



OREGON TEAM WELLNESS

F.A.Q.

What is Oregon Team Wellness®?

Oregon Team Wellness is an activity-rich curriculum developed and endorsed by experts from the fields of health, nutrition and fitness, including:

- Directing Physician of Sports Medicine for Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU)
- Certified Nutritionist and Special Educator for Oregon State University
- Fitness Professionals
- Special Olympics experienced and certified coaches and staff

Oregon Team Wellness, under the theme “Wellness is a Sport,” teaches and trains individuals with and without intellectual disabilities basic and proven knowledge and skills that improves their overall health and wellness.

Why is Oregon Team Wellness so important to Special Olympics?

Though Special Olympics is the leading service organization providing year-round opportunities for activity for many individuals who would otherwise be sedentary, there remains a major need for improved health and wellness off the field of play. Many of our participants do not possess the level of physical fitness that allows them to participate in their sports practices and competitions in a safe and optimal manner. As in society at large, we see an increased number of athletes that are excessively overweight and out of shape. Yet, they’re expected to run up and down a basketball court or a soccer field and meet the demands of a physically active practice.

In addition, Special Olympics participants of all ages face challenges within mainstream offerings, including park districts and fitness centers. Without easy access to transportation, our athletes are limited in their ability to go to a local fitness center or get together with friends for an active outing (e.g. community swimming pool or ice rink). Also, specialized instruction is often needed and is typically not available for the special needs athlete.

Is Oregon Team Wellness for Special Olympics athletes only?

Definitely not. *Oregon Team Wellness* is open to individuals with and without intellectual disabilities. Designed to be “unified,” partners can be siblings, friends, coworkers, parents, or even group home

workers. Studies have repeatedly shown that most individuals trying to change lifestyle behaviors are more successful when they have a partner sharing the same struggles.

Don't our athletes get enough activity during their sports practices?

Athletes needing to improve their level of physical fitness cannot achieve this solely through sports practices that occur once or twice a week for 1½ hours, particularly when the coach wants to focus heavily on sports skills instruction. Sports practices are helpful, but improving overall health and wellness requires fitness activities on a regular basis – recommended five times a week. *Oregon Team Wellness* provides this opportunity.

Many Special Olympics participants are very aware that they lack an adequate level of fitness. They may even have knowledge of how to improve their fitness level. However, **knowledge alone does not result in change**. In order to change behaviors, the new behaviors need to be taught by trained leaders and practiced. The Oregon Team Wellness program is based on providing athletes with the tools they need to change their behavior.

How does Oregon Team Wellness work?

Offered in the same way sport-specific training is offered, an athlete signs up to participate and attends a 1½ hour training session taught by a Special Olympics trained "Wellness Coach" once each week for eight weeks.

The Wellness Coach leads each session, which includes:

- Pre and Post Test (first and last session)
- Fitness Activities: warm-up, cardio, strengthening, flexibility (no equipment needed, easy to do at home)
- Weekly Nutritional Focus (based on choosemyplate.gov lessons)
- Weekly Health Tip (based on Healthy Athletes disciplines)
- Weekly Goal Setting (worksheet for fitness and worksheet for nutrition goals for the week)
- Weekly incentives for short term goals

Fitness. All exercises have been chosen to:

- Provide full body workout for maximum benefit
- Require no specialized gym equipment
- Ensure safety – once proper form is learned, supervision is not required to maintain safety, Exercises have been reviewed for safety and effectiveness by Dr. James Chesnutt, Head of Sports Medicine at Oregon Health Sciences University.
- Enhance fitness level to aid in sport performance and endurance
- Result in lifestyle changes. Each participant is encouraged to participate in these exercises on their own, at home, several times per week.

Nutrition. Sessions have a specific focus each week to help participants make one small change at a time. For example, the focus for one week is on whole grains. Participants learn why whole grains are important and how to incorporate them into a healthy eating plan. Sample recipes are included. The weekly theme, and materials used for suggestions are primarily found on the USDA's website, www.choosemyplate.gov, which is comprehensive and was prepared by nutritionists.

Healthy Tip. One Healthy Athlete® discipline is addressed each week instructing participants in the various disciplines, e.g. the proper way to brush teeth, why it's important to drink water, et al.

Weekly Action Plan. At the end of each session, participants fill out their Action Plan pages. Based on the lesson plan theme for the week, participants choose the fitness activities and nutritional goals they will do for the week and how many days they'll participate.

Incentives. At the end of each session, the Wellness Coach will highlight specific accomplishments of various participants. For example, perhaps a participant succeeded in the previous week's goal to refrain from having a cookie each night. Each individual will have his/her name go into a drawing for some type of fun (and simple) prize. Prizes may be: canvas shopping bag, measuring spoons or cups, etc. Wellness Awards can be presented on the last day of the eight-week session.

How will we implement *Oregon Team Wellness* without overburdening our current coaches?

Oregon Team Wellness is a great way to recruit new coaches that have an interest in wellness, but possibly not in a specific sport. Fitness Centers and gyms have proven to be a great place for coach recruitment.

Train the Trainers: For this program to be accessible and scalable throughout your Program area, a Train the Trainer program is available to enable program growth. Because Special Olympics already has an infrastructure in place that supports this method of training, Team Wellness fits nicely into our current Coaches' Education System of delivery.

What materials are needed?

Each trained Wellness Coach receives a comprehensive manual (which is reusable), and each participant receives a Participant Workbook. The books are of high quality, durable material and professionally designed to be attractive and user-friendly.

The Wellness Coach Manual provides weekly lesson plans enabling minimal preparation for the Wellness Coach. There is room for coaches to be a bit creative, while staying within the guidelines and parameters provided. For example, the cardio activity in the curriculum may be walking, but if a coach has access to a swimming pool and chooses to change the cardio activity to swimming or water walking, that is acceptable.

How do we know this program is effective?

To measure effectiveness of the program, participants are tested in the following areas prior to the start of the program, and again at the end of the program:

Results-Based Indicators:

- Weight
- Body Mass Index
- Blood Pressure

Accomplishment-Based Indicators:

- Number of push ups in 1 minute
- Number of seconds of hold plank (up 60 seconds)
- Number of sit-to-stand in 1 minute
- Walking distance in 6 minutes

What makes *Oregon Team Wellness* unique?

- It includes fitness and nutrition every training session.
- It is ACTIVITY RICH. Many wellness programs are lecture-based. It is well known that knowledge alone does not change behavior. Behavior changes take practice. Oregon Team Wellness provides "practice" at each training session.

- The fitness portion was designed to be done independently and requires no equipment, unlike many programs available that require weights, bands, and oftentimes – supervision.
- Participants may come with a Unified partner or participate individually.
- The nutrition portion is hands-on, with taste-testing opportunities so individuals can personalize their recipe book.
- There is an Action Plan component every week, which helps individuals make lifestyle changes in small – and lasting – increments.
- The coaching is done by a trained volunteer, not paid staff, allowing ready expansion to all locations of the state at minimal cost and maximum effectiveness.

Won't this interfere with sports practices? Special Olympics is about SPORTS.

We have been careful to offer Oregon Team Wellness at a time/day when it is not in conflict with sports training. In some cases, it is offered just prior to a sport-specific practice and it has been successful. Additionally, we have found that those involved in Oregon Team Wellness seem to have greater success in sport participation, and some have reported greater enjoyment at sports practice.

How do we get Oregon Team Wellness going in my state?

Visit: soor.org and click on: *Oregon Team Wellness* and place your order for materials. Special Olympics Oregon has a copyright, and is pleased to share these materials with other Special Olympics programs at only our cost. Prices are listed below, shipping is additional.

- Train the Trainer Guide : No Charge
- Wellness Coach Manual : \$35 each
- Participant Workbook : \$16 each

Do we have to call it Oregon Team Wellness? I'm not in Oregon.

No, in fact, you have the option to name the program for your state. Your materials will be shipped with all materials printed with your Program name. For example: Washington Team Wellness, Florida Team Wellness, Montana Team Wellness, etc.

Can *Oregon Team Wellness* be used in a school setting?

Yes! Because it is a prescribed and comprehensive curriculum, Oregon Team Wellness can be Unified and is ideal for a school setting.

Does *Oregon Team Wellness* work with Unified Partners?

Most definitely. Partners realize all the same benefits as when they are part of a Unified Sports® program. Additionally, their fitness level is improved.

Can *Oregon Team Wellness* be used as an outreach tool?

The program has been of great interest to Group Homes and Residential facilities. By bringing the program to them, it is likely that sedentary individuals who get involved in Team Wellness may start to feel healthy enough to gain interest in Special Olympics sports participation.

What are the best options for funding *Oregon Team Wellness* in my state?

Oregon Team Wellness is highly fundable through foundations, major gifts, sponsorships and government agencies. You will find that this program readily transcends the typical perception of Special Olympics as “just a sports organization” and expands the appeal to funders focused on education and health. In addition, because the *Oregon Team Wellness* initiative directly addresses the major

challenge of obesity among children and youth, as well as adults – a problem aggressively targeted by federal and state agencies – the potential for government support is very strong.

Can't we just create our own program using *Oregon Team Wellness* as a model?

Oregon Team Wellness was developed over three years with the collaboration of specific professionals from the medical, nutrition and fitness fields, all of which represent organizations, companies and individuals that have publicly endorsed the program with its current content, design and mission. In addition, a number of foundations and major donors have contributed substantial amounts of revenue in support of *Oregon Team Wellness* also with its current content, design and mission. To protect the integrity and intent of the program and its developers, supporters and endorsers, Special Olympics Oregon is required to prohibit any modifications or applications unless specifically offered by Special Olympics Oregon.

Can I make copies of the *Oregon Team Wellness* materials?

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