



# YOUTH TEAM PARENT'S GUIDE



## WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

We're excited to have your family join us this season! There's a lot to look forward to, but before we begin, here are a few tips to help you and your child have a positive season.

### Encourage Communication

Encourage your child to communicate with their coach with any questions they may have regarding training, competitions, injuries, recovery, etc. We strive to empower each team member with the ability to openly and confidently communicate with his or her coach. If a solution cannot be found between the athlete and coach, we then recommend a parent join the discussion.

### Report Aches and Pains to Your Coach

Check in with your child and urge them to let the coaches know if they are experiencing aches and pains. Our coaches can help athletes decide what is normal and what needs attention. This is an important step to prevent injuries and reduce the "pain and suffering" of running.

### Encourage Hydration

Most kids who participate in sports do not stay adequately hydrated throughout their competition season. Make sure your child brings a water bottle to school and drinks throughout the day, especially during lunch. It takes weeks to become fully hydrated. Headaches, abdominal cramps, muscle cramps/twitches, and fatigue can be prevented by being hydrated. In addition to drinking plenty of water, your child will need to consume beverages that include electrolytes to stay properly hydrated. Coconut water and Powerade are good options to choose from.

### Encourage Adequate Sleep

Encourage your child to get to bed as early as they can. Getting adequate sleep is challenging for many students, but sleep is key to optimum performance on the course and in school.

### Stretch, Stretch, Stretch

Have your child stretch, and then stretch some more. The Big 5 Stretches listed on the final page of this document are great for improving recovery and flexibility within the major muscle groups.

### Use a Foam Roller

Move the coffee table and let your runner use a "stick" or foam roller to help actively recover sore and tired muscles. Learn more about foam rolling techniques by watching this video: [bit.ly/2OTkDRj](https://bit.ly/2OTkDRj)

### Use Epsom Salts

Have your runner use epsom salts in a hot, soaking bath to relax and calm muscles. Magnesium is absorbed through the skin, and having some epsom salts even on the floor of the shower will help. Add a cup full to their bath or shower.

### Add Protein

Muscle recovery requires protein. Aim to have your runner to eat/drink 15-20 grams of protein within 15 minutes of finishing practice to maximize its benefit. Urge your runner to keep protein bars in their bag to eat right after practice or have them try Core Power or a protein drink if they need a change from bars. Chocolate milk is a great recovery drink and is offered frequently after practice during the season.



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## **Eat Fruits & Vegetables**

A good goal is to eat five kinds of vegetable and two kinds of fruit each day such as kale, spinach, broccoli, berries, bananas and oranges. These foods are rich in needed vitamins/minerals, phytochemicals, and fiber.

## **Energize with Carbs**

Athletes should eat carbs at regular intervals throughout the day. Complex carbs such as bread, pasta, cereal, potatoes, beans, fruit and milk are great sources of energy.

## **Make School Lunch Healthy**

Your runner's school lunch should include protein, complex carbs, fruits and vegetables so they are well fueled for practice. Check in with your runner and make sure they are eating well-rounded meals at school as well as staying hydrated throughout the day.

## **Iron, Vitamins and Calcium**

Speak to your pediatrician about your child taking an iron supplement, a multivitamin, or a calcium supplement. Some teen endurance athletes have an increased need for iron, vitamins, and minerals in addition to what they get from a well-balanced, nutrient-rich diet.

## **Wear the Right Shoes**

Be ready to buy new shoes for your child. Make sure that the cushioning and support in their shoes are in good shape. Check the bottoms for wear. We recommend visiting your local specialty running store and speaking with an employee to learn more about what running shoes are best for your child.

## **Add Some Cross Training**

Have your child cross train when they can. Play some soccer or basketball every once in a while. A strong core and strong arms are essential to proper running form and can make running easier.

## **Dress Appropriately**

During warm days, athletes should wear shorts and a T-shirt/singlet to practice. During cold days, athletes should wear layers. Bring warm, athletic attire to wear during their warm ups with shorts and a T-shirt underneath to wear during the workouts.

## **Stay in the Loop**

During the season, team members' parents/guardians will receive weekly emails from their child's coach including information on upcoming workouts and competitions. Parents/guardians will also have access to the team's Facebook group page, which will include team photos and information on a range of topics including nutrition and recovery best practices. Please read each email carefully and respond to questions and requests made by the coaches.

## **Get Involved**

Parents are encouraged to help cheer on and support each of the team's members during practices and competitions. Parents will receive weekly emails from their child's coach with information on how they can volunteer at upcoming practices and competitions.

## **Spread the Word**

Help the Atlanta Track Club Youth Team grow by sharing your positive experiences with family, friends and colleagues who have middle school age children.

## **Register Respectfully**

Only register for meets that you are certain your child will be competing in. If your child will not be able to compete in a meet that he or she is registered for, let your child's coach know at least 24 hours before the meet.



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## The Big 5 Stretches

Having your child do these five key stretches after practice each day will help improve their recovery and flexibility within the major muscle groups. Foam rolling can also help quicken the recovery process. Learn more about foam rolling techniques by watching this video: [bit.ly/2OTkDRj](https://bit.ly/2OTkDRj)



### Hamstrings

Standing on two feet, rotate the toes in with the heels apart, reach down and touch the toes. Stand up and turn the toes out with the heels together, reach down and touch the toes.



### Hip Flexors

Take a small lunging step, keeping the back leg straight. Reach up with the opposite arm. The arm that goes up is the same side as the leg that is back and straight. You should feel this in the front of your hip in the leg that is back. Switch sides.



### Quads

Firmly plant one leg, reach back with the other leg bent behind you and pull your foot back and out - holding it at the toe. You should feel this stretch throughout the front of your leg. Switch sides.



### Calves

While standing with one knee slightly bent under the body, straighten the other leg and place it in front of the body. Reach down toward your toes while keeping your front leg as straight as you can. Switch sides.



### Glutes

While standing on one leg, pull up the opposite leg while bending the knee. Rotate the foot toward the opposite knee using one hand on the foot and other on the knee. Pull the foot and knee evenly. Balance the foot on the opposite knee. A deeper stretch can be felt by holding a quarter squat while resting the foot/ankle on the opposite knee. Switch sides.

Modification: While facing a wall, take a step back with one foot. Keep that leg straight and bend the front knee. You should feel the stretch in the straight back leg keeping the heel on the ground. After 15-20 seconds slightly bend the back leg while keeping the heel on the ground.