

# Elements - Sensory/Movement based programmes: MATP



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

### The programme

The Motor Activity Training Programme is aimed at providing opportunities for young people who have profound and complex needs to be part of Special Olympics events. It consists of 7 core skill areas in which young people participate at a level appropriate to their functional ability. These are: mobility, dexterity, kicking, and striking (explored in this resource) plus manual wheelchair activity, electric (power) chair activity and aquatics.

### Levels

Athletes – as all Special Olympians are called – can take part through different levels of assistance:

Total – the coach assists the entire movement;

Partial – the coach provides some support;

Independent – the athlete performs without assistance.

### Training towards a Challenge Day

Young people practise the various skill areas with their coach over an 8-12 week period culminating in a Challenge Day where they can display what they've learned as part of a Special Olympics event.

**Think about** – in MATP the work and progression towards the achievement of a skill is as important as the end result



# Elements - Sensory/Movement based programmes: MATP Mobility

Depending on the athlete's functional ability, **mobility** can be as fundamental as being able to roll over on a mat or the ability to participate in a 10-metre assisted walk.

## STEP

### Space

- Young people can practise skills in a small space (for example, lying or sitting on a mat) or walking, with or without assistance, along a designated route.
- The space can be adapted to match the ability of the athlete; an assisted walk can begin with a few steps initially, and progress towards the 10 metre target.

### Task

- Gross motor skill activities involve ways of moving or propelling the body forwards, backwards, up, down or side to side.
- The athlete can begin with total or partial assistance, as required, but try to move towards independent movement, even if this is not the entire skill.

### Equipment

- MATP identifies specific equipment required for the performance of each skill. However, this can be modified or adapted using available materials. The focus is on the development of the skill which is not dependent on specific equipment items.

### People

- The coach needs to develop a close understanding of the athlete, their functional ability and ways of encouraging them to extend their mobility. The ability to recognise when movement adaptation is required is important in this respect.
- Each athlete will need to approach the development of their movement skills in a different way. For example, some may be able to use their arms to initiate a body roll; others may need to rely on turning their head to influence body movement.



### Safety

- Movements should be within the functional scope of the athlete; with carefully monitored practise, function can improve and change.

### How to improve

- This is a journey for the athlete. Improvement may be made small increments in some athletes; others may show sudden leaps in ability.

### Communication

- Both the athlete and the coach need to work together to achieve the end result. The coach needs to recognise verbal and visual signals from their athlete.



## Links

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