



Athletics Glossary

Term	Definition
Adaptation	When a muscle fiber or organism is overloaded, that muscle fiber or organism will adjust to the added stress and become stronger.
Aerobic (with oxygen)	A cellular process in which foods (carbohydrates) are completely oxidized by the oxygen in the air, and the maximum chemical energy from foods is produced. Aerobic activities use the largest muscle groups that can be maintained continuously and whose function is rhythmical in nature (i.e. walking, jogging, swimming, bicycling, etc.).
Anaerobic (without oxygen)	A cellular process in which foods (carbohydrates) are not completely oxidized because the oxygen in the air is not used.
Anchor Leg	The final or fourth leg of a relay race.
Approach	The run-up made by an athlete before performing the actual skill, i.e. long jumping, high jumping.
Arm Swing	The movement of the arms as they are moved forward and back as a counter balance to the opposite leg.
Athletic Shape	How fit an athlete is for his chosen event.
Base	Running that does not train any specific system, yet is aerobic running that provides the basic strength to do specific running.
Baton	Tubular object carried by and passed between members of a relay team.
Blind Pass	Passing the baton in a relay race with the outgoing runner receiving the baton from the incoming runner without looking at the exchange.
Center of Gravity	The point at which a line drawn through the head and torso extends to the ground.
Chute	An extension of the straight-away on an oval or semi-oval track.
Circle	The competition area for the shot put.
Closed Position	A powerful throwing position for the shot put in which the putting shoulder and hip are back.
Crossbar	The bar, which can be raised and lowered, that is placed between two standards for the high jump.
Crouch Start	The all-fours position of a runner at the start of a sprint.
Date Pace	The pace of the interval to be run that is equal to the pace of the best performance that the athlete is currently able to achieve for the event that he or she is preparing for.
Dead Heat	When two or more runners cross the finish line simultaneously, resulting in a tie.
Did Not Finish (DNF)	When an athlete starts a race, but drops out before crossing the finish line.
Disqualification (DQ)	When an athlete violates a rule, does not show up for a scheduled event, or gains an unfair advantage by impeding or interfering.
Drive Leg	The leg that exerts the force during a stride or takeoff.



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Duration	The time that stress placed on an organism.
Exchange Zone	The 20M-long zone in which the baton must be passed from the incoming runner to the outgoing runner during a relay race.
False Start	Leaving the starting blocks before the start command.
Fartlek	A Swedish term meaning speed play. A type of workout which requires the runner while on a continuous run to use fast, moderate, or slow periods of running alternated as desired by the runner. This workout is both aerobic and anaerobic.
Field	Participation area for field events.
Flex	The act of bending a joint, such as the elbow or knee.
Flexibility	Ability to move a body joint through its normal full range of motion.
Follow Through	The movement of a part or parts of the body following another movement of the body.
Foot Strike	Striking the ground with the foot supplying the mechanical force that propels the body forward.
Forward Lean	The angle that the torso assumes during running or walking that is initiated at the hips.
Foul	An infraction of a rule.
Front Runner	An athlete who is leading a race, thus setting the pace.
Grip	The hand position of a throwing implement.
Handoff	The exchange or pass of the baton between the incoming and outgoing runners of a relay team.
Head Wind	Direction of the wind blowing toward the athletes.
Heat	A grouping of athletes for competition.
Hip Rotation	The forward rotation of the hips that takes place during a stride while running or walking.
Impeding	A violation in which one runner bumps, or cuts in front of, another runner, forcing him to slow down or break stride.
Intensity	The degree of stress placed on an organism.
Interval Training	Alternating runs at maximum effort for specified times (usually 2-5 minutes) with “recovery” periods of jogging. Usually the period of rest is equal to the period of the run. This is an aerobic workout.
Jogging	Running at a slow pace.
Kick	Acceleration of pace; leg speed at the end of a race.
Lead Leg	First leg to leave the ground in jumping or hurdling.
Lead-off Leg	First runner on a relay team.
Legal	A successful attempt and completion of any jump or throw in which there are no rules violations or infractions.
Marks	An athlete's starting point for a race or a jump.

**Special Olympics Athletics
Coaches Quick Start Guide**



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Max	Maximum amount of weight that can be lifted for one rep.
Mechanics	The manner in which one puts one foot in front of the other, striking the ground in an action that tends to push the earth backward causing the body to be propelled forward.
Muscle Endurance	Ability to repeatedly continue the work without muscle fatigue. This is particularly important for distance runners.
Muscle Power	Work done over a given period of time. Power is very important to those events in track and field that require explosive strength such as the long and high jumps.
Muscle Strength	Greatest amount of force an athlete can exert at one time.
Over Distance	Steady pace running in excess of 10 minutes in duration and the basis of any distance running or walking program. This is an aerobic workout. This is the only type of workout carried on year-round. Long Slow Distance (LSD) running is accomplished at a pace approximately 65 percent of VO ₂ Max.
Pace	The rate of covering a specific distance while running or walking.
Passer	The relay runner who hands off the baton.
Passing	When an athlete declines to attempt a jump or throw when it is his turn.
Pit	The landing area for long jumpers and high jumpers, usually filled with sand or sawdust (long jump) or synthetic materials (high jump).
Plyometric Training	Exercises characterized by powerful muscular contractions in response to rapid, dynamic stretching of the involved muscles. The muscle flexes and extends. Through this type of exercise this muscle reflex process is improved.
Power Foot	The lead foot in a race; preferred or strength foot.
Power Phase	The time from which the foot makes contact with the ground through the extension of the leg until the toes lose contact with the ground.
Progressive Resistance	Gradually increasing the weight lifted as the body gets used to the new stress. When the muscle is stressed beyond its normal demand, the muscle responds positively and becomes stronger.
Receiver	The athlete who receives the baton in a relay race.
Recovery	The act of bringing an arm or leg back to the drive, push, or stride position.
Recovery Phase	The time from which the foot loses contact with the ground until it again strikes the ground.
Reflex	An involuntary and automatic muscle reaction.
Repetitions (reps)	Number of times a lift is made continuously, one lift after another and without rest.
Rest	That period of time allotted to recovering from a period of stress, usually spent in rapid walking or slow running.
Rhythm	Uniform and well-coordinated running action.
Scissors Jump	A high-jump style in which the legs are moved in a scissors motion when crossing the bar.
Scratch Line	The restraining line which cannot be crossed in throwing and jumping events.



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Sector	The landing area for the shot put and softball throw.
Set	A group of repetitions followed by a rest period.
Shot Put	Iron, plastic or brass spheres used for shot put competition.
Specificity	Physical conditioning for an event in track and field which matches the physiological demands of the activity. For example: endurance training produces endurance; power training produces power; strength training produces strength.
Sprint Training	Repeated quality runs (in excess of 75 percent of the runner's basic speed) of 50-150m with rest periods that allow complete recovery. This is an anaerobic workout.
Staggered Start	The start used for the 200M, 400M, 800M, 4x100M and 4x400M relay races, in which the runners are positioned at different points around the curve of the track.
Stance	An athlete's particular starting position.
Starting Blocks	Metal blocks set on the track behind the start line, used to support the athlete's feet for all sprints.
Straight-away	Straight area of a track from one curve to the next.
Stress	The overload that is placed on a muscle fiber or organism.
Stride	Distance covered by an athlete's leg cycle while running.
Strike Impulse	The amount of time that the foot is in contact with the ground during the strike phase.
Stroke Volume	The amount of blood ejected by the ventricle of the heart with each beat, usually expressed in milliliters (ml). Highly trained endurance athletes have considerably higher cardiac outputs.
Swing	Pendulum action of an athlete's body or parts of the body.
Takeoff	The act of leaving the ground.
Takeoff Foot	Foot from which the athlete propels himself off the ground.
Takeoff Mark	Spot from which the athlete leaves the ground.
Technique	The form used by an athlete to perform a skill.
Tempo	The number of turnovers required to run or walk at a given pace.
The Overload Principle	Strengthening of muscles through one of the following methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Lifting the same weight as before, but more quickly.◆ Increasing the amount of weight lifted.◆ Lifting the same weight, but lifting it more times than before.
Toe-board	A restraining board, which the athlete may not cross over, used in the shot put.
Torso	That part of the body which extends from the hips to the top of the shoulders.
Turnover	The number of times that the right or left foot strikes the ground in a given period of time.
Tying Up	The point at which the muscles can no longer perform at a given intensity.



Term	Definition
Visual Pass	A relay pass with the outgoing runner receiving the baton from the incoming runner while looking back at the other runner and baton during the exchange.
VO₂ Maximum	<p>Body's ability to use oxygen at the cell level. Equivalent to the pace one can run for 10 to 12 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A measure of the maximum oxygen uptake of the whole body. It is based on the following events: ◆ Movement of air in and out of the lungs ◆ Movement of oxygen from the lungs to the blood ◆ The blood picking up the oxygen ◆ The heart pumping the blood ◆ The delivery of blood to the muscles via arteries, arterioles and capillaries ◆ The availability of nearby cells to extract and use the oxygen carried in the blood
Warm-up	The gradual process of raising the body temperature and loosening muscles prior to strenuous exercise.
Weight Training	Development of strength with the use of weight lifting and based on the overload principle.
Wind Sprint	Short, practice sprint for conditioning.