



FUNfitness is a physical therapy event that addresses the ongoing health needs of Special Olympics athletes. **FUNfitness provides athletes the opportunity to be screened for flexibility of hamstring, calf, shoulder rotator and hip flexor muscles;** functional strength of the abdominal and lower extremity muscles, and for balance. During these screenings, physical therapists, related professionals and students offer athletes expert guidance and exercises recommendations to prevent and reduce the risk of injury, and to improve the athletes' optimal function in sports training and competition.

Importance and Impact

FUNfitness is an event designed to:

- assess needs in flexibility, strength, balance and aerobic fitness;
- teach exercises to help athletes improve identified areas of need;
- educate participants, families and coaches about the importance of flexibility, strength, balance and aerobic conditioning in overall fitness; and
- provide a hands-on opportunity for athletes to learn how physical therapist can help them improve their fitness.

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Purpose and Goals:

The tests and measures utilized during FUNfitness are evidence-based, and have reliable data. All tests for flexibility, functional strength, balance and aerobic capacity are designed to minimize the risk of injury in people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Education is provided at the end of the screening for athletes, coaches and families to address the areas that need improvement.

At FUNfitness screenings, we learned that a large percentage of Special Olympics athletes in the U.S. have the following health related concerns:

- **71%** have flexibility problems
- **73%** have balance problems
- **56%** have strength problems

