on a vertical or back-to-front plane to keep students' momentum going forward.

RUNNING LONG JUMP

In the running long jump, speed is critical to carry the jumper a further distance, so great long jumpers are often great sprinters. Make sure your students can execute a proper sprinting pattern and reproduce it over and over again before considering the running long jump. The successful long jumper requires speed and spring, combined with the ability to stride consistently. The goal is to sprint and hit the takeoff board with the push-off leg without adjusting the stride at any time.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Place different colored footprints on the runway.
- Have students practice approach run as often as possible so that a consistent run develops.
- Have students measure the approach themselves so they know the start point.
- Use colored bands, stickers, colored shoelaces, etc. to help students identify takeoff leg.

Determining Takeoff Leg

The student's stronger leg is usually the takeoff leg. Have the student take three consecutive hops from a standing start using the right foot and then left. The leg on which they hopped the farthest is likely the takeoff leg. If a preference is not shown, most right-handed people will use their left foot for takeoff.

Measuring an Approach

The goal of the approach is to gradually accelerate to a maximum, but controlled, speed that can be used to propel the jumper at the takeoff point. As students progress through skill and strength improvements, the length of the approach will be adjusted, moving from three to five, seven and nine strides. To measure the approach, have students stand on the takeoff board and run back down the runway, counting the number of strides. Mark the point where the student stops or reaches the number of strides she plans to use for the approach. This is the initial mark that will be adjusted forward or backward. Students face takeoff board from this mark. Run approach several times and note location of first and third steps taken with takeoff foot. Matching the stride to meet these two checkmarks will help students run a consistent approach.

The Takeoff

Have students perform the approach run and plant takeoff foot on board behind foul line. Instruct them to stretch upward immediately prior to takeoff. They should takeoff strongly from board by extending takeoff leg, bending other leg and driving thigh up and over sand pit. Their upper body should be straight, head up and vision focused ahead in the sand. Instruct them to land in a running position on non-takeoff foot and run through the sand.

In-Flight – Step Style

From takeoff, students drive right knee and left arm forward and upward over sand pit. While in flight, they extend lead leg with the takeoff leg trailing, appearing to be in a stride position mid-flight. They should circle right arm overhead and bring left leg forward, so that arms and legs are parallel. When preparing to land, have them extend arms and upper body to reach forward, dropping arms below legs and bending knees upon hitting the sand. They should land in the sand heels first, with hands sweeping past hips. Instruct them to roll over on toes, falling forward.

In-Flight – Hang Style

From takeoff, students should drive right knee and left arm forward and upward, holding left leg and right arm back, then driving left leg and right arm (they are parallel). They should arch back to achieve "Hang" position. They should then circle arms clockwise while lowering upper body toward thighs, extending legs, and reaching arms forward and back. They should hit the sand heels first and bend knees, moving upper body forward and rolling over toes, falling forward.



RUNNING LONG JUMP ACTIVITIES

Cross the Brook

Develops jumping and falling forward and tall body position during jump

Description: Place two ropes on the ground about shoulder-width apart to start, forming a “brook.” Have the students jump from one side of the brook to the other, focusing on driving from the legs and using proper jumping technique. Space the ropes farther apart to work on hopping distance.

Pop-ups

Increases height on jump and develop tall body position during jump

Description: Place string or light rope across pit about 10 feet from takeoff board. The distance of the rope can be adjusted depending on skill level. Instruct students to take the “running tall” position and begin short approach. They should run toward pit with moderate, controlled speed, hitting board and driving up and out beyond marker and landing into pit. Repeat several times to work on proper form.

Combination Skills: Approach/Takeoff/Landing

Description: Line students up one at a time on the runway on their individual starting point. Have them begin their approach by stepping forward with the takeoff foot. On a verbal command, students accelerate to the takeoff board, planting the appropriate approach step (three to nine strides) on the board. Encourage students to take off strongly from the board, driving the knee opposite the takeoff foot forward and over the landing pit. Show students how to extend their legs forward, bring the upper body down to the thighs and drop the arms below the legs in preparation for landing. Students should land in the pit, heels first with hands behind the hips. Upon landing, instruct students to thrust arms and upper body forward, remembering to bend their knees to absorb the impact, and then roll over their toes and fall forward. Start with shorter approaches then gradually increase distance as students’ skill improves.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Break down skill and demonstrate and practice each move separately.
- Have students use a three or five stride approach, then work up to nine strides.
- Student always takes first stride with takeoff foot.
- Move the start back, always taking an odd number of strides, until a consistent approach is achieved.
- Increase length of approach as flight technique improves.



LONG JUMP COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student takes off on the wrong foot and looks down at board

What To Do

Re-check approach and start point
Practice doing run the exact same way each time
Do run-up on track with controlled acceleration

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student is not getting any height in the jump (stays close to ground)

What To Do

Increase drive; make sure upper body is not angled forward; use extension of legs
Practice bounding and jumping drills
Strengthen core muscles with warm-up/fitness exercises

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student lands upright

What To Do

Increase forward reach and momentum; increase height so legs can be repositioned
Strengthen core muscles
Practice two-footed jumps

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student is not extending and moving arms and legs during flight

What To Do

Increase confidence, control and/or strength; make sure takeoff leg is fully extended so student is getting height
Jump from boxes





TURBO JAV

At a fraction of the size and weight of a traditional javelin, the Turbo Jav was designed to teach throwing fundamentals and proper mechanics in a safe and fun environment. Even advanced athletes in other throwing sports can benefit from using the Turbo Jav to improve throwing accuracy and technique.

The skills and drills presented in this section have all been derived from an instructional booklet produced by Tom Petranoff, two time world record holder in Javelin, inventor of the Turbo Javelin, and owner of Throwing Zone Athletics.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Grips the Turbo Jav appropriately
- Throws the Turbo Jav from a standing position
- Aims for a close target

Proficient

- Throws the Turbo Jav with a one or multi-step approach
- Hits close targets consistently
- Throws the Turbo Jav for distance

Advanced

- Throws the Turbo Jav with a full approach
- Consistently hits targets at various distances
- Consistently throws for long distances

TURBO JAV BASICS

The Grip

The grip refers to both the part of the Turbo Jav where the thrower holds it, as well as how the thrower holds it. On the grip area, you'll find a line of raised dots followed by a raised "V." This is called the "Y system." The grip should be placed in the students' hands with the dots facing down into their palms. The crease of the thumb and index fingers rest on the raised V, while the fingers wrap around the lip of the grip. Proper hand placement on the Turbo Jav is essential for learning how to accurately throw it.

Throwing Mechanics

1. **Stance:** Student stands with feet shoulder-width apart and entire body facing forward. The non-throwing arm is pointing in the direction of the throw.
2. **Grip:** See above for proper Grip.
3. **Carry:** Student brings the Turbo Jav up to head height directly beside the eye, keeping it parallel with the ground.
4. **Drawback:** Keeping the Turbo Jav level and point facing forward, the throwing arm pulls the Turbo Jav back above the head and over the shoulder so the tail is now behind the student.
5. **Throw:** With a smooth, continuous motion, student pulls the Turbo Jav forward through their center of gravity and throws it over the shoulder. Ensure good follow through to achieve optimum flight and distance.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Break down and practice Throwing Mechanics and individual body movements without the Turbo Jav first.
- Use tape to mark key positions for proper grip.
- Demonstrate that Turbo Jav should glide like a paper airplane.
- Place markers or poly spots on the ground to help students stand with feet shoulder-width apart.
- Reinforce importance of throwing over the shoulder; throwing to the side of the body will result in bad flights and increase injury risk.
- Start with easy throws at first to get the feel of throwing over the shoulder.



TURBO JAV ACTIVITIES

Target Throw

Develops accuracy and proper throwing form

Description: Designate a throwing line and a safety area behind the throwing zone for students waiting. Set up standing targets or buckets about 15-30 feet away from the throwing line. Divide students into groups so that each group has one Turbo Jav. Demonstrate and practice proper throwing form as described in Throwing Mechanics. Students throw, aiming for the target or bucket. Award points to keep track of accurate throws. For example, one point for hitting the bucket and three points for getting it in. To encourage proper throwing mechanics, be sure that points are only awarded if the rubber nose of the Turbo Jav hits the intended target or bucket.

Variation: Advance drill by moving the throwing line further away from the targets.

Basketball Hoop Throw

Develops accuracy and proper throwing form

Description: Designate a throwing line about 15-30 feet away from a basketball hoop and backboard with a safe zone behind the throw zone for students who are waiting. Divide students into groups so that each group has one Turbo Jav. Review proper throwing form. Using proper form, students throw the Turbo Jav at the backboard. Award points when the nose of the Turbo Jav hits the backboard. For example, one point for hitting the outside of the backboard, three points for hitting the square and five points for hitting the backboard and going through the hoop.

Variation: Advance drill by moving the throwing line further away from the backboard.

One Step Approach

Description: Designate a throwing line and a safety area behind the throwing zone for students waiting. Divide students into groups so that each group has one Turbo Jav. Students take one large step behind the throwing line. Instruct students to step forward with the same leg as their throwing arm. For example, a right-handed thrower will start with the right foot forward. Students draw the Turbo Jav back in the carry position, with the opposite arm pointing in the direction of the throw. Students then step forward with their back foot and, in a continuous motion, throw the Turbo Jav by pulling the tail through the point. One step throws can be used for both target and distance throws.

3-5-7 Step Approach

Description: Once students have mastered the throwing mechanics, they can add steps to their approach to help increase their throwing distance. Students start with a three-step approach, which begins the same as the one step approach; with the same foot forward as their throwing arm (i.e. right-hand thrower=right foot forward). Instruct students to raise the Turbo Jav into the carry position. For right-handed throwers, the first step would be with their left (back) foot, followed by the right foot moving quickly to allow the third step off the left foot to plant quickly. Once the left foot is firmly planted, students throw the Turbo Jav. Left-handed throwers follow the same progression, just beginning with the left foot forward. Once students have mastered the three-step approach, add two more steps to make it five, then two more which would complete the seven-step approach.

Variation: Advance this approach by moving from a walk to a jog, then a run.

Full Approach

Description: Once students have mastered a seven-step approach at a running pace, they can move on to the full approach. Most throwers will start with a minimum of eleven steps and build from there, but usually not using more than 75-80 feet for the full approach. Students begin a full approach with the same form as the 3-5-7 approaches, making sure to follow through after the throw. Remind students to focus on running smoothly and keeping the Turbo Jav point level and in the direction of the throw. Begin the full approach at a walking pace, gradually moving up to a jog, then a run.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Model approaches and have students walk through with you before introducing the Turbo Jav to the approach.
- Reinforce the importance of the follow through, especially as the length and speed of the approaches increase.
- Use sticker or other visual marker to designate throwing hand/foot.
- Be sure student has strength and range of motion to complete throw, if not modify activity.

TURBO JAV COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student is having trouble keeping Turbo Jav level

What To Do

Turbo Javs come in two different weights; try a lighter one if possible
Re-check for proper grip placement

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student throws with arm, not shoulder

What To Do

Remind student to bring non-throwing arm in toward the rib cage when throwing to allow for the throwing shoulder to rotate forward

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student has difficulty coordinating all movements

What To Do

Break down movements into three steps and practice each on separately before combining

Be sure student has strength and range of motion to complete throw, if not modify

Practice without Turbo Jav for as long as needed

Use peer partner who has mastered mechanics to work with student



SOFTBALL THROW

Throwing a softball well is essential to participating in the game. In Special Olympics, Softball Throw is an event in the sport of Athletics (Track & Field.) Many students who find other Track & Field events challenging can excel at softball throw and have a lot fun doing it. While it is a great training tool for the shot put, it also builds strength and coordination and gives students the confidence to try other sports that involve throwing, such as football, softball and baseball.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Can release ball forward a minimum of 10 feet
- Has full range of movement in arms and shoulders
- Can grip ball firmly, placing thumb under ball with index, middle and ring finger on top, and little finger on side
- Transfers body weight from the right leg to the left leg

Proficient

- Can use a high forward release
- Raises right arm with elbow pointing back and hold ball behind the head
- Bends left arm and holds it in front of chest
- Brings right arm up and forward, leading with elbow

Advanced

- Extends right arm, snaps wrist and releases ball off fingertips
- Follows with throwing arm, down and across body
- Uses a run in preparing for the throw



SOFTBALL THROW BASICS

Gripping the Softball and Ready Position

Learning proper grip and finger placement on ball

Have students pick up a softball with their throwing, dominant hand. Students place their thumbs under the ball with the index finger, middle and ring finger on top and the pinky finger on the side. This grip may vary depending on the size of the student's hand. Instruct students to apply pressure by squeezing their fingers to keep the ball in the hand. The finger pressure on the ball should be evenly distributed. A too tight grip can prevent proper spin on the ball. The grip should be firm, but not too tight, thus allowing the wrist to be flexible and create backspin.

Underhand Throw

1. Position feet parallel, at shoulder-width apart, pointing towards the target.
2. Place weight on dominant foot or throwing arm side.
3. Bring the throwing hand and arm back in a pendulum-style swing with the palm facing forward.
4. At top of the backswing, take a step forward with the left foot, while bending the knees.
5. Swing arm forward, releasing ball when fingers are pointing at target.
6. Allow back foot to step up parallel to forward foot, a bit more than shoulder-width apart.



Overhand Throw

1. Using proper grip of the softball, keep hand on top of ball as you reach the position where the palm is facing away from target above the shoulder (do not lock elbow).
2. The back foot starts to pivot and turns the body sideways.
3. The elbow should be at the same level as the shoulder and the hand is above the head.
4. The transfer of weight from back to front begins as the elbow leads the arm into the release position (above the head in line with the shoulder.)
5. The arm circle path from start to release point is on line to the target.
6. As the ball is released, the fingers will pull down with force across the seams. The thumb leads the hand downward towards the ground upon release.
7. The follow-through: the hand follows through down and towards the "glove-side." The back leg should continue following through (as if stepping). The goal at time of release is to create complete vertical backspin on the ball.

Throwing Mechanics with Ball

Understanding steps and movements in proper throwing

Break down throwing mechanics into individual steps, practicing each movement separately without a ball, adding the next as the student masters each. Next, combine all movements and practicing still without the ball. When students have mastered the mechanics of the approach, throw and follow-through, introduce the ball, practice proper grip and continue to focus on throwing technique. Do not be concerned with distance at this point. Smaller and/or lighter balls (rubber softballs, tennis balls, etc.) can be used to help learn the proper technique.

Throwing for Distance

Advanced students should practice throwing for distance. After the first throw, visually mark where the ball landed, using items such as small flags, cones, Frisbees, etc., so the student knows the distance she needs to surpass. Practice throwing over a barrier, like a high jump standard with the crossbar. Emphasize holding up the throwing arm and throwing overhand. Give each student three tries, encouraging them to try and beat their previous throw.



Teaching Tips for Success

- Stand behind students and move their arms through throwing motion.
- Practice throwing motion without a ball first, then with ball.
- Demonstrate grip by touching the athlete's fingertips with your hands. Place the students fingers in the correct position.
- Make sure students' left shoulders are lower than the right, and their backs are arched when releasing the ball, this allows for maximum force.
- Use markers for proper foot placement.
- Student can wear wrist band, sticker, etc. to designate throwing hand.
- Make sure ball is proper size to fit students' hands.
- Students with small hands may place all four fingers on top and the thumb to one side and hold the ball in the palm of the throwing hand.
- Place footprints on the ground and have students follow the pattern for throwing.

SOFTBALL THROW COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student holds the grip too tight

What To Do

Make sure ball is not in the palm of the student's hand

Make sure student has finger pressure evenly spaced

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student holds the grip too loose

What To Do

Make sure the student is holding the ball with a tighter and even grip

Ask the student to pick up the ball with her finger tips

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student does not grip the ball with the finger tips

What To Do

Manually adjust the student's fingers so she is using the finger tips and not the palms of her hand

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student releases the ball too early and the ball falls short of target

What To Do

Encourage student to hold ball longer to ensure a higher release point

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student releases the ball too late and the ball misses the target

What To Do

Encourage student to release ball sooner to ensure a lower release point.
Demonstrate the correct release point

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student steps with the wrong foot forward

What To Do

Place a piece of tape on the correct foot. Re-emphasize the proper technique with demonstration and physical prompt if necessary

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student has improper weight transfer and the ball lands wide of target

What To Do

Provide varying targets from left to right to reinforce bringing ball across body (or to prevent across body weight transfer)







SHOT PUT

The shot put is a Track & Field event involving “putting” (throwing by using a pushing motion) a heavy spherical weight—the shot—as far as possible, using one hand. The shot is made of solid metal and is put from a circle 7 feet in diameter. The circle has a stop board 4 inches high at its front; if the competitor steps on or out of the circle, the throw is invalidated. The shot is put with one hand and must be held near the chin to start. It may not drop below or behind shoulder level at any time.

Skill Progression

Basic

- Holds shot appropriately in throwing hand
- Places shot against the neck, with palm turned out
- Aims for a close target from standing put

Proficient

- Throws the shot with a one or multi-step approach using correct stance
- Hits close targets consistently
- Throws the shot for distance from sliding put

Advanced

- Throws the shot with a full approach and rotation
- Consistently hits targets at various distances
- Consistently throws for long distances from gliding put

SHOT PUT BASICS

The skills and drills presented here are derived from the National Throws Coaches Association website, as well as CoachesEducation.com for beginner's Shot Put.

Step-by-step teaching progressions can be used to lead the beginner through the various aspects of shot put technique, from how to hold the shot to a full throw using the rotational or glide technique. It is important that each step of a teaching progression focuses on a single aspect of technique and that only one new technical element is introduced with each successive step. By teaching the shot put in such a progressive manner, the beginning shot putter is allowed to learn one step at a time and will not be overloaded by having to concentrate on too many things at the same time.

THE GRIP

1. Hold shot with both hands. Place shot in throwing hand and spread fingers around shot. Do not rest shot in palm of hand.
2. Place thumb and little finger wider apart for balance and support.
3. Raise shot above head, wrist flexed backwards. At this point, the shot is supported on the sides by the thumb and little finger.
4. Bring arm down, place shot against the neck (below the ear) with palm turned out.
5. Lift elbow parallel to the floor, away from the body. Check to see that the thumb is pointing down. Apply pressure against the shot to support it. Once the student is able to demonstrate that he can hold the shot properly, he is ready to learn the basic elements of the throw.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Practice placement of fingers to learn proper grip around the shot before moving on to the stance.
- Make sure the elbow stays behind the shot.
- Reinforce that the shot is held at the base of the fingers, not the palm.
- Cup the shot with fingers and thumb along the back side of the ball. Don't touch the shot with palm, and don't spread out fingers around the ball. Use dominant hand.



SHOT PUT STYLES

NOTE: This section is written for right-handed shot putters. Switch “right” and “left” if you are left-handed.

Standing Put

1. From ready position, stand straddle near toe board, facing perpendicular to direction of throw (left shoulder at front of the ring.)
2. Shoulders are parallel to direction of throw.
3. Left arm (non-throwing arm) is relaxed, extended in front of body.
4. Step back and bend right leg, keeping back straight.
5. Turn upper body 90 degrees away from direction of put.
6. Body weight is over bent right leg.
7. Drive hips and chest counterclockwise toward direction of put.
8. Extend right arm and snap fingers, releasing shot.



Sliding Put

1. From ready position, stand straddle near middle of ring, facing perpendicular to direction of throw (left shoulder at front of the ring.)
2. Lower upper body and flex right leg to quarter squat.
3. Lift left foot and extend it forward, sliding body toward front of circle.
4. Rotate right leg and extend body upward to force hips around to direction of put.
5. Right leg remains flexed and body is perpendicular to direction of throw.
6. Rotate right leg and extend body upward to force hips around to direction of put.
7. Thrust chest forward and extend both legs.

Teaching Tips for Success

- Use the legs. Explode from the bent position up toward the sky.
- Put body weight behind the put.
- Bend knees and drop buttocks back toward the middle of ring to prevent falling forward and incurring a foul.

8. Transfer weight to left leg.
9. Extend right arm and push shot with fingertips.
10. Release shot, right arm extending in direction of put.

Gliding Put

1. From ready position, stand at rear of circle, facing away from the direction of put; weight is on right leg.
2. Place ball of left foot on throwing surface.
3. Hop backward powerfully, turning both feet 90 degrees, parallel to toe board.
4. Land on both feet simultaneously.
5. Rotate and raise trunk upward; feet begin turning wse
6. Transfer weight from right to left foot, pivoting both feet and knees toward direction of put.
7. Keep right elbow away from body, and extend right arm forcefully.
8. Keeping thumb down, put the shot and forcefully snap the wrist and fingers outward.

The Reverse - Weight Transfer

1. After shot is put, right arm continues past body to the left. Left arm continues back around body.
2. Switch feet - right foot moves toward toe board, and left foot moves to the back. All of weight is on right leg.



SHOT PUT ACTIVITIES

Warm-up Drills for Shot Put

The underhand toss, chest pass and wrist-flip drills help warm up and prepare the body for the motions of shot put.

Underhand Toss

To perform the underhand toss, have students stand on the toe board facing the field, holding the shot with both hands in front of the body, bend knees and drive the shot up and out with legs and arms. This drill works on using the entire body to launch the shot.

Chest Pass

The chest pass should also be done facing the field. Students hold the shot with both hands at chest level, and push the shot up and out, working on your arm extension.

Wrist flips work on the final step of the throw, and can help add an extra foot or two of distance if done correctly. Students hold the shot with throwing hand against neck. While facing the field, they use wrist to “Flick” the shot out from the neck.



Teaching Tips for Success

- The student should always enter and exit the ring from the rear.
- Break down putting into parts and practice the parts.
- Elbow must stay behind the shot.
- Demonstrate proper way to enter and exit ring.
- Have student keep right elbow at shoulder level during put.
- Move hips forward and keep chest high and square to direction of put.
- Extend the legs during put.
- Put shot with fingers.
- Finish put with right arm extended in front of body, hand above head level.
- The student is balanced the entire time in the throwing circle.
- Practice without a shot, with a softball, and finally with the shot.
- Put begins with extension of legs.
- Do not watch shot after release.
- Student's chin and chest are straight and up.
- As technique improves, left arm gets more involved in putting action.
- Keep shot next to neck before the put, to avoid throwing shot.

SHOT PUT COACHING CHART

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student is throwing the shot instead of "putting" it

What To Do

Correct the hand/arm/elbow positioning, keeping elbow high

Make sure shot is cradled under the chin

Practice in standing put stance

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The student's shot is not going upward when put

What To Do

Remind student to use legs when thrusting; make sure upward direction is being followed with the body.

Use a target to "put over" in the air (i.e., hold a stick or bar in the air)

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student lands upright

What To Do

Increase forward reach and momentum; increase height so legs can be repositioned

Strengthen core muscles

Practice two-footed jumps

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

No distance/power in student's put

What To Do

Break down movements

Lift upward simultaneously with legs and back, making sure the legs are thrusting and parts are occurring in the right sequence

Practice without shot for as long as needed, or use a lightweight ball to get the feel of the motion

Use peer partner who has mastered mechanics to work

