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LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT



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EXPLORE
The LTAD Document



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What is the Long Term Athlete Development Model?

WHAT IS LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT?

The LTAD model is a participant-centred approach to delivering sport. It seeks to maximise everyone's participation and potential in sport, not just that of performance athletes. It provides a seven-stage progression from childhood to adulthood focusing on key common principles of individual physical and psychological development.

One of the most common recommendations is to avoid early specialisation. It is highly important that participants are exposed to multiple sporting environments to develop a well-rounded athlete with a wide skill set.

CONSTRAINTS

The model recognises that people go through stages of growth and development from birth to death.
At any stage, a range of physical, psychological, social and environmental factors can affect the ability to participate, train and compete in physical activity.



WHY LTAD?

LTAD helps sports organisations and coaches plan and structure their training sessions and programming in a way that ensures it fulfils the specific needs of the participants.

The FUNdamental movement skills and physical literacy gained early in life will have a major impact on the future development and participation of the individual, particularly with regards to children.

DEVELOP PARTICIPANTS

Focusing on the specific needs of the participants, LTAD helps coaches develop participants in the different stages of development:

- Maintain a healthy balance of competition and training
- Seeing competition as a means to personally improve and not just for winning
- Maximise enjoyment and individual potential
- Avoid the dangers of imposing adult programs on young children (i.e. burnout, injury, dropout.)
- Match the content of the sessions and programmes to the individual needs of the participants
- Ensure that participants have a wide array of skills which allows them to try different sports and indeed swap sport if they wish
- Focusing on the building blocks of each stage and building a solid base of generic movement and sport skills

KEY FACTORS OF LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

1) PHYSICAL LITERACY	Focusing on mastering basic human movements, fundamental movement skills and foundational sport skills. Physical literacy is key to the LTAD model, helping individuals feel confident in their physical abilities and achieve excellence in sport.
2) SPECIALISATION	Specialisation in sport occurs when athletes limit their participation to a single sport. They train and compete in this sport year-round. Sports can be divided into early and late specialisation.
3) AGE	Consider the age of the athlete for safe and effective training, competition, and recovery: • Chronological age – the number of years and days since birth • Relative age – the differences in age among children born in the dame calendar year • Developmental age – physical, mental, cognitive and emotional maturity • Skeletal age – the maturity of the skeleton based on bone development • General training age – the number of years in training and sampling of sports • Sport-specific training age – the number of years since the athlete specialised
4) TRAINABILITY	When creating optimal training programmes, coaches need to consider the current trainability of the athlete in relation to their current state and to be aware of the sensitive periods in which training for different body systems have optimal effects. These different body systems include stamina, strength, speed, skill and flexibility.
5) INTELLECTUAL, EMOTIONAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT	Children develop intellectually, emotionally and morally at different rates, one or more of these factors could be advanced or still developing. The variation in the rate of development affects a child's capability to make decisions and deal with the strong emotions tied to the sport experience. Be aware of how this can affect training and competition.

KEY FACTORS OF LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

6) EXCELLENCE TAKES TIME	While some argue that talent is dependent on genetics and nurturing, it's irrefutable that many years of practice and effective training are necessary for attaining excellence. Regardless of natural born talent, athletes must understand that elite levels of performance require determination, grit, and time.
7) PERIODISATION	Periodisation is an overall concept of training that divides the training process into specific phases, to ensure the correct form of training is done at the right time. Training is split into components of weeks, days and sessions.
8) COMPETITION	Competition drives actions in sport. Coaches program based on competitions and determine the success of things based on the outcome of competitions.
9) SYSTEM ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION	The "system" refers to the variety of settings and situations that athletes are exposed to when participating in sport and physical activity. The alignment of these systems allows health, education, recreation, and sport to interact: the four main sectors of the LTAD model.
10) CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	Continuous improvement is key to long-term athlete development. With the ever-changing landscape of sport and athleticism, athletes need the ability to adapt and change alongside it. Change can be difficult, however taking no action to improve sport can result in declining participation.

YOUR GO TO

LONG TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The 7 Stages of Long Term Athlete Development:

STAGE-1: ACTIVE START

THIS PHASE IS TARGETED AT THE AGE GROUP OF 0-6 YEARS OLD.
KEY POINTS:

- PARTICIPATION IN LOTS OF UNSTRUCTURED AND SOME STRUCTURES ACTIVE PLAY
- DEVELOP BASIC BALANCE, LOCOMOTOR (WALKING, RUNNING, JUMPING, HOPPING, CRAWLING, MARCHING, CLIMBING, GALLOPING, SLIDING, LEAPING, HOPPING, AND SKIPPING) AND BALL SKILLS
- DEVELOP THE ABCS (AGILITY, BALANCE, COORDINATION AND SPEED) USING FUN GAMES AND PLAY ACTIVITIES
- AVOID PROLONGED INACTIVITY





STAGE-2: FUNDAMENTALS

THIS PHASE IS APPROPRIATE FOR BOYS AGED 6 TO 9 AND GIRLS AGED 6 TO 8.
THE KEY POINTS OF THIS PHASE ARE:

- PARTICIPATION IN AS MANY SPORTS AS POSSIBLE
- DEVELOP ABCS (AGILITY, BALANCE, COORDINATION, SPEED)
- DEVELOP KGBS (KINESTHETICS, GLIDING, BUOYANCY, STRIKING WITH THE BODY)
- DEVELOP RJT (RUNNING, JUMPING, THROWING)
- DEVELOP CKS (CATCHING, KICKING, STRIKING WITH AN IMPLEMENT)
- STRENGTH TRAINING WITH BODY WEIGHT EXERCISES AND SMALL WEIGHTS – SANDBAGS, MEDICINE BALLS ETC.

STAGE-3: LEARNING TO TRAIN

THIS PHASE IS APPROPRIATE FOR BOYS AGED 9 TO 12 AND GIRLS AGED 8 TO 11.
THE KEY POINTS OF THIS PHASE ARE:

- DEVELOP FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS
- LEARN GENERAL SPORTS SKILLS
- DEVELOP STRENGTH WITH BODYWEIGHT EXERCISES, SANDBAGS AND MEDICINE BALLS – OTHER GYM EQUIPMENT CAN BE USED IF ACCESSIBLE
- CONTINUE TO DEVELOP ENDURANCE WITH GAMES
- INTRODUCTION TO BASIC FLEXIBILITY AND MOBILITY EXERCISES
- CONTINUE TO DEVELOP ABCS DURING WARM-UPS AND IN SPECIFIC SAQ (SPEED, AGILITY AND QUICKNESS)
- FURTHER DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF WARM-UPS, COOL DOWNS, STRETCHING, HYDRATION, NUTRITION, RECOVERY, RELAXATION AND MINDSET
- BASIC PERIODISATION CAN BE INCORPORATED INTO THE SCHOOL YEAR





STAGE-4: TRAINING TO TRAIN

THIS PHASE IS APPROPRIATE FOR BOYS AGED 12 TO 16 AND GIRLS AGED 11 TO 15.
THE KEY POINTS OF THIS PHASE ARE:

- MORE EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPING SPORT-SPECIFIC SKILLS
- LEARN CORRECT RESISTANCE TRAINING TECHNIQUES
- TRAINING PROGRAMS START TO BE INDIVIDUALISED
- DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO AND WHEN TO STRETCH – CONSIDER GROWTH OF BONES, MUSCLES, TENDONS AND LIGAMENTS.
- DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO OPTIMISE NUTRITION AND HYDRATION.
- DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF MENTAL PREPARATION
- DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING OF HOW AND WHEN TO TAPER AND PEAK.
- ESTABLISH PRE-COMPETITION, COMPETITION AND POST-COMPETITION ROUTINES.

STAGE-5: TRAINING TO COMPETE

THIS PHASE IS APPROPRIATE FOR BOYS AGED 16 TO 18 AND GIRLS AGED 15 TO 17.
THE KEY POINTS OF THIS PHASE ARE:

- TRAINING CONCENTRATES ON STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES AND IS FAR MORE SPECIFIC
- LEARN TO PERFORM SPORTS-SPECIFIC SKILLS UNDER A VARIETY OF COMPETITIVE CONDITIONS DURING TRAINING.
- TRAINING PROGRAMS ARE FULLY INDIVIDUALISED ALONG WITH KEY AREAS OF NUTRITION AND SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY.
- USE WELL-STRUCTURED PERIODISATION STRATEGIES





STAGE-6: TRAINING TO WIN

THIS PHASE IS APPROPRIATE FOR BOYS AGED 18+ AND GIRLS AGED 17+.
THE KEY POINTS OF THIS PHASE ARE:

- ALL OF THE ATHLETE'S PHYSICAL, TECHNICAL, TACTICAL, MENTAL, PERSONAL AND LIFESTYLE CAPACITIES ARE WELL ESTABLISHED, THE FOCUS OF TRAINING HAS SHIFTED TOWARDS MAXIMISING PERFORMANCE
- ATHLETES TRAIN TO PEAK FOR MAJOR COMPETITIONS
- WELL PLANNED PERIODISATION STRATEGIES ARE PUT IN PLACE – VOLUME AND INTENSITY IS VARIED AND PLANNED RECOVERY PERIODS ARE PROGRAMMED TO PREVENT OVERTRAINING

STAGE-7: ACTIVE FOR LIFE

THIS PHASE REFERS TO THE ACTIVITIES PERFORMED AFTER A PLAYER HAS RETIRED FROM COMPETITION PERMANENTLY.
THE KEY POINTS OF THIS PHASE ARE:

- KEEP ACTIVE THROUGH RECREATIONAL PARTICIPATION – SPORT AS A HOBBY AND PASSION.
- RETAIN SKILLS IN A RECREATIONAL CONTEXT.
- TAKE ON OTHER ROLES WITHIN SPORT – COACHING, ADMINISTRATION, MENTORING.
- TRAIN FOR LONG-TERM HEALTH AND LONGEVITY.
- ADJUST TO NON-COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT.
- TAKE TIME FOR REST AND RELAXATION.

