

Section 2: Performance

Now you've joined Hillingdon AC what else should you know?

A Balanced Lifestyle - Becoming a better athlete

As the athlete develops, their training and competition schedule will increase and the family may have to cope with the demands of this extra training. The family can play a major role in ensuring that young athletes lead a balanced lifestyle and that they are not over training. Parents can sometimes become over-involved thus putting pressure on an athlete. If the child is experiencing pressure within athletics it can often take away the enjoyment of the sport. Athletes should be encouraged to achieve a balance between enjoyment of the sport and celebrating success. As a parent or carer you should emphasise the importance of sport for health and reward your child's effort and success. An overall concentration on winning can create a psychological fear of failure.

Parents and carers could consider the questions below:

- Do you get frustrated if your child does not win?
- Do you feel that your child only enjoys athletics when they win?
- Do you find yourself disliking the other athletes?

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, please be aware of placing any unnecessary pressure on your child.

Clothing

Make sure that you wear suitable clothing to each training session, such as trainers, shorts/tracksuit bottoms, t-shirt and jumper. Its very important that athletes muscles do not get cold straight after training therefore it is better for you to take extra layers of clothing rather than not have enough. Waterproof clothing will be needed for wet weather whilst sun cream is necessary for warm weather.

Footwear

When purchasing new footwear for athletes it is essential that you try the trainers on, as you would wear them when running, with the laces correctly fastened. Key points to look out for are the grip on the sole of the shoe, the weight of the shoe and the support that they give you. You should also ask if there is somewhere that you can jog and stride out to test how the trainers feel when running; this can be done outside of the shop if necessary. Ask as many questions as you can about the trainers and don't be afraid to try on as many pairs until you find the right ones for you.

Apart from the odd rule in serious competitions, you don't have to worry too much about what to wear in athletics. Your hands obviously play their part in many of the events, but it's your feet which need the most care. If you are a serious athlete then a shoe designed for your event may be best, but otherwise, an ordinary trainer is fine. And it's comfort, not just the looks that are important.

When you try on a new pair, think about cushioning, support and flexibility. Cushion provides the bounce when you hit the ground, support keeps your feet in position, and flexibility helps your feet to bend freely.

Try and test them in the shop for cushion, support and flexibility before you hand over your money. HillingdonAC members get 10% discount at RunnersWorld in Eastcote and Watford. Remember that a sole that bends at the front usually offers the best support. For anybody with flat feet, support under your arches will be most comfortable and those with high arches should look for lots of cushioning. Don't squeeze your feet, but at the same time, there shouldn't be room for your feet to move from side to side and the heel to slip up and down. Just aim for a snug fit. The type and style of trainers worn is crucial for development and safety of athletes.

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Spikes are also very important and athletes must get the right spikes for their discipline i.e. sprints, distance, throws. You can also acquire multi-event spikes for all round competitors. Spikes to be worn on the track must not exceed 6mm, as referred to in the code of conduct, and spikes to be worn in cross-countries can vary depending on the weather between 7mm to 15mm.

Nutrition

- There are clear connections between what we eat and health. It is important therefore to establish good nutritional habits from an early age
- When training hard, and particularly during growth spurts, your child will have higher energy requirements and needs to eat more
- We need nutrients in the form of protein, carbohydrates, fat and fibre in order to gain enough energy to build up the body

Does the athlete eat the right things?

- Give the athlete a balanced diet. Plenty of fruit and vegetables (five portions a day). Lots of carbohydrates, e.g. potatoes, bread, cereals, fruit.
- Avoid high fat foods, e.g. fried food, take-aways, crisps, white sauces, croissants, doughnuts, fatty meat, food with more than 4% fat content.
- A diet which is rich in Carbohydrates is recommended for athletes who train on a regular basis in order to replenish glycogen stores in their body.
- Choose healthy snacks for your child, e.g. baked beans on toast, pasta, jacket potato, energy and muesli bars, banana and jam sandwiches, dried fruit
- Does the athlete eat at the right times?
breakfast is the most important meal of the day
they should eat within 30 minutes of finishing exercise (including every training session and competition), as this is the best time to refuel muscles and speed recovery (take a banana to training and drink).
- you will get to know your own body and how close you can eat to competition training. Try to eat 3-4 hrs before. This will ensure that the brain as well as the muscles will have enough fuel for the competition
- there is a food record sheet in this pack which you may find useful.

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Optimal Nutrition for Exercise and Sport

Energy needs differ substantially among individuals. Factors such as age, gender, size and environment influence daily caloric output.

Nutrients are chemicals that fulfil specific functions in the body. They provide energy, furnish structural components to construct body tissues, and supply regulators to control metabolic functions. Example sources of the nutrients are listed below:

Nutrient	Plant Source	Animal Source
Carbohydrates	Bread, cereals, pastas, fruits and vegetables	
Protein	Dried beans, peas and nuts	Fish, poultry, meat, milk and cheese
Fat	Margarine, vegetable oils, salad dressings	Lard, butter
Vitamin A	Dark green leafy vegetables, yellow vegetables	Butter, fortified milk, liver, margarine
Vitamin C	Citrus fruits, broccoli, strawberries, tomatoes, cabbage, dark green leafy vegetables	Liver
Vitamin B1	Breads, cereals, nuts	Pork, ham
Vitamin B2	Breads, cereals	Milk, cheese, liver
Niacin	Breads, cereals, nuts	Fish, poultry, meat
Iron	Dried peas and beans, spinach, asparagus, prune juice	Meat, Liver
Calcium	Turnip, greens, okra, broccoli, spinach	Milk, cheese, mackerel, salmon

Source: www.kidsfirstsoccer.com

Fluid and Keeping Hydrated

- it is vital that your child drinks at least two litres of fluids a day such as water and other still drinks, especially when exercising. This is because fluid is lost during exercise and a lack of fluids can result in dehydration, which can affect health as well as performance. This is important even with a short exercise session
- encourage your child to be organised and take drinks to training in a bottle, as appropriate drinks may not be available at the venue
- it is best for your child to drink water or juice rather than fizzy drinks or tea and coffee
- your child should not experiment with new sports drinks on the day of competition. Try the drink in the weeks leading up to a competition and use what they are familiar and feel comfortable with
- a good indicator of good hydration is when urine is straw-coloured and plentiful.
- Drink 500ml 2 hours before exercising
- Drink 500ml for every 40 minutes of exercise - you should ensure you take regular sips throughout your session.
- Continue to drink after exercising for 1 – 2 hours.

Water for performance

A loss of water that exceeds 2% of one's body weight significantly impairs endurance performance.

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Food Record

	Meal & time	Type of food or drink	Quantity
Morning			
Afternoon			
Evening			

Recommended Daily Portions

(Number of servings)

Did you achieve ? (tick as appropriate)

- Water - > 3 litres / day
- Fruit & Vegetables > 5 portions / day
- Milk & Dairy > 3 portions / day
- Luxuries < 1-2 portions / day
- Carbohydrate at every meal
- Protein at every meal

Daily Food Rating

3= Good 2= Okay 1= Poor

Quantity _____

Quality _____

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A Balanced Lifestyle

Tips on dealing with injuries

- all children who participate in any type of sport risk getting injured. However with good coaching, taking good care of themselves - not over training, taking sufficient rest etc; the risk of injury is lowered considerably
- Rest, Ice, Compression & Elevation (RICE) is a tried and tested procedure when dealing with soft tissue injuries such as swelling and bruising
- the best ice pack is ice crushed into a wet flannel and applied for up to 20 minutes. Repeat every few hours
- rest and only return when fully recovered to ensure that the injury is not aggravated
- always seek medical advice if there is any possibility of a head injury
- if in doubt, always seek advice from a doctor or qualified physiotherapist.

Anti-doping advice for parents of young athletes taking part in competition

- Competing in sport drug free should be important to all athletes! If you are a parent of a young athlete who competes in athletics you and your child will need to be aware of the anti doping rules and what your child needs to do to ensure they compete drug free.
- It is important that your child understands that sport is about performing and competing to the very best of their natural ability. If they use prohibited substances or methods to enhance their performance they are cheating themselves, their competitors and their sport. They will get caught.
- Your child must also be careful that they don't accidentally take a banned substance. The principle of strict liability means that an athlete who has a prohibited substance in their sample is responsible for explaining how it got there.
- Many common medications contain prohibited substances. If your child is competing in athletics it is important they check that their medication does not contain a substance which is on the prohibited list. You can do this by checking the Drug Information Database (DID) at www.uk sport.gov.uk/did.
- DID is the most comprehensive and up-to-date drug information service available to athletes and will advise you of the status of registered UK medicines. You can also phone their Drug Information Line on 0800 528 0004 or email drug-free@uksport.gov.uk.

Asthma Inhalers and Therapeutic Use Exemptions

- If your child is asthmatic and uses an inhaler to treat this, they will need to register this with UK Athletics. This principal applies to all prescribed medication containing prohibited substances.
- Please visit the Anti Doping section of the UK Athletics website: www.ukathletics.net where you will be able to find out more information and download the relevant forms. Alternatively you can call the Anti Doping Coordinator, David Herbert, on 0870 998 6732.
- If you have any further questions regarding drugs in sport please email UK Athletics at antidoping@ukathletics.org.uk or call 0870 998 6732

Drug Testing

- Tests and controls are conducted to ensure the rules of sport are followed, and according to these rules doping is forbidden. Drug testing is there to protect the integrity and reputation of drug free athletes as well as to detect athletes who are determined to have misused prohibited substances or methods to enhance their performance.

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- Drug tests can be conducted in or out of competition. The main advantage of out of competition testing is that athletes can be tested anywhere, anytime with no advance notice.
- Testing is normally only carried out on national and international level athletes however UK Athletics' Rules do allow testing on any athlete
- If you have any further questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the Anti Doping department of UK Athletics

Event Information

Distances above 200m are restricted in some age groups. Check with your coach!

100m - The 100 metres is a fast explosive power event.

200m - The 200 metres requires similar skills and abilities as the 100 metres, but clearly the ability to maintain a high speed over the additional distance is very important.

300m/400m - The 400 metres for senior sprint athletes is considered to be the ultimate test as it relies upon speed, strength and endurance.

600m/800m - 800 metres athletes have to cover two laps of the track. The event requires a tremendous amount of speed, strength and endurance.

1500m - The 1500 metres is one of the middle distance events. For this event you run three and three quarter times around the track.

3000m Steeplechase - The 3000 metre steeplechase is run over 28 hurdles and seven water jumps, each being 91.4 centimetres in height (for men & women).

5000m - The 5000 metres is traditionally the first event that would be categorised, as 'long distance' and good levels of stamina are required but also a turn of speed. This race is twelve and a half laps of the track and therefore is not suitable for children. It is advisable that children concentrate on developing their skills at shorter distances (check the rules with your coach!).

10000m - The 10,000 metres requires great amounts of strength and stamina over the 25 laps of the running track.

Marathon - The marathon covers a distance of 26 miles 385 yards (42,195 metres). The first major marathon was that held in the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens from the village of Marathon to the Olympic Stadium in Athens. The distance as above was established at the 1908 Olympic Games in London when the course was adjusted so that the finishing line was in front of the royal box at the White City Stadium in London. As the marathon covers such a long distance the minimum age you have to be to run the distance is eighteen years old.

20 & 50K Walks - The rules state that walking is: - '**A progression of steps so that unbroken contact with ground is maintained**'. These walks cover a very long distance in which only senior athletes should attempt. However there is no reason why you cannot practice the walking technique over much shorter distances.

Sprint Hurdles - Hurdles is a fast, explosive power event in which athletes have to sprint and clear barriers. The hurdles is a fast running event in which children can hurdle over low obstacles as opposed to proper hurdles. It is important that a young athlete learns to run with a good technique in between the hurdles.

300m/400m Hurdles - The 400 metre hurdles is an ultimate test as it relies upon the speed of a sprinter, the strength and endurance to maintain that speed over the longer distance and also the ability to clear the hurdles.

4 x 100m relay - Four athletes are needed to make up a team and each athlete has to take their turn to run 100 metres whilst transporting the baton to the next athlete around the track. The athletes must make sure that they pass the baton over in the correct change over area and be careful not to drop the baton. The winners are the first team across the line who complete this successfully.

The British 4x100m men's team ran a fantastic race to win the Gold Medal in the 2004 Olympics in Athens. The relay is a very enjoyable and competitive team activity for children to take part in. They can practice their technique at passing the baton to one another and have races over shorter distances. They could also vary the amount of runners in your teams for fun races.

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4x400m relay - Four athletes are needed to make up a team and each athlete has to take their turn to run 400 metres whilst transporting the baton around the track to the next athlete. The athletes must make sure that they pass the baton over in the correct change over area and be careful not to drop the baton, though change over is much easier than the faster 4 x 100 metre relay event. All Combined events require great amounts of speed, strength, agility and endurance along with the ability to compete consistently in all the events.

Decathlon - The Decathlon comprises of ten events which male athletes compete in over two days. On day one the athletes have to compete in the 100 metres, followed then by the long jump, shot putt, high jump and 400 metres. On the second day, they have to do the 110 metres hurdles, followed by the discus, pole vault, javelin and 1,500 metres. Athletes score points depending on how fast they have run, or the distance they have jumped, thrown or vaulted.

Heptathlon - The heptathlon comprises of seven events which female athletes compete in over two days. On day one the athletes have to compete in the 100 metre hurdles, followed by the high jump, shot putt and 200 metres. On the second day, they have to do the long jump, javelin, and finally the 800 metres. Athletes score points depending on how fast they have ran, or distance they have jumped or thrown.

Combined events

Male - Due to the nature of combined events, children should not compete in triathlon competitions until they are 13 years old. When they are in the under 15 category, they can compete in the Pentathlon (five events) which is held over one day and includes the 80m hurdles, shot putt, long jump, high jump and 800 metres. As an under 17 athlete they can compete in the Octathlon (eight events) which includes the long jump, discus, javelin, 400 metres, 100 metre hurdles, high jump, shot putt and 1,500 metres. Only when they reach the under 20 category can they compete in the full decathlon event.

Female - When they are in the under 15 category, they can compete in the Pentathlon (five events) which is held over one day and includes the 75m Hurdles, Shot Putt, High Jump, Long Jump and 800m. Girls in the under 17 category can take part in the heptathlon but the normal 100 metre hurdles are ran over the shorter distance of 80 metres. Only when they reach the under 20 category can they compete in the full heptathlon event.

Individual disciplines

Discus - The discus is one of the events that was held in the ancient Olympic Games. The requirements of the event are strength, explosive speed and control. The discus is released after a rotation around the circle. A young athlete may start their training for throwing using a cricket or rounders ball or a discus made of foam, which can be used safely indoors, or outside.

Hammer - A spectacular event in which strength, explosive speed and control are all essential. The hammer is released after a rotation around the circle. Again, the young athlete will not use a full weight hammer until they are a senior athlete. They may start their training using a cricket or rounders ball or a soft foam hammer that can be used indoors or outdoors. Hoops or quoits may also be used to practice.

Javelin - A spectacular event, in which the competitors hurl the spear like implement which, for the top male performers, is nearly the length of the infield (nearly as far as the 100 metres!). As with the hammer, the young athlete will probably start training for this event by throwing other implements such as soft foam javelins or a cricket / rounders ball.

Shot - This is the projecting of a solid metal ball from within the confines of a concrete circle. The requirements of the event are strength, explosive speed and control. The shot is released after a glide or rotation round the circle. Famous past and present UK shot athletes include Carl Myerscough and Judy Oakes. Shot putts are very heavy! It is therefore advised that the young athlete practices by throwing cricket or rounders balls. If the young athlete is in year six at school (10-11 years old) they can practice putting the shot (2.72kg maximum).

High Jump - The high jump involves athletes jumping over a horizontal bar without knocking it off. The high jump bar is raised each time the athletes successfully clear each height. The most common technique used by senior athletes is called the Fosbury Flop. There are two high jump techniques that you can use, the scissor jump and the Fosbury flop. It is advised that the young athlete practices and develop their skills at the scissor jump first.

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Long Jump - The long jump is a sequence of movements from the run up, to taking off from the board, to the movement whilst jumping, and the landing in the sand. The young athlete can take part in lots of different jumping activities that will improve their long jumping skills. They may often begin by practicing the standing long jump before combining both the run up and the jump. It is good for them to master the long jump technique first.

Triple Jump - Formerly called the 'Hop, Step, Jump'. A high degree of flexibility, control, speed and strength is required to master this event. _ Boys and girls under the age of 11 are not allowed to compete in the triple jump, as it is a very difficult event that puts great amounts of pressure on your body.

Pole Vault - One of the most spectacular of the field events in which a combination of strength, speed, agility and gymnastic skills are all called upon. In competition terms, the pole vault is generally an activity for older athletes. However, the young athlete can practice various activities that will help them to develop the skills they need to be good at the pole vault when they are older. These may include swinging activities that they can practice on climbing frames, trapezes and ropes. Backward rolls, cartwheels and handstands are also useful to develop key skills.

Planning

Ensuring that your daily commitments compliment your training is an important part of becoming a champion. Mark / shade each box against the activity you are doing at that time. Show this to your coach and use it to discuss ways in which you make your time even more effective.

- Plan your week so that training sessions are completed, similar for homework and revision. Keep a diary showing when projects have to be submitted and keep to the deadlines
- Keep a routine and get plenty of rest. Remember the body recovers whilst it is resting so resting is as important as training.
- Ask your club secretary for a copy of the UK Athletics clubs medical resource: it has lots of tips on how to stay injury free and ensure you recover properly from your training sessions. (If your club does not have a resource, contact UK Athletics clubs services on 0870 998 6800)

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Training Diary

This type of record can help you keep organised with your training and enable you to reflect on your progress

Date	Venue	Time	Activity	Weather condition	Completed (tick)	Session notes
e.g. 09/12/08	Uxbridge track	7-9pm	6x 200m (walk back recovery)	Wet	✓	All runs within 30 seconds, felt good.

Training Tips

Remember: Make good practice permanent - ensure that you carry out every aspect of your training perfectly. Ensure you drink plenty of fluid before, during and after your training. Also have a good meal after training to guarantee the body refuels ready for the next session.

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Planning

Individual Competition Record

By using this record after each competition you may then be able to evaluate your season and plan new ways to improve.

Event:	Date:
Venue:	Time:
Conditions:	
What did I want from this competition:	
Result:	
What did I do well:	
What I need to improve on:	
Actions/conditions:	
Coach's thoughts:	