

Fitness Competition Practice Plan

Objective 1: To build strength and endurance in each of the four categories of fitness.

Objective 2: For lower-level athletes: To provide solid building blocks to prepare for higher intensities of exercise. For higher-level athletes: To continue to challenge athletes to strive for improvement.

Objective 3: To educate on the importance of fitness when it comes to specific sport competitions.

Key Concepts:

1. The muscles in our bodies are all interconnected. Strengthening one group of muscles will help us improve performance with another set of muscles. It is important to work all major muscle groups to optimize our performance and health.
2. Balance requires skills/strength from your upper body, core, and lower body. It may be helpful to interweave some aspects of balance into every practice.
3. Athletes are scored on their improvements for each specific exercise. However, those exercises should not be the only physical activity done during practice.
4. Physical fitness is important to help us improve our performance in other sport competitions.
5. While the competition focuses on strength and balance exercises, it is to the benefit of the athlete to incorporate some endurance and flexibility as well.

--- > Fit5 Exercises: <https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/fitness/fit-5>

6. While the fitness competition focuses on physical activity, it is beneficial to emphasize the importance of nutrition and hydration as well.

--- > Fit5 Guide: <https://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Fit5-Guide.pdf>

7. Always start every practice with an active warm-up (see below for ideas) and end each practice with a static cool-down.
8. Keep it fun! Do workouts that your athletes like! An important component of fitness is enjoying the exercises and wanting to exercise. If you try one of these workouts and it works better than another, do not be afraid to keep doing it if your athletes are moving and enjoy doing it! Also, try adding a theme to your practices to keep athletes engaged!

Theme Ideas for Practices:

- Super Bowl – wear your favorite football jersey/gear
- Valentine’s Day – bring a valentine for your coach/teammates or wear red/pink
- St. Patrick’s Day – wear green
- March Madness – wear your favorite basketball jersey/gear or a crazy outfit
- SO Day – wear your favorite Special Olympics shirt/jersey

Fun Workout Games/Options

- Dice Workout
 - Idea 1:
 - Randomly choose an exercise or have an athlete shout out which exercise they want to do
 - Roll two dice to determine how many of that exercise to do
 - For exercises like wall-sits or planks, the number you roll will be how many seconds you hold that position
 - Idea 2:
 - Assign an exercise to each number 2-12
 - Whatever number you roll first is the exercise you perform
 - Roll the dice again, this is the number of the exercise you do

- Deck of Cards Workout
 - Assign a different exercise to each suit (example below):
 - Hearts: Squats
 - Diamonds: Planks
 - Spades: Jumping Jacks
 - Clubs: Heel to toe walking
 - The number on the card is the number of each exercise you do (ex. 8 Hearts – 8 squats)
 - It is helpful to switch up exercises halfway through deck, or maybe even three times throughout the deck.

- Alphabet Workout

- Assign a different exercise and number of exercise to each letter
- Have athletes say a word or come up with a word and do all of the exercises assigned to each letter in the word
- Example found online:

A: 10 CRUNCHES	N: 10 TRICEP DIPS
B: 10 JUMPING JACKS	O: 10 PUSHUPS
C: 5 PUSHUPS	P: 10 SQUATS
D: 5 SQUATS	Q: 20 JUMPING JACKS
E: 30-SECOND WALL SIT	R: 30-SECOND PLANK
F: 15 ARM CIRCLES	S: 20 BICYCLE CRUNCHES
G: 10 MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS	T: 30-SECOND WALL SIT
H: 5 BURPEES	U: 5 BURPEES
I: 30-SECOND PLANK	V: 20 ARM CIRCLES
J: 10 JUMP SQUATS	W: 10 LUNGES
K: 10 LUNGES (EACH SIDE)	X: 10 PUSHUPS
L: 15 CRUNCHES	Y: 20 HIGH KNEES
M: 20 HIGH KNEES	Z: 10 BURPEES

- Flip a Coin Workout

- Flip a coin and depending on if it lands on heads or tails, do a different exercise
- Example found online:

	Heads	Tails
1st time-	15 jump squats	25 calf raises
2nd time-	:60 jog in place	25 jumping jacks
3rd time-	20 kneeling pushups	10 pushups
4th time-	20 jumping jacks	:50 jog in place
5th time-	40 high knees	40 jumping jacks
6th time-	35 crunches	20 sit-ups
7th time-	10 pushups	20 knee pushups
8th time-	:60 jog in place	25 jumping jacks
9th time-	50 crunches	20 sit-ups

- Popsicle Stick Workout
 - Write different exercises on a popsicle stick (or pieces of paper)
 - Randomly pull a popsicle stick from a jar and do the exercise written on the stick

- YouTube Videos
 - Yoga
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQwKKCqkJxg>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjFFasD3kr0>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yetbSrCW1TQ>
 - Any other “beginner yoga” YouTube videos
 - Dance
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rj2IubFfEqY>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmlwwW3izTU>
 - Any other “beginner dance workout” YouTube videos

Potential Weekly Schedules

OPTION A

The “little bit of everything” Model

Week 1: Pre-season scores

Week 2: Deck of Cards Workout

Week 3: Yoga Video

Week 4: Alphabet Workout

Week 5: Mid-season scores

Week 6: Dice Workout

Week 7: Popsicle Stick Workout

Week 8: Dancing Video

Week 9: Deck of Cards Workout

Week 10: Post-season scores

OPTION C

The “let’s get down to work” Model

Week 1: Pre-season scores

Week 2: Lower Body Focus & Balance

Week 3: Upper Body Focus & Balance

Week 4: Core Focus & Balance

Week 5: Mid-season scores

Week 6: Lower Body Focus & Balance

Week 7: Upper Body Focus & Balance

Week 8: Core Focus & Balance

Week 9: Fun “Game” of Choice

Week 10: Post-season scores

OPTION B

The “mix it up, but not too much” Model

Week 1: Pre-season scores

Week 2: Dice Workout

Week 3: Deck of Cards Workout

Week 4: Alphabet Workout

Week 5: Mid-season scores

Week 6: Dice Workout

Week 7: Deck of Cards Workout

Week 8: Alphabet Workout

Week 9: Yoga Video

Week 10: Post-season scores

OPTION D

The “athletes prefer consistency” Model

Week 1: Pre-season scores

Week 2: Dice Workout – Option 1

Week 3: Dice Workout – Option 2

Week 4: Dice Workout – Opt. 1, new exercises

Week 5: Mid-season scores

Week 6: Dice Workout – Opt. 2, new exercises

Week 7: Dice Workout – Opt. 1, new exercises

Week 8: Dice Workout – Opt. 2, new exercises

Week 9: Dice Workout – Opt. 1, new exercises

Week 10: Post-season scores

Warm-Ups

- Each practice should begin with a warm-up that is 5-10 minutes long.
- The goal for warm-ups is to gradually increase heart rate and get muscles warm and ready for practice.
- During this time, make sure all athletes have a water bottle and are dressed appropriately with athletic clothing and good shoes.
- SOI Dynamic Stretching Library: <https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/fitness/fitness-for-sports-coaches>
- Warm-up exercises (dynamic stretches – moving):
 - Light jog – to modify: walk
 - High knees – to modify: march in place
 - Arm circles: big and small circles, change direction of arm circles
 - Neck circles: change directions
 - Knee to chest: alternate legs, do not hold
 - Heel to butt: alternate legs, do not hold
 - Jumping jacks – to modify: step out to side and do arm movement, remove jump
 - Leg swings: front to back and side to side
 - Butt kicks – to modify: slow movement down
 - Torso twists

Cool-Downs

- Each practice should end with a cool-down that is 5-10 minutes long.
- The goal for the cool-down is to gradually decrease heart rate and stretch out muscles to avoid soreness and injury. Stretches should feel good and not cause discomfort or pain.
- Remind athletes to drink lots of water following practice, talk about nutrition, and give any announcements for the week.
- After group stretches, encourage athletes to continue stretching muscles that are causing them any soreness.
- SOI Fit5 Exercises (balance videos) <https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/fitness/fit-5>
- Cool-down exercises (static stretches - not moving):
 - Calf Stretch (press hands on wall and place one foot in front of the other, lean forward)
 - Knee to chest hold (Can be done laying on back or standing up)
 - Heel to butt hold (Can be done laying on back or standing up)
 - Hurdler's stretch (Sit on ground with one leg extended in front of you, the other bent to form a "4" shape with your legs. Lean forward to touch your toes. Switch legs)
 - Butterfly stretch (Sitting down, bring the soles of your feet together and bring your knees toward the ground)
 - Triceps stretch
 - Chest Stretch
 - Side Stretch

Lower Body Exercises

- Squats
 - Stand up straight. Keeping your back straight, bend your knees and bring your butt down as if you are going to sit in a chair. Straighten your knees and stand back up straight.
 - If too hard: sit in a chair and try standing up and sitting down
 - If too easy: try holding something heavy, staying in the squat longer, lowering down a little further, or adding in a jump at the end of the squat
- Calf Raises
 - Stand up straight with your feet flat on the ground, stand up on your tiptoes, and then return to standing flat on the ground.
 - If too hard: sit in a chair and raise your toes while seated
 - If too easy: try holding something heavy or staying on your toes longer
- Step Ups
 - Using stairs or a sturdy step-stool about 6-10 inches in height, step up and down for 1-3 minutes
 - If too hard: speed up
 - If too easy: slow down
- Jump Rope
- Wall-Sits
 - Sit against a wall as if you are sitting in a chair
 - Knees should not bend further than 90-degree angle
 - Avoid arms pushing down on legs (keep at sides or in front of body)
 - If too hard: stand up a little higher than 90-degrees
 - If too easy: hold a heavy object or hold position longer
- Single Leg Deadlifts
 - Stand up straight with your knees straight but not locked, bend forward as if you are trying to pick something up off the ground, lift one leg off the ground. Switch legs
 - If too hard: don't kick leg back, keep both feet on ground
 - If too easy: try picking up something heavy
- High Knees
 - Pick up one knee at a time and bring to waist height
 - If too hard: slow down / march in place
 - If too easy: speed up or pick up knees even higher
- Lunges
 - Begin standing, take one leg and step out in front of you, bending your front knee to form a 90-degree angle and bending your back knee so it almost touches the floor behind you. Alternate legs
 - Do not bend front knee past your toes
 - Keep upper body upright with straight back
 - If too hard: do not lower all the way to the ground
 - If too easy: hold heavy object in each hand

Upper Body Exercises

- Triceps Dips
 - Sit on the floor with your knees bent in front of you and feet on the ground. Place hands on the floor behind you (fingers facing toward body). Lift hips into the air, balancing on all fours (“crab” position). Bend elbows, lowering your body toward the ground. Then straighten your arms to rise up.
 - If too easy: try similar position/movement on a chair with feet on the ground, hips toward the end of the seat/lifted off the chair, and hands on the edge of the front of the seat.
 - If too hard: stand up. Interlock fingers, raise arms above head, and bend elbows to bring arms behind head. Try with light weights, but be sure to have a good grip on weights.
- Biceps Curls
 - Bring your arms to your side and bend your elbows so your hands come up towards your shoulders, then relax your elbows so your hands return to your sides. Make sure to fully extend your arms back down to the start position.
 - If too easy: hold onto something heavy
- Push-Ups
 - Refer to fitness competition playbook for instructions.
 - If too easy: try holding pushup at bottom for a few seconds before rising, try pushup movement at a slower pace, or lower chest closer to the ground.
 - If too hard: do from knees instead of toes or against a wall standing up
- Punches
 - Punch across body twisting your upper body as you do so (Ex. If you’re punching with your right hand, punch toward your left side while twisting the right side of your body to the left)
 - If too easy: increase speed or add light weights
 - If too hard: slow down
- Side Arm Raises
 - Start standing with arms at your sides, raise arms out to the side to form a “T” with your body, and then lower arms back down to your sides. Do not raise arms past shoulder height.
 - If too easy: add weights to your hands

Core Body Exercises

- Curl-Ups
 - Refer to fitness competition playbook for instructions.
 - If too easy: slow down movement, focus on squeezing your core, and hold for a few more seconds.
 - If too hard: do not lift as high off the ground
- Planks
 - Refer to fitness competition playbook for instructions.
 - If too easy: lower to forearms, hold as long as you can
 - If too hard: try plank position on your knees instead of your toes. You can also move to a standing position and lean against a wall with the same posture.
- Russian Twists
 - Start by sitting with your knees bent, feet flat on the ground. Lean back slightly to activate your core, and then twist your body so both hands touch the ground on one side of your body. Next, twist your body so both hands touch the ground on the other side of your body.
 - If too easy: Try lifting your feet up off the ground while you're doing this or holding something heavy
 - If too hard: Do not lean back as far.
- Hip Thrusts
 - Lay on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor, and arms at your sides. Lift your hips up off the floor to create a flat line from your shoulders to your knees.
 - If too easy: slow down movement, squeeze buttocks, and/or add something heavy to your pelvis
 - If too hard: do not lift quite as high.

Balance Exercises

- Side-to-Side Hops
 - Bending your knees slightly, hop from one side to the other (as if over an imaginary line)
 - If too easy: increase speed, increase space between jumps (wider imaginary line), or increase height of jump. This could also be done on one foot at a time.
 - If too hard: slow down movement and/or try holding on to wall/railing/chair.
- Deadlifts
 - Stand up straight with your knees straight but not locked, bend forward as if you are trying to pick something up off the ground, lift one leg off the ground. Switch legs
 - If too easy: try picking up something heavy
 - If too hard: don't kick one leg back, keep both feet on ground
- Single Leg Stance
 - Refer to fitness competition playbook for instructions.
 - If too easy: close eyes or try moving arms around to add distractions
 - If too hard: hold on to wall/railing/chair for support
- Heel-to-Toe Walking
 - Walk in a straight line, each step bringing the heel of the foot stepping to the toe of the foot on the ground
 - If too easy: close eyes, don't look down, move arms to add distractions
 - If too hard: look down or hold on to wall for support
- Ball Taps
 - Refer to fitness competition playbook for instructions.
 - If too easy: speed up or use smaller ball to make the reach further to the ground
 - If too hard: slow down, reset at top of each tap, switch legs each time