



UNIFIED FITNESS CLUBS



Special Olympics
Indiana



Special Olympics
Health

MADE POSSIBLE BY FOUNDATION
Golisano



Unified Fitness Clubs 3.0

Unified Fitness Clubs are year-round physical-activity-based programs that utilize activity trackers and incentives to engage participants of all abilities and activity levels in healthy lifestyles. Clubs typically meet weekly and select activity types that suit the needs of their members. Walking is appropriate for all levels of fitness and is easy to access. Clubs can take place at a Unified School or in a Community setting.



ACTIVITY TRACKING



LESSONS FOR LIFE



FITNESS ACTIVITIES

How to Participate

- 1. Start recruiting athletes and unified partners to come join**
- 2. Establish a meeting time and location**
- 3. Register your county or school to participate via online form**
- 4. Have a meeting with Manager of Health and Fitness**
- 5. Host first meeting, gather information from athletes and partners (name, dob, email, fitness device, and athlete or partner)**
- 6. Gather attendance for every meeting**
- 7. Send pictures, stories, and success to Manager of Health and Fitness.**

Frequently Asked Questions

How many coaches or program coordinators will I need?

As many as you feel comfortable with. This can also depend on the size of your club. Larger clubs will find it more helpful to have more leaders, and smaller clubs may not need as many. A 1:10 ratio tends to work well for most clubs. Use volunteers, paraeducators, parents, and others as leaders for your club!

Can youth lead the club?

Yes! Youth can lead the club, however, there needs to be an adult/coach/program coordinator appointed to support as needed.

How long will each session take?

Sessions will typically last 20-45 minutes. Physical activity should occur for a recommended 30 minutes. However, this depends greatly on your participants. Feel free to cut meetings short if participants are getting restless or continue with an activity if the club wants to keep exercising. You may also choose to discuss “Lessons for Life” topics during a walk or jog.

Where should I hold my club meetings?

Anywhere! That is, anywhere with enough space for all your club members and an accessible bathroom. This can be your school gym, cafeteria, sports field, large classroom, virtual meeting platform, YMCA, after/before sporting practice, etc.

How large should my club be?

Your club can be as small or large as you want it to be! Anywhere from 20 to 30 athletes and Unified Partners is a good range to start with. Aim for a 1:1 ratio of Unified Partners to Athletes.

Frequently Asked Questions

What health metrics are we tracking, and why?

Towards the end of this Program Overview is a Lifestyle Survey for athletes to take at the beginning and end of this program. For programs that are interested, we may take some in-person health measurements as well. This allows SOIN to track improvements to health. This can help athletes and coaches see where they have improved, and where they might want to focus more on next time. It also helps SOIN with grant writing and improving athlete's experience in Unified Fitness Clubs.

Who will see the health metrics and lifestyle surveys?

Only the group leader, select individuals at SOIN, and possibly an intern will see any names included with the measurements. They get put into a password protected spreadsheet and used to generate averages for the program statewide. No names are used past the collection point.

Is there training and support involved?

YES! SOIN wants your club to succeed and is there to help you every step of the way. This Program Overview will also help you create a thriving club. If you have additional questions, feel free to reach out to Manager of Health and Fitness with questions.

What about money?

Unified Fitness clubs are **completely free!** All resources and supplies needed for the program and activities are provided by SOIN. Only thing not provided is tracking device.

Does each Athlete have to have a Unified Pair?

Unified Fitness Clubs is a **unified** program, meaning athletes with and without intellectual disabilities work together. You will see many opportunities for "Unified Pairs" to work together in both the "Lessons for Life" and the "Fitness Activities." We strive for a 1:1 ratio - that said, we also don't want to exclude anyone simply because they do not have a Unified Pair. Groups of three may work well for your participants, or you can try larger groups and see what works best. The main goal is to have athletes with and without intellectual disabilities work together and have the best experience possible.

Data Collection

Health Metrics

SOIN will measure athletes' height, weight, and blood pressure (optional, but not required). SOIN can provide the equipment and volunteers necessary to take these measurements at your first club meeting. If you have your own equipment and would like to take these measurements on your own (ex: school nurse), you are more than welcome to do so. This information will be recorded on a spreadsheet provided to you at the start of your program. (In person only)

Lifestyle Surveys

Each athlete will complete a [lifestyle survey](#) at the beginning and 8 weeks into the program. The lifestyle survey is included in this manual and will be provided to you at the start of the program.

Personal Health Goals

During your first club meeting, athletes will make their own personal health goal. Athletes should make a plan to achieve their goal. Program Leaders will record each athlete's personal health goal on a spreadsheet provided to you at the start of your program. You can use the "goal setting" section of this Program Overview to help athletes set goals.

Step Counting

Athletes will track their step count, either with a hard copy step tracker, pedometer, pedometer app, or the [SO FitNow App](#).

Fitness Assessments

There are optional pre and post fitness assessments that participants can take to determine their progression in strength, flexibility, and endurance.

Attendance

Program Leaders will track attendance at each club meeting on a spreadsheet provided to you at the start of your program. Attendance is the most important thing collected.

Implementation Checklist

Getting Ready

- Review Program Guide (this document)
- Review “Lessons for Life” Content
- Submit Program [Registration Form](#)

Day 1

- Optional: Collect Health Data
- Participants can set a Personal Health Goal
- Participants complete the [Lifestyle survey](#)
- Explain how to use trackers and submit steps
- Assign Unified Pairs and Fitness Captains
- Share meeting dates/schedule

Week 8*

- Participants complete the [Lifestyle survey](#)
- Submit [End of Session Evaluation](#) to SOIN
- Participants report on their Personal Health Goal
- Optional: Collect Health Data

*Programs do not have to stop at 8 weeks. If your team continues participating, we will continue to collect data every 8 week.

PE Standards


PE Standard	Unified Fitness Club
<p>Standard 1: Students will demonstrate competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fitness club activities including<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Fitness bingo○ Fitness stations○ Spell your name fitness Obstacle course• Earn steps for team through individual fitness activities
<p>Standard 2: Students will apply knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics related to movement and performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walking and running activities at different speeds• Optional timed races• Fitness goal setting• Pre- and post-testing to measure fitness improvement
<p>Standard 3: Students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss fitness benefits with athletes during physical activity• "Healthy Minds" Lesson for Life: activity improves mental health• Identify cardiovascular versus strength versus flexibility exercises• Warm-up and cool-down activities
<p>Standard 4: Students will exhibit responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss rules and etiquette during fitness activities and games• Demonstrate safe technique during strength exercises• Cooperate and work well with united partner and club members• Provide encouragement to peers
<p>Standard 5: Students will recognize the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have fun with peers while participating in fitness activities• Provide consistent social interaction through club meetings• Health and fitness goal setting• Work together with club members to participate in fitness activities

Life Lessons

“Lessons for Life” provide a resource for coaches and program leaders to talk with their athletes about health. Did you know? Individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID):

- are **3 times** more likely to have arthritis than the general population have a greater risk of becoming **overweight or obese**
- are **2 times** more likely to have cardiovascular disease or asthma

“Lessons for Life” cover topics like personal hygiene, hydration, and healthy food choices. These topics can help participants lead healthier lives and have better health outcomes. These weekly nutrition, fitness, and wellness lessons will help your participants learn about their physical health and improve their health literacy. Lessons can be adapted and changed to fit the unique needs of your club!

You will see this  icon throughout the “Lessons for Life” document. This indicates a great opportunity to incorporate your Unified Pairs or Fitness Captains. Unified Pairs can present these parts of the lessons. Or each team can present a whole lesson! The lessons are also very customizable, so do whatever works best for you and your club.

By providing a non-competitive environment for all athletes to learn about their health and connect with peers, YOU are paving the way for better outcomes in their futures. Thank you!

“Since joining our Unified Fitness Club, athlete Tasha Paulo has become a more confident person at school and more conscious of her health and well-being. Unified Fitness Club has helped her form new friendships, increased her level of confidence, and opened her up to becoming an athlete leader. Not only has she lost a significant amount of weight, Tasha is a great role model for other athletes in her school and says that she loves ‘working out with my friends and family’”
– SO American Samoa

*See “Lessons for Life” packet of activity

Goal Setting

To have effective goals, they should be "S.M.A.R.T." goals:



Examples of a S.M.A.R.T. goal would be:

- "I want to be able to do 15 toe push-ups at the end of 8 weeks in my Unified Fitness Club. I will increase the amount of push-ups I do every week to build up to 15."
- "This week, I want to eat at least 1 fruit and 1 vegetable. I will keep a food diary to track my goal."

Make sure athletes and Unified Partners write down their goals. During your first meeting, have each athlete come up with a goal, write it down, and share it with the group.

Use the next page for an easy template. Support your athletes and Unified Partners and encourage team members to support each other in accomplishing their goals



My Personal Health Goal

Name: _____

My Personal Health Goal is:

To reach my goal, I will do these things:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I will know I have reached my goal when:

SMART Goal Checklist:

- Specific** - is it clear what action I have to take?
- Measurable** - will I be able to track my progress?
- Attainable** - can I see myself achieving this goal?
- Relevant** - is this goal important to me?
- Time-Bound** - when will my goal be achieved?



Step Count

You may be wondering how your athletes can track their steps. There are many ways to track steps and distance. Your athletes may even already be using some of these! Participants can track steps using whatever is most comfortable or familiar for them. Make sure to remind them keep track of their steps every day to turn them in every week!

Movband 5/Engage Moves

- Is always tracking steps
- Must re-set every day after recording steps to get accurate counts
- Simple and easy to use
- SOIN will provide support

Strava

- App available on iPhone, Android, and other smart phones
- Great at tracking distance during activity
- Does not calculate steps
- Is not "on" all the time. Must start and stop workout in order for milage to be counted

SO FitNow App

- Send Itzel Graber an email at igraber@soindiana.org to request account
- In email include Name, Date of Birth, County, and Ahtlete/Partner
- Go to sofitnow.specialolympics.org or download the app in the App store by searching "SO FitNow" on mobile device
- Enter your details exactly the way they are written in the welcome email. (SOIN will provide support)

Phone Apps

- There are many pedometer apps available on almost any phone Apps like "Pedometer" and "Pacer" are great options!
- If participants have an iPhone, the built-in "health" app also tracks steps throughout the day
- Some apps can also track things like calories burned and health stats

Modification for Wheelchairs

CONVERTING DISTANCE TO STEPS



Track the distance wheeled and convert to steps

An odometer, provided by Special Olympics Washington, can be attached to the wheelchair and will monitor the distance covered each day. The distance can then be converted to steps by using the following equation: $1\text{km}/.62\text{miles}= 1250$ steps.

USING ACTIVITY MINUTES



Use minutes of moderate/vigorous activity for any exercise

Enter any activity in which a pedometer/odometer would not accurately record your steps. The number of active minutes will determine the estimated step count which can then be added to the step tracker document.

Equation:

- 10 Minutes of moderate intensity activity = 1,000 Steps
- 10 Minutes of high intensity activity = 2,000 Steps