



**Special  
Olympics**



SPECIAL OLYMPICS WISCONSIN

# **FITNESS COMPETITION**

PLAYBOOK

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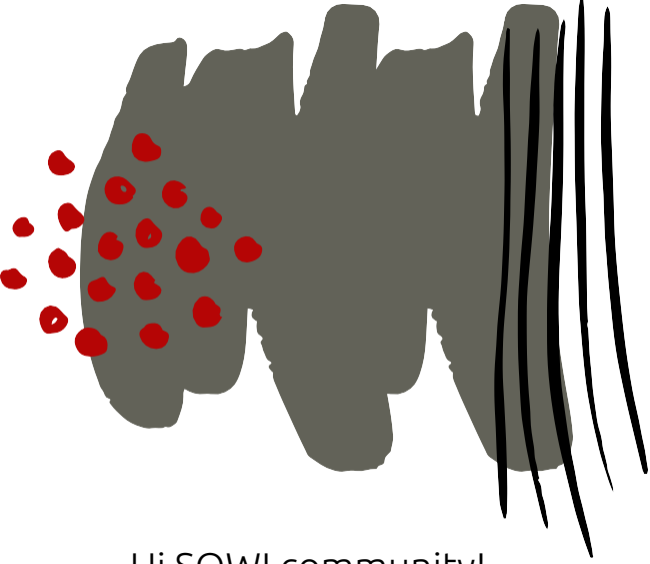
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# THE GAME PLAN

Hi SOWI community!

The Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) Fitness Competition has been designed by Special Olympics staff representing multiple SO Programs, the SONA Region and Special Olympics Inc. (SOI) to offer participants (athletes and Unified partners) the opportunity to challenge themselves and others through performance measures of various fitness exercises.

The Fitness Competition provides trainings and exercises that can be done in-person, but also allow for participants and their coaches to train and compete virtually, all while staying connected to their Special Olympics community.

Why is fitness important for our Special Olympics community? We have an obligation to improve the statistics that dominate our current fitness picture. Current health statistics for individuals with intellectual disabilities present challenges that only activity on multiple days per week can address.

Combining fitness initiatives into your daily routine, along with other sporting endeavors, presents the opportunity to improve everyone's health and quality of life.

SOWI Fitness Team

# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ATHLETES TO PARTICIPATE?!

**6.5 million people** in the United States and an estimated 200 million people worldwide have an intellectual disability. Through **sports, health, and fitness**, we can change the statistics below for people with ID and become a **stronger, healthier, and more unified community**.

<p><b>2 TIMES</b> as likely to be <b>OBESE</b></p>		<p><b>2-4 TIMES</b> as likely to be less <b>PHYSICALLY ACTIVE</b></p>
	<p><b>LIFE EXPECTANCY</b> is reduced by an average of <b>16 YEARS</b></p>	
<p><b>5 TIMES</b> as likely to have <b>DIABETES</b></p>		<p><b>2 TIMES</b> as likely to have <b>CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE &amp; ASTHMA</b></p>

# FITNESS AS COMPETITION

## PRE-READ

Physical fitness exercises can include a broad array of fitness components. The recommended competition format for the Fitness Competition incorporates fitness exercises that target the following:

- 1) Balance
- 2) Core body strength
- 3) Lower body strength
- 4) Upper body strength

**The Fitness Competition format will allow participants to select which level of exercises they will focus on for training to challenge themselves and compete against other participants over the course of a pre-determined season length.**

## PREPARING FOR A FITNESS COMPETITION

It is a good idea to prepare yourself and others to assist you before conducting a fitness competition or training session. Carefully plan and organize the session in advance so that you can effectively educate, engage, and motivate participants to give their best effort during each session. The following steps will help you prepare:

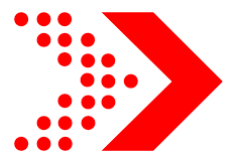
- **Gather equipment in advance** – Don't forget to bring something with which to record scores, whether that is pencil and paper or an electronic device.
- **Learn and practice the exercises** – All the exercises have protocols on how to conduct and score the individual exercises. Training, which should include participants regularly practicing their selected exercises, will allow individual participants to improve their scores and become healthier and more physically fit.
- **Plan the order and timing of exercises** – It may be best to do the more challenging exercises first, such as the ones that cause more fatigue, and then do the exercises that are not as difficult. Also, build in rest time between tests so that participants do not tire as quickly and can perform optimally. While you are planning your exercise order, you should also consider how many assistants you will need to help so that each exercise is done and supervised appropriately, as well as scored correctly.
- **Ensure participants stretch and warm-up properly prior to attempting the fitness exercises, as well as cool down afterwards and ensure that hydration (i.e. water) is provided.**



## THE FITNESS COMPETITION

A new Special Olympics Fitness Competition has been developed. It provides Special Olympics participants (athletes and Unified partners) with an opportunity to compete in a sequence of four different fitness exercises and measure overall performance levels. Competition can be offered amongst individual athletes, traditional teams, or Unified teams.

The Fitness Competition offers participants a wide range of exercises best suited for their individual needs and interests. Places of finish in a competition are predicated upon each participant's or team's performance improvement over the course of a season.



# FITNESS COMPETITION

## FAST FACTS



**Length of Season: 10 weeks**

**Participants select one of the three levels in this guide.** The fitness exercises in each level require little to no equipment, so they can be done at home or at a training site.

**Each participant must train and compete in the same four exercises throughout the course of the 10-week season.** For team competition, however, participants do not have to train and compete in the same level of exercises.

**Participants will be divisioned based on age, gender and a score, which reflects level of improvement.** This approach provides flexibility to participants and programs, while encouraging participants to continually work towards progression in their fitness exercises.

- Participants have choices when selecting fitness exercise levels.
- Participants are incentivized by the scoring format to improve throughout the course of the 10-week season and become more fit and skilled. This is due to awarding points based upon the levels of increase in their performance.

# FITNESS TEAM FORMATS

## Unified Sports Pairs or Traditional Pairs

- **Unified Sports Pairs:** An athlete and Unified partner train and compete together, either in-person or virtually, against other Unified pair teams.
- **Traditional Pairs:** Two Special Olympics athletes train and compete together, either in-person or virtually, against other pair teams comprised solely of Special Olympics athletes.

▶ Ideally, the pairs team members would select the same level of fitness exercises, but this is not required.

▶ The Fitness Competition composite scores for the two participants are added together and averaged for the team's score. This is used for divisioning and in competitions against other Unified or traditional Special Olympics pair teams.

## Teams (Traditional or Unified)

Teams of four members train and compete together, either virtually or in-person. A Unified team must have an equal number of athletes and partners.

▶ Each team member selects their level of fitness exercises in which to train and compete. They do not need to be the same levels.

▶ The Fitness Competition scores for all team members are added together and averaged for the team score. This is used for divisioning and in competitions.



# SCORING FOR FITNESS COMPETITION

For the Fitness Competition, an athlete, Unified partner or team's final score will be based upon the sum of four scores from each fitness exercise:

- Score 1 = a pre-season score
- Score 2 = % improvement from pre-season to midseason
- Score 3 = % improvement from pre-season to end of season

A pre-season point value is assigned to participants, corresponding to their scores from Week 1. The point/scoring matrix has been developed to assign points for the number of repetitions completed within a period of time OR the amount of time an exercise is held.

The corresponding points from each of the four fitness exercises are added together to give the participant a total individual pre-season score. If the athletes and Unified partners are on a team, the scores for each team member are added together to get the total team pre-season score.

**Fitness exercises that use repetitions** (over a 30, 60 or 90-second time frame):

0 repetitions	= 0 points
1-5 repetitions	= 1 point
6-10 repetitions	= 2 points
11-15 repetitions	= 3 points
16-20 repetitions	= 4 points
21-25 repetitions	= 5 points
26-30 repetitions	= 6 points
31-35 repetitions	= 7 points
36-40 repetitions	= 8 points
41-45 repetitions	= 9 points
46-50 repetitions	= 10 points
50+ repetitions	= 11 points

**Fitness exercises that focus on the overall amount of time an exercise is held:**

0 seconds	= 0 points
1-10 seconds	= 1 point
11-15 seconds	= 2 points
16-20 seconds	= 3 points
21-25 seconds	= 4 points
26-30 seconds	= 5 points
31-35 seconds	= 6 points
36-40 seconds	= 7 points
41-45 seconds	= 8 points
46-50 seconds	= 9 points
51-55 seconds	= 10 points
55+ seconds	= 11 points

Note: Agencies will just submit raw scores (number of repetitions or time held) for each exercise. SOWI will convert the raw score into points.

# FITNESS COMPETITION SCHEDULE

## PRESEASON

SOWI staff will conduct a webinar to provide an overview of the season for athletes, Unified partners, coaches, family members and local coordinators.

## WEEK 1

**Participants select their fitness level and receive instruction on how to do each exercise properly.** Each participant must keep the same four fitness exercises throughout the duration of the 10-week season.

**A pre-season score is recorded and submitted for each of the four fitness exercises.** For example, some fitness exercises may require the number of repetitions within a designated amount of time, such as the number of push-ups properly completed within 60 seconds. Other fitness exercises may be scored based on the amount of time/duration an exercise is held, such as balancing on one leg.

## MIDSEASON (WEEK 5)

**A score (i.e. number of repetitions or elapsed time) for each of the four fitness exercises is recorded and submitted at midseason.** The pre-season score from Week 1 (i.e. number of repetitions or elapsed time) is compared with the midseason score from Week 5. Points are assigned based upon the percentage of improvement. Each of the four fitness exercises is assigned a corresponding numeric score (based upon % improvement for each) and these four scores are added together for a composite score.

# FITNESS COMPETITION SCHEDULE

Continued...

## DIVISIONING: PRE-SEASON TO MIDSEASON

Division participants by age, gender and similar composite performance improvement scores/points. In addition to the composite improvement scores, the points from the pre-season are added to provide a total pre-season and midseason performance improvement score.

For example, Joe is a male athlete and is participating in Level 2 fitness exercises:

### Joe's pre-season results:

Push-ups (knees): 10 total = 2 points  
Squats: 10 total = 2 points  
Plank (knees): 20 sec = 3 points  
One-leg Stance (closed): 10 sec = 1 point

### Joe's midseason results:

Push-ups: 11 total = 3 points  
Squats: 12 total = 3 points  
Plank: 25 sec = 4 points  
One-leg Stance: 15 sec = 2 points

To place Joe into a division for the end of season competition, SOWI would use:

Pre-Season score: 8 points

Midseason score: 12 points

Improvement: 50%

Joe would be divisioned with other male athletes of a comparable age that attained a comparable % improvement of 50% (+ or -).

## End of Season Competition (Week 10)

Participants compete in each of their four fitness exercises and receive a score (i.e. number of repetitions or elapsed time) for each of the four fitness exercises. These are recorded and submitted. The pre-season score is compared with the end of season score. The composite score is used to determine places of finish within each division. Participants will be awarded medals or ribbons based on their placement against others same-gender athletes of a comparable age and ability.

In the example above with Joe, he again improves upon each fitness exercise at the end of season competition. The results would provide a return for the following score:

### Joe's End of Season Results:

Push-ups: 12 total = 3 points  
Squats: 14 total = 3 points  
Plank: 30 sec = 5 points  
One-Leg Stance: 20 sec = 3 points

Pre-season total score = 8 points  
End of season total score = 14 points  
TOTAL FINAL % IMPROVEMENT: 75%



# THE EXERCISES

**This section contains everything you need to know to guide participants through each of the four exercise target areas.**

- Materials needed for each exercise
- Goal of the exercise
- Instructions
- Scoring guidelines
- Pictures and video links
- Links to supplemental exercises

# FITNESS COMPETITION EXERCISES

## LEVEL 1

1-Leg Stance - Eyes Open  
Curl Ups  
Sit to Stand  
Roman Holds

## LEVEL 2

1-Leg Stance - Eyes Closed  
Plank – on Knees  
Squats  
Pushups – on Knees

## LEVEL 3

Ball Taps  
Plank – on Toes  
Wall Sit  
Pushups – on Toes

How do I decide what level is appropriate for my athlete or unified partner?

Participants should be able to complete each exercise, but still find it challenging. If the participant can max out on any particular exercise within a level, consider moving up to the next level. Similarly, if a participant cannot complete any particular exercise, consider moving down a level. Participants should maintain proper form throughout the entire exercise.

## MATERIALS

Before you start, make sure you have:

- Stopwatch

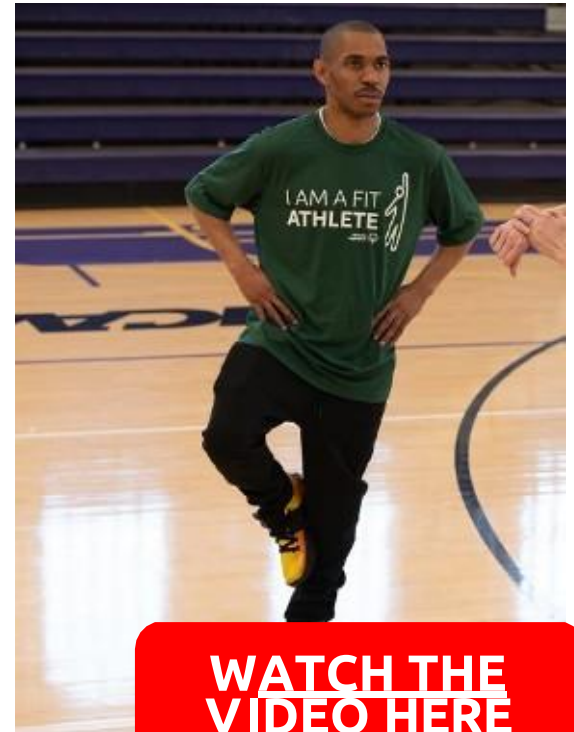
## PROCEDURE AND SCORING

### EXERCISE:

1. Participant stands within arm's reach of a stationary object.
2. Feet are shoulder width apart.
3. Participant places their hands on their hips.
4. Participant bends the knee of the non-supporting leg lifting the foot off the ground.

**SCORING:** Time starts when participant is in the correct standing position and ends when balance is lost which is when the non-supporting leg touches the ground, or when the hands come off the hips.

Once participant has exceeded 55 seconds without a loss of balance, they have achieved the maximum amount of points for this exercise.



[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)



## MATERIALS

Before you start, make sure you have:

- Stopwatch

## PROCEDURE AND SCORING



[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)



### EXERCISE:

1. Participant stands within arm's reach of a stationary object.
2. Feet are shoulder-width apart.
3. Participant places their hands on their hips.
4. Participant bends the knee of the non-supporting leg lifting the foot off the ground.
5. Participant does this test with their eyes closed.

**SCORING:** Time starts when participant is in the correct standing position and ends when balance is lost which is when the non-supporting leg touches the ground, when the hands come off the hips, or when the eyes open.

Once participant has exceeded 55 seconds without a loss of balance, they have achieved the maximum amount of points for this exercise.

## MATERIALS

Before you start, make sure you have:

- Stopwatch
- Ball



WATCH THE  
VIDEO HERE



## PROCEDURE AND SCORING

### EXERCISE:

1. Participant stands with their feet together and holding a ball in both hands.
2. Participant lifts one foot in the air and bends their knees keeping their other foot on the ground.
3. Participant reaches down and taps the floor to the one side of their body while keeping their balance.
4. Return to the starting upright position.
5. Repeat this exercise. If participant is a beginner at this exercise, they can reset each time by putting both feet on the ground and even alternating which foot they raise off of the ground.

Note: If participant would like a more advanced exercise, keep the same foot off the ground and repeat without losing balance as many times as possible in the prescribed time.

**SCORING:** Participant goes from the upright position to the floor touch position as many times as they can without losing their balance for 60 seconds. Count how many times they tap the ball in that 60-second timeframe for their total score.



## MATERIALS

Before you start, make sure you have:

- Stopwatch
- Metronome App on phone



**WATCH THE  
VIDEO HERE**



## PROCEDURE AND SCORING

### EXERCISE:

1. Participant lies on their back on the floor. They bend their hips and knees so their feet are flat on the floor.
2. Participant reaches their arms toward their knees.
3. Participant lifts their head and then slowly lifts their upper back until they reach their knees.
4. Participant should get their shoulder blades completely off the ground.
5. Participant touches their knees and lowers all the way back down, including their head.
6. Exercise is repeated one for every beat of the metronome on phone set at 40 beats per minute.

**SCORING:** Participant does as many curl-ups to the beat of 40 per minute as they can. Total number of curl-ups completed is the total score.

## MODIFICATIONS

Participants with mobility issues can use the NCHPAD adaptations for curl-ups found [here](#).

## MATERIALS

Before you start, make sure you have:

- Stopwatch



[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)



## PROCEDURE AND SCORING

### EXERCISE:

1. Participant starts on hands and knees/toes.
2. Participant straightens one leg at a time and put the balls of their feet or knees on the floor.
3. Participant's hands are placed below their shoulders.
4. Participant's body should make a straight line from their heels/knees to their shoulders.
5. Participant should keep their abdominal muscles tight and their back straight.
6. Participant should hold this position in the correct form for as long as possible.

### NOTES:

1. Participant should always have a straight back and should never make an "A" body shape while completing this exercise.
2. Stop the test when correct form cannot be maintained for 5 seconds or longer. That means when any movement such as bending, sagging or swaying occurs at the elbows, shoulders, trunk or knees.

**SCORING:** Total time until participant breaks form is recorded. After the max of 55 seconds the max score has been achieved.

## MODIFICATIONS

Participants with mobility impairments in the hands, wrists or forearms can complete this test with their elbows and forearms on the ground. Note that this test is more difficult so form should be monitored even more closely.

## MATERIALS

Before you start, make sure you have:

- Stopwatch



[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)



## PROCEDURE AND SCORING

### EXERCISE:

1. Participant should start each rep in the standing position, holding no weight and feet slightly wider than their hips or shoulder width apart. Toes should be pointed slightly outwards.
2. Participant should find a spot in front of them at eye level to focus on so their head stays in the proper position.
3. Participant squats down until their hip crease is below the top of knee.
4. Participant stands up again and finishes with knees and hips fully extended.

### NOTES:

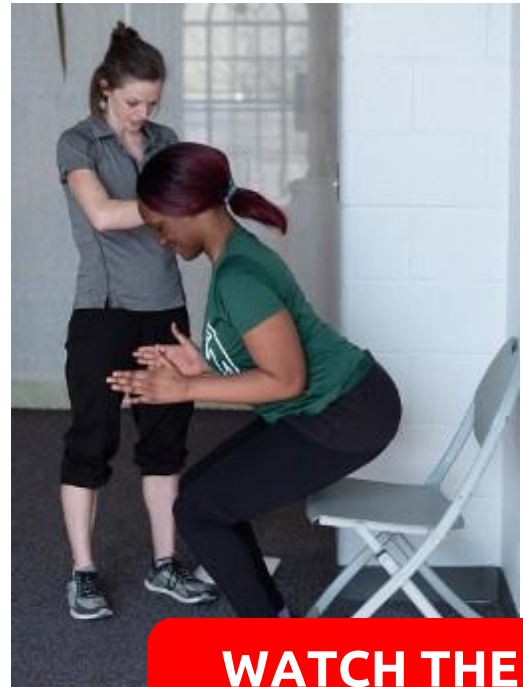
1. Participant should maintain a natural head position – chin up, eyes straight ahead.
2. Participant should make sure their knees are bent over toes.
3. Participant's feet need to be shoulder-width apart.
4. Participant's spine should be straight.

**SCORING:** Each successful repetition is counted for 30 seconds. No repetitions are counted after time runs out. No repetitions are counted for bad form. The count remains the same until a proper repetition is completed.

## MATERIALS

Before you start, make sure you have:

- Stopwatch
- Chair (without wheels)



[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)



## PROCEDURE AND SCORING

### EXERCISE:

1. Participant sits on chair or bench with feet hip-width distance apart.
2. Participant's arms are positioned across the chest.
3. Participant stands up fully from sitting position and sits down again without using their arms to assist.
4. This is considered 1 repetition. Participant continues to do the sit to stand component for 30 seconds.

**SCORING:** Each successful repetition is counted for 30 seconds. No repetitions are counted after time runs out. No repetitions are counted for bad form. The count remains the same until a proper repetition is completed.

## MODIFICATIONS

Participants with lower body mobility impairments can perform this test pushing on arm rests or pulling on a countertop (or similar) for assistance. Participants should use the same assistance methodology for each testing opportunity for consistency.

## MATERIALS

Before you start, make sure you have:

- Stopwatch
- Solid wall



[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)



## PROCEDURE AND SCORING

### EXERCISE:

1. Participant stands with back flat against the wall and feet about 1-2 feet away from the wall.
2. Participant holds arms at sides or across chest.
3. Participant bends at the knees and lowers down until thighs are parallel to the ground.
4. Participant holds this position for the desired time.

**SCORING:** Time is recorded starting when the participant assumes the correct position. Total time is time to failure which is any adjustment from the original position.

## MATERIALS

Before you start, make sure you have:

- Stopwatch



WATCH THE  
VIDEO HERE



## PROCEDURE AND SCORING

### EXERCISE:

1. Participant stands flat-footed with their legs shoulder-width apart.
2. Participant raises their arms laterally to a 90-degree angle (shoulder height) and holds that position. Their body should form a T-position.
3. Participant holds their arms at 90 degrees for as long as possible without dropping them below shoulder height.

### NOTES:

1. Participant will receive one warning if they bring their arms above or below 90 degrees. If a participant is warned for a second time, the time will be stopped, and the score will be recorded.
2. Participant should not walk or move around when completing this exercise.
3. Focus on keeping participant's neck long and natural. Elevating the shoulders can cause neck tension if done improperly.
4. Dumbbells can be used to increase the difficulty of the exercise, but the test is designed to complete on body weight alone.

**SCORING:** The total amount of time to failure is counted as the final score. If the participant holds the exercise for more than 55 seconds, they have achieved the maximum score.

## MATERIALS

Before you start, make sure you have:

- Stopwatch
- Sturdy chair with armrests



WATCH THE VIDEO HERE



## PROCEDURE AND SCORING

### EXERCISE:

1. Participant starts in a plank position with arms shoulder width apart and palms flat on the floor.
2. The head, back, hips, knees and/or toes should be in a straight line.
3. Participant bends their elbows and lower their chest toward the ground. Participants must bend their elbows at least 90 degrees before returning to the starting position. A towel or a block under the chest can help participants to know they've gone far enough down. They should use their arms and core to push back up to the starting position.

**SCORING:** The total amount of push-ups in 60 seconds is counted as the score. Participants must maintain form in order for the push-up to count.

## MODIFICATIONS

Participants with mobility issues can use the NCHPAD adaptations for push-ups found [here](#).

### CHAIR PUSH-UP EXERCISE:

1. Participant will begin in their wheelchair or chair with armrest and palms on the arm rest.
2. Participant will fully extend the arms; while pressing against the arm rest lifting their body.
3. Once arms are fully extended, the participant returns to seated position.
4. A complete push-up is done once the participant returns to the seated position.

**CHAIR PUSH-UP SCORING:** Count the number of push-ups completed by the participant in 60 seconds.