

# Cross



# country

**RUN JUMP THROW**

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# RJT Cross Country

This section has been designed to help schools and clubs develop fun and varied cross country or distance running sessions for children. Some children find running difficult and often don't enjoy the annual school cross country. This section pulls together fun games and activities that enable kids to practise the skills of running in a way that builds endurance while having fun.

The Run Jump Throw philosophy that children should be able to learn skills in a fun, non-threatening environment is applied here. All games in this section are fully inclusive and can be modified to meet the needs of the whole group. All children should be able to achieve success and individual effort should be recognised. The emphasis should be learning and building endurance through fun and play rather than drills and long repetitive runs.

## Setting up a Cross Country Course

A good cross country course is:

- ▶ Easy to follow and interesting.
- ▶ Has obstacles or hurdles.
- ▶ Has hills but not too long or steep.
- ▶ A bit of water or mud is also fun.

## Recommended Distances

Distances should be long enough so that children are not tempted to sprint the whole way and short enough so they don't stress participants. The effort should be aerobic which means that the children should be able to talk to each other while running.

### Recommended distances for timed runs

- ▶ 6-7 year olds – 1000m.
- ▶ 8-9 year olds – 1000-1500.
- ▶ 10-11 year olds – 1000-2000m.

### Recommended time on task in activities to develop Endurance

- ▶ 6-7 year olds – 3-8 minutes.
- ▶ 8-9 year olds – 4-10 minutes.
- ▶ 10-11 year olds – 5-15 minutes.

## Games and Activities

Enjoyment and variety are the keys to any successful running/walking programme.

The objective in cross country related sessions is to have children running, jogging or walking continuously for around 10 mins. A great way to do this is through fun games.

## Exploring Space and Direction

### Equipment

- ▶ Cones/markers.
- ▶ Hall, grass area or hard surface.

### Instructions

Children to run in the following ways

- ▶ Forwards.
- ▶ Backwards.
- ▶ Sideways.
- ▶ Curved.
- ▶ Zig Zag.
- ▶ Around objects.

In pairs, explore a path, one child copying/following the other. Then change. As you run, make shapes, letters etc.



# Running for Endurance I

The focus for this card is exploring running for endurance. This includes running in a relaxed style and exploring different paces.

## Key Skill Criteria

- ▶ Running with a mid foot contact instead of a fore foot (balls of feet) contact used in running for speed.
  - ▶ Posture - ears above shoulders, shoulders above hips and hips above ankles.
  - ▶ Running with relaxed arms – arm action will be a little lower than for running for speed and a little more relaxed.
  - ▶ Hands should be relaxed – like holding on to eggshells.
  - ▶ The torso and hips should be kept square to the front – there should only be a little shoulder movement and no rotation of the body.
  - ▶ Knee lift is lower than for running for speed – the knee should still come through in a straight path.
  - ▶ An even rhythm is important.
- Note:** Before any participant attempts timed runs or races, he/she should have a good background of steady running and running activities. It is preferable to use soft surfaces because there will be less stress on their legs.



## Verbal Cues:

- Even rhythm – stay relaxed.
- Landing on the mid sole of the foot.
- Lower knee lift and arm drive.
- Eyes focused forward.

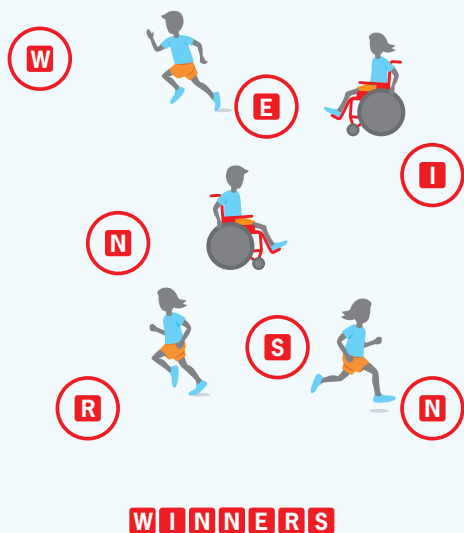
# Break the Code

## EQUIPMENT

- Cards with letters on them.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Set up up to 7 stations, 150-300m apart.
- Split group into smaller groups, 3-4 people per group.
- At each station have either a person who writes a letter from a pre-selected word on the participant's card, or a big card with the letter on it and the participant writes it down.
- Participants run to each station to get the letter for that station.
- Remind people to run at a comfortable pace, it is not a race.
- At the end, participants unscramble the letters to make the word – e.g. fitness.
- Groups can go to the stations in any order, but will need to collect ALL letters before heading back to the start to unscramble their word.



**Q:** Where should your eyes look when running towards a target?

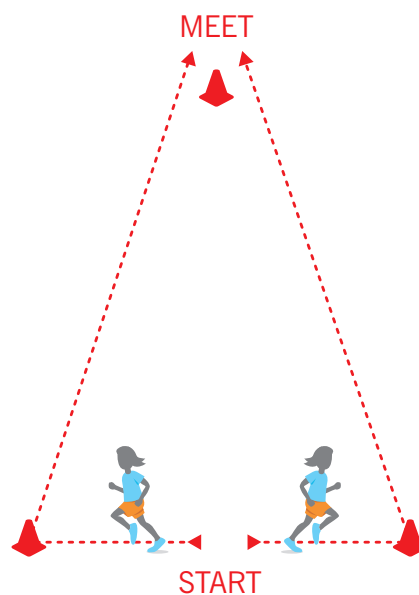
# Opposite Pairs Run

## EQUIPMENT

- Cones / Markers

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Mark out a circuit of about 500m with the midway point marked.
- Divide group into pairs.
- Each pair runs in the opposite direction around the circuit and attempts to pass their partner at the halfway point – if they don't meet, they wait at the midway mark, then complete the lap.
- On the second lap they meet halfway again, waiting if necessary, then run for home to gain a point against their partner.
- The first lap and half the second lap should be run at a comfortable pace.



**Q:** How can you and your partner work better together?

Make sure everyone is involved and enjoying the games. To vary or modify a game, think about which STEP you can change:

**S**  
SPACE

**T**  
TASK

**E**  
EQUIPMENT

**P**  
PEOPLE