



# Unified Fitness

## *with Equipment*

A guide for Unified Fitness athletes and partners as they embark on a 12-week program for physical activity, nutrition, and wellness.

**Special  
Olympics**  
Pennsylvania



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# Welcome!

Dear participants (athletes and Unified partners),  
Welcome to **Special Olympics Pennsylvania's** (SOPA) Unified Fitness Program!  
We're so excited that you're embarking on a twelve-week program of physical activity, nutrition and friendship.

The Unified Fitness Program involves similar-age people with and without intellectual disabilities training together at least twice a week for structured workouts over twelve weeks. You are training partners: encouraging, motivating and pushing yourselves and each other to do your best.

This program can be conducted in the off-season, and/or in-season, in addition to any sport-specific training you may be doing. Over the course of the upcoming twelve weeks, participants will meet a minimum of twice a week at your workout location such as a school/university, gym/fitness center or home together for 60 minutes. Each workout will consist of 5 parts: warm-up, cardiovascular endurance, strength and cool down using flexibility and balance exercises.

Throughout your workout, key information points are to be shared about nutrition, hydration & wellness. Spend time

together during your workout reviewing this education! We've also included "family engagement" activities. Spend time together while at home reviewing this education as a family!

The first and last workouts of the Unified Fitness Program will be different from all other workouts. At the first workout, participants will conduct a pre-assessment; at the final workout, participants will conduct a post-assessment. By assessing your level of fitness prior to starting and after completing the Unified Fitness Program, you will be able to track the improvements you make to your overall health and fitness over the course of twelve weeks. You have been provided with an online link that you will need to access in order to record the results of your pre- and post-assessments.

It is now time to begin the Unified Fitness Program! We are so excited for you!

# What is SOPA?



**The mission of Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA)** is to provide year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual or developmental disability including autism with a cognitive delay, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

## About Unified Sports

Special Olympics Unified Sports is an inclusive program that brings together a proportional number of Special Olympics athletes and athletes without intellectual disabilities (Unified partners) as equal peers on sports teams for training and competition. The participants should be of similar age.

By sharing common goals and meaningful experiences in practices, during workouts, and through competitions, all participants form closer relationships. They gain a better understanding of each other's unique talents and capabilities. Unified Sports brings people together through the universal language of sports. But the lasting impact takes place off the field of play when these teammates become friends who fully support one another. This leads to more inclusive schools and communities where everyone is valued and respected.

# What is Unified Fitness?



**Unified Fitness is a twelve-week long fitness program to be followed in the off-season, and/or in-season, in addition to sport-specific training. Special Olympics athletes and Unified partners train together at least twice a week, supporting each other to do their best. Workouts are intended to last 60 minutes in total and include:**

## WARMUP

Warm-ups help prepare the body for exercise, prevent injuries, and increase flexibility.

## CARDIOVASCULAR ENDURANCE

Cardiovascular endurance exercises improve the body's circulatory and respiratory systems (heart & lungs) in order to participate in physical activity.

## STRENGTH

Strength training improves muscular strength and helps your body become stronger.

## COOL DOWNS

Cool downs using flexibility and balance exercises can help slow the heart rate and breathing, avoid muscle stiffness and soreness, prevent injury, and relax your body.

# Health Education Schedule



Each week, time should be taken to review the **educational topic** and material for the week. See below the schedule for your Unified Fitness journey. During weeks 1 and 12 there is no topic or material to review to allow time to complete the **PRE and POST Fitness Assessment**. Each week the materials will be estimated to take about 5-10 minutes to review. If you do not have the additional time to review, we suggest you discuss and review at the end of your training during cool downs.

## Schedule:

- Week 1: Fitness Assessment
- Week 2: Physical Activity, pg. 72-75
- Week 3: Nutrition, pg. 76-78
- Week 4: Nutrition, pg. 79-81
- Week 5: Nutrition, pg. 82-83
- Week 6: Hydration, pg. 84-86
- Week 7: Hydration, pg. 87-88
- Week 8: Emotional Health, pg. 89-91
- Week 9: Emotional Health, pg. 92-93
- Week 10: Emotional Health, pg. 94-96
- Week 11: SMART Goal Setting: pg. 97-98
- Week 12: Fitness Assessment

## Here is an example of how you can schedule your hour-long training sessions:

**Warm Up:** 10 minutes

**Cardiovascular exercise:** 20 minutes

**Strength:** 20 minutes

**Flexibility/Balance:** 5 minutes

**Education topic Discussion:** 5 minutes