



Preparing to Compete Workbook

Special Olympics
Ontario



Your information

This workbook belongs to:

I live in:

**I participate in the following Special
Olympics Ontario sports:**

I love competing because...



***“To be
prepared is half
the victory.”
-M. de Cervantes***

Purpose of the *Preparing to Compete Workbook*:

Do you ever get nervous before a competition? Not to worry – it is completely natural! Most athletes get nervous before a big game or event, even professional athletes. But how can you make sure your nerves don't impact your performance? You need to focus on being positive and confident in your ability, which is why Special Olympics Ontario's Health Team has created a *Preparing to Compete Workbook*.

The Workbook will walk you through the week of your competition, preparing you DAY BY DAY. Inside, you will find tons of great tips and information about nutrition, mental preparation and training.

Use the *Preparing to Compete Workbook* to improve your health and to help you perform your very best! Make sure to fill out the goals section and complete the daily activity sections each day – that way you will be able to work with your coach after the competition to see how you can improve for next time.

Table of Contents

Information	Page 2
Purpose	Page 3
Getting Started	Page 4
Goal Setting	Page 6
Day 1	Page 7
Day 2	Page 8
Day 3	Page 9
Day 4	Page 10
Day 5	Page 11
Day 6	Page 12
Day 7	Page 13

- Getting Started: Staying Healthy Year Round -

Get active

Staying physically fit is very important to being a good athlete. **Improving your competitive performance starts with making one healthy choice at a time!**



Here are some helpful hints to GET ACTIVE every day!

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- If you are taking the bus, get off a few stops early
- Walk to school, to work, to the grocery store, or to run errands if possible
- Ride your bike

Eat right, feel great!

It is important to **EAT RIGHT to FEEL GREAT!** Proper nutrition is what keeps your body going in all the activities you do every day, whether you are walking up stairs, playing basketball or training for competition. It is important to eat foods from each of the 4 food groups

Fruits & Vegetables

Be sure to have 7– 10 servings of fruits and veggies every day!

Hint: One apple is one fruit serving



Grain Products

Remember to try 6-8 servings of grains every day!

Hint: One slice of bread is one grain serv-



Milk & Alternatives

Have 2-4 full servings of dairy products every day!

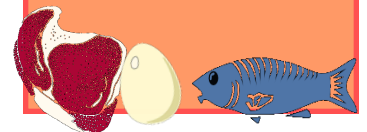
Hint: One glass of milk is one dairy serving



Meat & Alternatives

Always have 2-3 servings of protein every day!

Hint: Two eggs is one serving



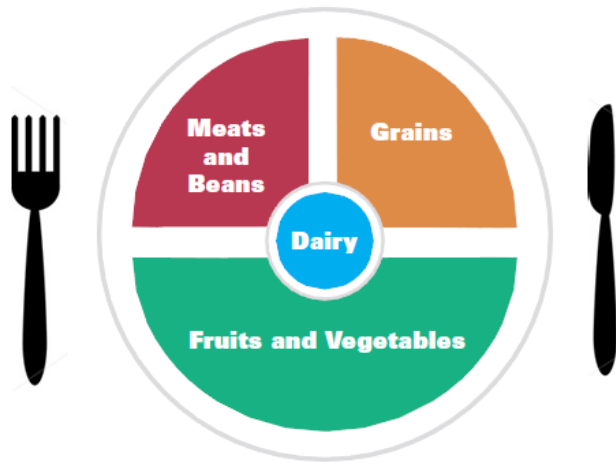
How the food groups help you

Each Food Group helps to give your body different essential nutrients, that's why eating from each food group is so important!

- **Fruits & Vegetables** have nutrients that keep your body healthy and aid in healing
- **Grains** give your body the energy it needs every day
- **Dairy** keeps your bones and teeth strong
- **Meats & Alternatives** makes your muscles and body strong

- Staying Healthy Year Round-

Have a balanced plate at every meal

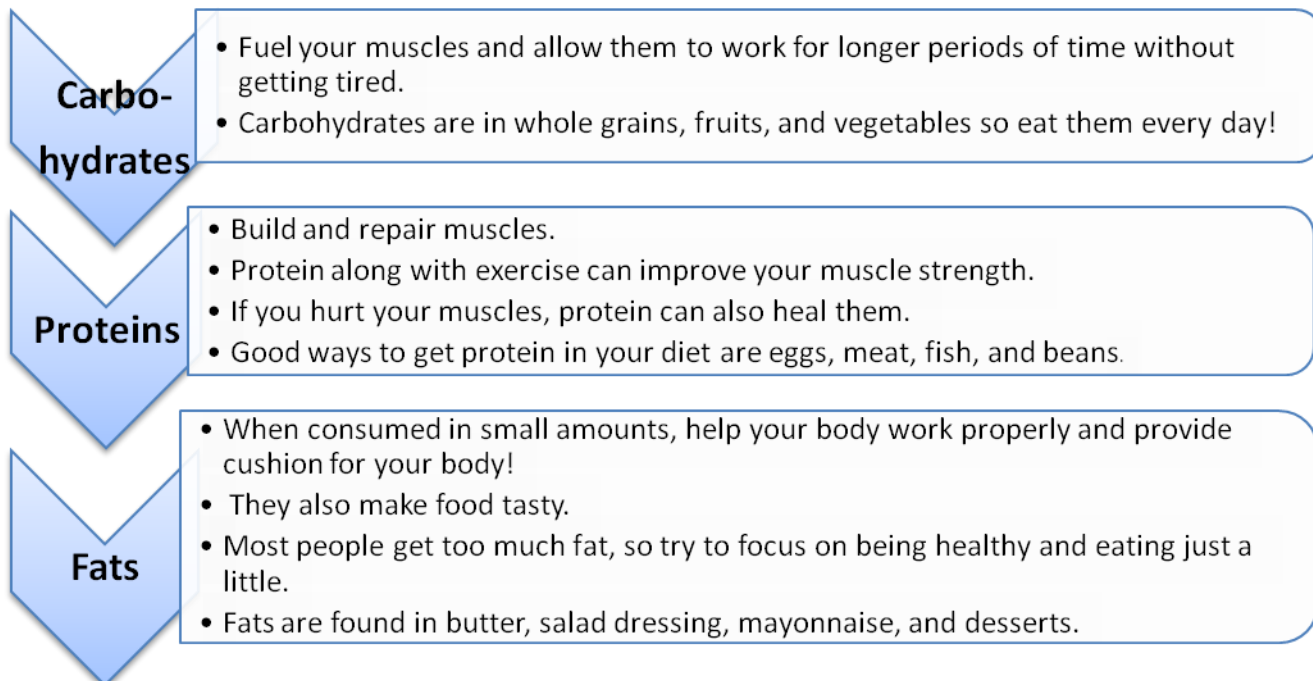


A good guide to use when you are eating is dividing your plate into three sections. **Fruits and Veggies** should take up most of your plate. **Dairy** is shown as a circle in the middle of your plate to remind you it can be added to other food groups in your meal.

Nutrition & Exercise

Athletes are very active people who spend a lot of time practicing and competing in sporting events. To be able to stay active, it is important to keep your energy up. Food is what gives your body the energy it needs to walk, run, and play sports. Food also keeps you focused while you are doing an activity, whether basketball, track, or soccer. Practicing good nutrition can help you improve in your sport!

3 main nutrients in food that keep you healthy



- The Importance of Goal Setting -

Goal Setting Guidelines

Goal setting is a very important part of life. Goals give you a clear idea of what you want to achieve and how hard you have to work to achieve your goals. Goal setting is a great way to help motivate you, help you stay focused, and help you maintain your commitment to healthy eating.

Things to consider when setting goals:

- What do I want to do?
 - Who can help me work towards my goals?
 - How am I going to do this?
 - When do I want to accomplish my goals?
- * Be very **specific** when writing your goals – this will allow you to develop a picture in your mind of you successfully completing your goal!
- * Set **realistic** goals – goals that are difficult enough to push you, yet something you will be able to accomplish with hard work!
- * Focus on setting goals that are within your control...how you want to perform and what you want to do!



Mental Preparation

Most people tend to think of physical training when they think of sport and competition. **BUT it is important to also consider MENTAL PREPARATION.** By learning how to control your competition nerves you can increase your confidence so you are able to achieve new personal bests.

***"If you can
believe it, the
mind can
achieve it."***
-R. Lott

- Day 1: Create Your Game Plan -

Set Goals



Remember to work on your goals every day!

My TRAINING goal is: _____

Example: To improve my flexibility

I will do the following to work on my goal:

Example: Remember to stretch every day

My NUTRITIONAL goal is: _____

Example: To stop drinking pop

I will do the following to work on my goal:

Example: To drink 100% fruit juice instead



...

"People with goals succeed because they know where they are going. It's as simple as that."
- E. Nightingale



My MENTAL goal is: _____

Example: To stay relaxed during competition

I will do the following to work on my goal:

Example: Practice taking deep breaths

- Day 2: Get a Jump Start -

Warm-up routine

Talk to your coach and plan a WARM-UP ROUTINE for competition day.

Example: 1. Walk for 5 minutes 2. Stretch (ex. butt kicks, high knees, arm circles)

Write out your warm-up plan here:



Avoid sugary foods & drinks

AVOID SUGARY FOODS AND DRINKS like candy bars and sodas right before you practice or compete. They might give you an energy boost at first, but it will fade fast, leaving you feeling drained.

Try this...

Eat apples slices with
almond butter instead
of a chocolate bar.



Drink skim-milk
instead of soda



"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure."

– C. Powell

Think positively

Remember to THINK POSITIVELY about your competition day! Draw a positive picture of yourself competing in the box. Imagine yourself performing your best!



- Day 3: Stay Focused -

Make a checklist

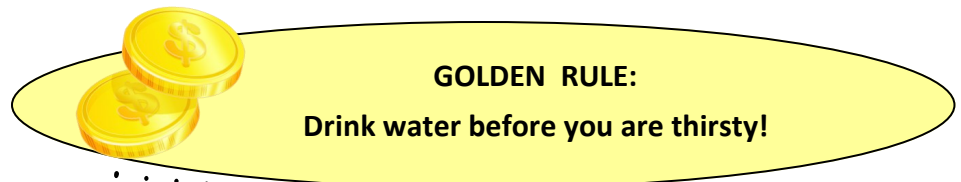
To become competition ready, **MAKE A CHECKLIST** of all of the important items you will need to remember to bring with you to the competition.

Write out your checklist here:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Water bottle	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

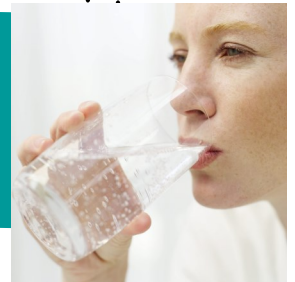
Stay hydrated

It is important to drink before, during and after exercise to **STAY HYDRATED** and perform well. **Water is your best choice.** Try to stay away from soda and sport drinks. These choices tend to have a lot of sugar and calories.



Did you know?

You should aim to drink 8-10 glasses of water each day. When you are at a practice or competition, you need to drink even more.



You can!

Write down 2 phrases below that you can use on competition day to stay motivated and **focused**. Read these words each day to remind yourself that **YOU CAN!**

(Examples: I can do this! Keep on trying!)

1.	_____
2.	_____

"Focus your energy on greatness"

—D. DeNotaris

- Day 4: Keep Calm and Cool -

Clear your mind

Walking is a great way to improve your health and physical fitness level. It can also help you deal with competition nerves. **CLEAR YOUR MIND!** Take a 20 minute walk today to keep calm and focused.



“Calmness is power.”

– J. Allen

Did you know?

You should walk 10,000 steps per day to stay healthy and fit

Forget the fat

Eating fatty foods like French fries, chips, hot dogs, greasy hamburgers, doughnuts, can make you feel sick and uncomfortable during exercise. **FORGET THE FAT** and try to avoid eating these foods for a few hours before and after exercising.



Take the Fatty Food Pledge

Example:

I will stop eating hot dogs
so I can perform my best!

I will stop eating _____
so I can perform my best!

Deep breathing

Looking for a way to stay calm and relaxed? **DEEP BREATHING** can help you deal with competition stress.

HOW TO?

1. Close your eyes to concentrate.
2. Take a deep breath.
3. Feel your tummy push out.
4. Let the air out slowly.
5. Try to count to 6.
6. Repeat 10 times.



- Day 5: Gear Up -

Light and easy

Take the day off. You want to make sure your body is well-rested for Competition Day. If you do decide to train today, make sure to keep it LIGHT AND EASY.

"You have to expect things of yourself before you can do them."

- M. Jordan



REMINDER!

Use the checklist from DAY 3 to pack your competition bag. Leave it by the door, so you remember your checklist!

Snack attack

With all of the excitement of Competition Day, it can sometimes be hard to remember to eat. **To avoid a SNACK ATTACK, pack a few small snacks you can bring with you to help boost your energy levels.**

Try these SOO approved Snacks:

Half of a low fat turkey sandwich

Fresh or dried fruit

Granola Bar

Hard Boiled Egg

Small handful of Almonds or Walnuts

Carrots and Hummus



Lights out

To make sure you are fully energized on Competition Day, make sure to **turn your LIGHTS OUT early and get at least 7-8 hours of sleep the night before.**



- Day 6: Competition Day -

Warm-up your muscles

You are probably feeling nervous and excited today. You might feel like you are ready to compete the minute you arrive at the event, but **it is important you WARM-UP YOUR MUSCLES before competing to avoid injury.** Spend some time going through your warm-up routine you made on DAY 2 with your coach.



Best breakfast

Now that the Big Day has arrived, it is very **important to make sure you eat a healthy breakfast.**



Did you know?!

Avoid eating a large meal 2-4 hours before you compete. If you get hungry, this is when the snacks you packed (DAY 5) will come in handy!

BEST BREAKFAST Options

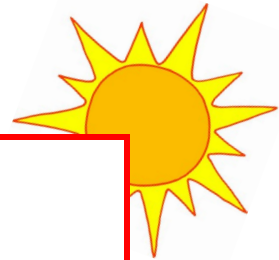
Cereal / oatmeal + milk + strawberries

Toast + almond butter + banana

Toast + egg + melon

Yogurt / cottage cheese +

blueberries + granola



Go into the bubble



GO INTO THE BUBBLE. Take a few minutes before you compete to go through your performance in your mind. **Find a quiet area and listen to music or wear ear plugs. Imagine what it will feel like to perform.** This will help you clear and collect your thoughts so you can focus on competing.

"To be a great champion you must believe you are the best. If you're not, pretend you are."

—M. Ali

- Day 7: Learning for Next Time -

Make sure to go over your goals with your coach after the competition.

Did you achieve your TRAINING goal?

What did you do well this week?

What can you improve on for next time?

*"There's
always room
for
improvement."*

L. Leber



Did you achieve your NUTRITIONAL goal?

What did you do well this week?

What can you improve on for next time?

Did you achieve your MENTAL goal?

What did you do well this week?

What can you improve on for next time?





***"LET ME WIN.
BUT IF I CANNOT WIN,
LET ME BE BRAVE IN
THE ATTEMPT."***

*-Special Olympics Athletes'
Oath*

Special Olympics Ontario is part of a world wide charitable organization dedicated to enriching the lives of people with intellectual disability through sport.

With funding support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Special Olympics Ontario (SOO) is focusing on promotion the benefits of healthy active living to persons with intellectual disabilities in Ontario. The project aims to enhance the ability of athletes to train and compete while empowering people with intellectual disabilities to invest in their overall health.

For more information about Special Olympics Ontario and its Health Programs program please contact us:

Toll Free:

1-888-333-5515 ext 268

Email:

karlaw@specialolympicsontario.com

For more resources and information check out the *SOO Health* website at:
www.specialolympicsontario.com/health

