

Elements - Sensory/Movement based programmes: Dexterity, Kicking & Striking



The Motor Activity Training Programme (MATP), developed by Special Olympics, is a movement-based programme aimed at young people who have severe and complex impairments.

Ideas & Strategies

Dexterity, kicking and striking are three of the core skill areas of the Motor Activity Training Programme (MATP).

Dexterity

In this area, athletes work to develop some basic skill components. These include:

- Grasp and hold – can an athlete reach for a small item, like a bean bag, close their hand around it, and hold it in their grasp?
 - As a progression, can the athlete release the bean bag?
 - Finally, can they grasp, move their arm, then release?
- The coach can support with tactile and verbal guidance.

Kicking

- The athlete's motivation is to kick or push a ball with their foot (or feet) in order to knock over some skittles or to score a goal.

Striking

- The target here is for the athlete to develop the skill of striking a ball with an implement – or by using their hand.

Sports-specific

For some athletes, the MATP can lead to participation in Special Olympics sports-specific events. As Special Olympics events use a 'divisioning' system that classifies athletes for competition, there are opportunities for young people who have a wide range of abilities.

Think about – ways in which skill development to assist young people in their daily living.



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STEP

Space

- Space can be manipulated in various ways to facilitate MATP skill developments. For example:
Kicking - varying the distance between the athlete and the target; initially the ball can be almost touching the skittles;
Dexterity – gradually increasing the distance that the athlete moves their arm.

Task

- Skill development can progress through task adaptation. For example:
Striking – a ball can be struck from a tee using the hand only; progress to a small, easy-to-hold bat; finally a longer handled bat can be used, possibly using both hands.
Dexterity – the athlete may be able to pick up a bean bag using a pinch (thumb and forefinger) initially before developing the ability to open the hand.

Equipment

- Equipment can be adapted in many ways to facilitate MATP skill development. For example:
Kicking – for athletes performing from a seated position (for instance, wheelchair users), the ball can be positioned on a small platform or step at a convenient height for the foot.

People

- Some athletes will find certain MATP skill areas more suited to their functional ability than others. However, all the activities can be adapted in order to give each young person the opportunity to try each skill.



Safety

- A group or individual warm-up can prepare the athlete; for example, a parachute warm-up may increase blood circulation and range of arm movement.

How to improve

- The coach can work on the basic movements required for each skill area without using equipment (balls, etc) in order to establish a movement pattern.

Communication

- Constant positive encouragement can support and motivate each athlete.



Links

For information about Special Olympics and MATP see the Links section.