



Special Olympics  
Young Athletes

# Session 1

## SKILLS FOCUS:

- RUNNING
- DRIBBLING
- BALANCE



## Equipment Required:

- An open playing area
- Selection of cones (Red, Orange & Green)
- Spot markers
- Basketballs for each athlete
- Obstacle Course equipment
- Parachute
- PECS Cards (Optional)

This project is being run by **Special Olympics Ireland** in collaboration with the **School of Health and Human Performance in Dublin City University**.

Each Session is

**45 minutes** in length.

At the end of the session plan you will be asked to **tick off the activities you managed to complete each week.**



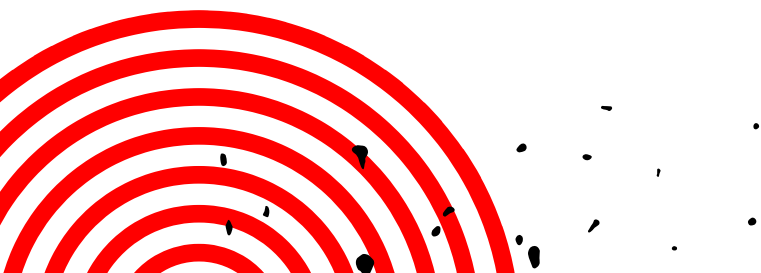
**Special  
Olympics**  
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# Warm Up - Traffic Lights

## Description of Activity

Invite athletes to find a space in a large open playing area where they are not in contact with anyone else. On a signal, athletes move around the playing area in response to the following commands. Coach demonstrates each command.

- Red: Balance on one leg
- Orange: Walk slowly
- Green: Run really fast



## Skills in Focus

Run  
Walk  
Balance

## Duration

5 minutes

## Equipment

- An open playing space
- Green, Orange and Red cones
- PECS cards (Optional)

## Adaptations

- If athletes are struggling to balance on one leg, *change the movement* to walking heel to toe with hands on hips.
- Getting athletes to walk along a line on the floor while performing heel to toe walking might also be helpful.

## Observations

During this activity, look at the athletes movements when they are balancing to see how long they can hold their single leg stand. If athletes are struggling spend a longer amount of time on the balance skill during this game.

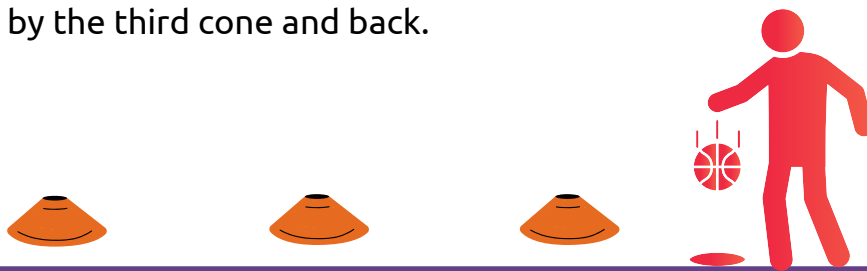
# Try To ... - Dribbling

## Description of Activity

Each athlete stands on a spot marker on the floor and is given a basketball which they can dribble. The coach demonstrates the position of the athletes hand, using the coaching cues below. The coach asks the athletes to stand on the spot and try to bounce the ball:

- With one hand, With the other hand, Below the height of their knees
- Between their legs, To waist height

After 5 mins of practicing the skill of dribbling while standing on the spot, the coach then gets the athletes to practice bouncing the ball out to a cone and back for 5 mins. Have three cones lined up in front of the athlete. On the first go they dribble the ball out to the first cone and back. Then out to the second and back. Followed by the third cone and back.



**Skills in Focus**  
Dribble

## Duration

10 minutes

## Equipment

- An open playing space
- Cones
- Basketball / Ball which bounces easily
- PECS cards (Optional)

## Adaptations

If athletes are struggling to dribble the basketball correctly, do not move onto the game of dribbling while moving. *Keep the athletes stationary* and continue to practice dribbling on the spot for 10 minutes.

## Coaching Cues

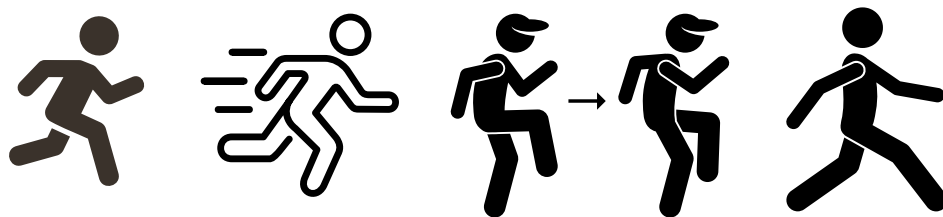
- *Fingers spread wide* - Encourages athletes to push the ball with their fingertips, rather than slapping at the ball. Fingers are spread open but relaxed.
- *Keep the ball by your side* - Ensures athletes are bouncing the ball at or below waist level when in a stationary position.

# Coach Says - Running

## Description of Activity

This activity encourages the exploration of different running techniques through commands. The coach invites athletes to spread out in the open area and complete the tasks individually. Athletes are instructed to watch the coaches movements and listen to the their commands.

- The coach will call 'Coach Says Run...' followed by different commands, the coach will also do the movement as they command.
- The athletes must recreate this movement.
- Commands include - Run while ... doing heel kicks, high knees, leaning forwards, on your tippy toes, moving your hands from hip to lip, stamping hard into the ground, slowly, quickly, high knees, with long arms, with bouncy strides, with fast arms.



Skills in Focus  
Run

## Duration

7 minutes

## Equipment

- An open playing space
- PECS cards (Optional)

## Adaptations

- Depending on athletes ability level, keep the number of commands low to *make the activity easier* or increase the number of demands to *make the activity harder*.
- Ensure to focus on using the below coaching cues.

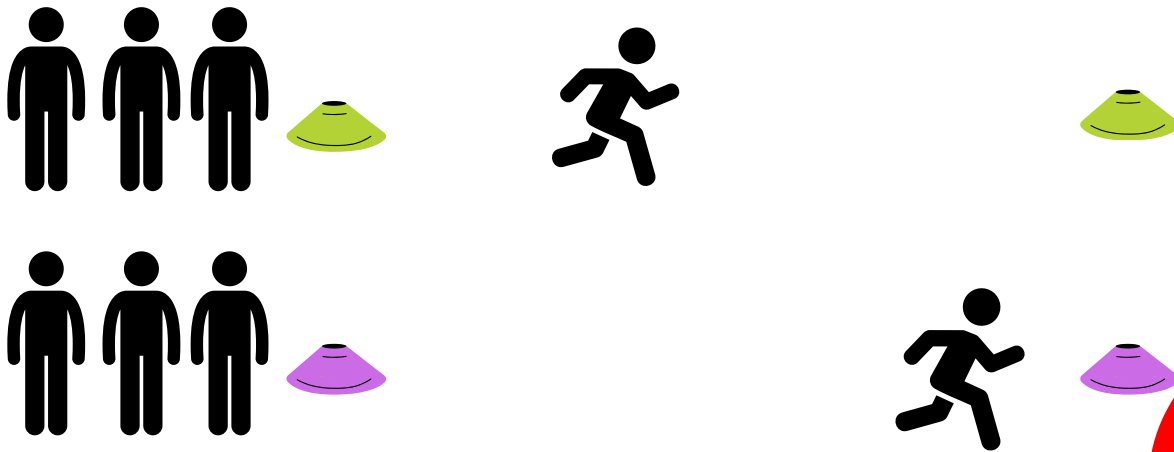
## Coaching Cues

- *Run like a ninja, light on your toes* - This will help athletes to land on the ball of their foot instead of being flat footed.
- *Swing your arms back and forth*- This will help athletes to move their arms in opposition to their legs.

# Relay Race - Running, Skipping, Hopping

## Description of Activity

The focus of this game is reinforce the skill of running. Coaches and volunteers group athletes into teams of 3-4 children. Each group has to line up behind a cone. The athletes take it in turns to run, skip or hop to the opposite cone and back, on the coaches command. Athletes high five their team mate and the next athlete takes a turn. Coaches use the below coaching cues to help improve the athletes running technique.



### Skills in Focus

Run  
Hop  
Skip

## Duration

8 minutes

## Equipment

- An open playing space
- Cones or spot markers
- PECS cards (Optional)

## Variations

If athletes are getting bored after repeating the relay race a couple of times, coaches can *add in an activity* at the end e.g. when the athlete runs to the opposite cone they have to *throw a bean bag into a hula hoop* before running back to their team.

## Coaching Cues

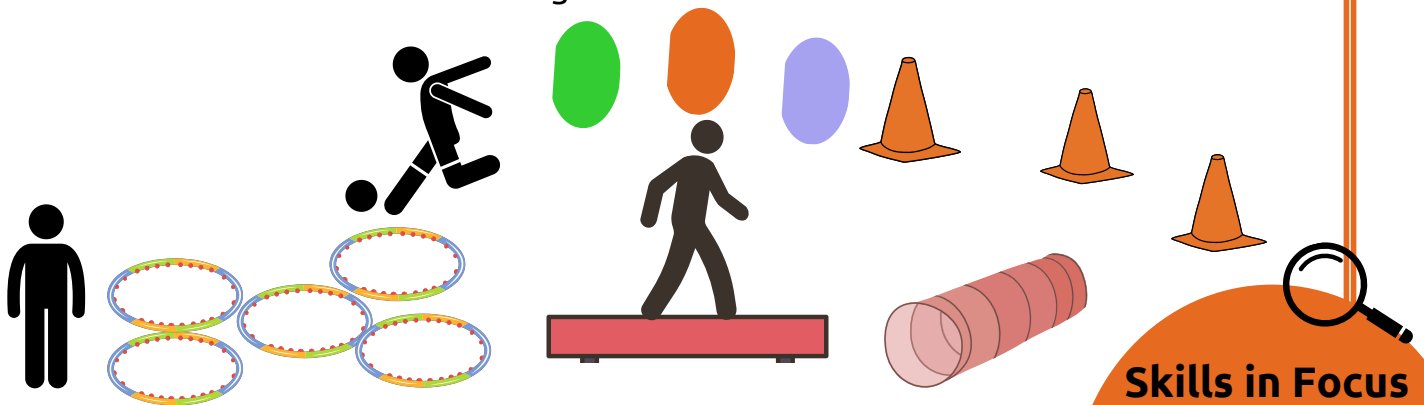
- *Run like a ninja, light on your toes* - This will help athletes to land on the ball of their foot instead of being flat footed.
- *Swing your arms back and forth* - This will help athletes to move their arms in opposition to their legs.

# Obstacle Course

## Description of Activity

Athletes take turns to complete the obstacle course which targets and reinforces a range of different fundamental movement skills.

- Hop scotch jumping into the hula hoops (two feet and one foot alternating)
- Walk across the balance beam, hold a single leg balance at the end of beam
- Crawl through the tunnel
- Run moving in and out between cones
- Balance on stepping stones
- Kick a ball into a net or at a target



### Skills in Focus

Hop  
Jump  
Balance  
Run  
Kick

## Duration

10 minutes

## Equipment

- An open playing space
- Hula Hoops
- Balance Beam
- Tunnel
- Cones
- Balance Rocks
- Ball and Pop up Goals

## Adaptations

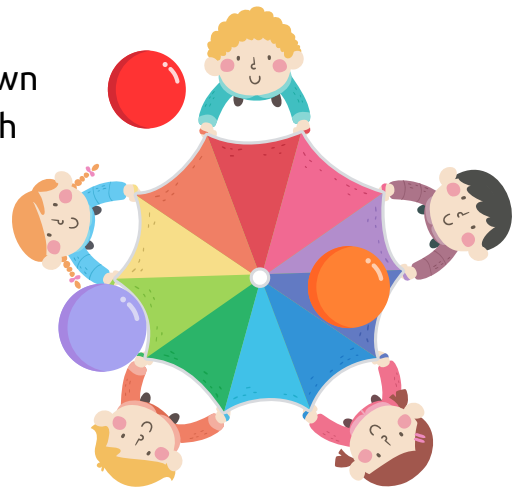
- Use different equipment to make the course easier or more challenging depending on the athletes ability.
- Tell athletes a story as part of the obstacle course, e.g. that they are trekking through the jungle or have landed on another planet that they are exploring.

# Cool Down - Parachute Activity

## Description of Activity

The coach and volunteers open up the parachute and invite athletes to find a space and hold onto the handle. The coach starts by asking athletes to move the parachute slowly up and down, then really fast up and down. This is repeated a couple of times. Volunteers help throw some soft balls into the middle of the parachute and the athletes move the parachute to make the balls fly into the air.

After a few minutes when all of the balls are thrown from the parachute, all the athletes lie underneath and take deep breaths to relax before the session finishes. Volunteers and parents move the parachute gently up and down.



## Duration

5 minutes

## Equipment

- An open playing space
- Parachute
- Soft balls
- PECS cards (Optional)

## Variations

- *Merry-Go-Round:* Have athletes turn sideways and hold onto handle with their left hand. Everyone walks in a circle to create a merry-go-round. Get athletes to march, skip or hop in a circle.
- *Mushroom:* Have all athletes hold onto the parachute, raise the handle above their heads and then pull it down quickly so everyone is underneath forming a 'mushroom'. Repeat this a few times.



# Session 1

## SKILLS FOCUS:

- RUNNING
- DRIBBLING
- BALANCE



**Please circle the activities you completed in Session 1:**

Warm Up

Dribbling Skill

Running Skill

Running Game

Obstacle Course

Cool Down

## Session Notes

**What went well:**

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**What didn't work as well:**

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**Targets for next session:**

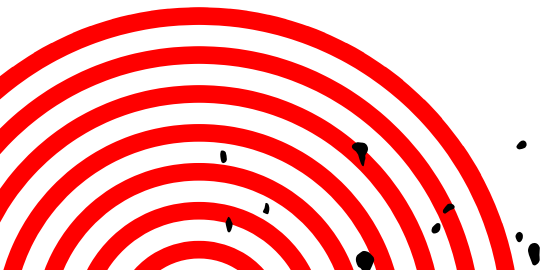
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Young Athletes

# Session 1

## VIDEO LINKS



**To view a demonstration of each activity and game outlined in Session 1, please click on the relevant link below:**

### **Traffic Lights Warm Up video**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EBgR7JCJSpKeNQ-k40XcD5xJOsRo-lWn/view?usp=sharing>

### **Try to...Dribbling video**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hiOz75W8z0dq3szGp5qUdElIWQvij0UI/view?usp=sharing>

### **Coach Says - Running video**

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JhrWQ\\_32esKysUeaH2fcvQ2Kselci692/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JhrWQ_32esKysUeaH2fcvQ2Kselci692/view?usp=sharing)

### **Relay Race video**

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vVi9\\_CZPPUAX5dlczHjnKLQNUJleqGGx/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vVi9_CZPPUAX5dlczHjnKLQNUJleqGGx/view?usp=drive_link)

### **Obstacle course video**

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/19p\\_S6LDZr4Bgs4SzHYy\\_Ck6m3kpfkt\\_4/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/19p_S6LDZr4Bgs4SzHYy_Ck6m3kpfkt_4/view?usp=sharing)

