

What is Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD)?



Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) is a model which describes what should be done at specific ages and stages of development. This is a model for development in physical activity and sport to provide a safe, enjoyable and progressive pathway for children to pursue healthy physical activity along with a pathway to excellence.

One of the goals of the LTAD model is Physical Literacy. Physical literacy is defined as the mastery of fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills. A physically literate person moves with poise, and confidence in a wide variety of physically challenging situations, is perceptive in reading all aspects of the physical environment. Athletes anticipate the movement needs or possibilities, and responds appropriately with intelligence and imagination.

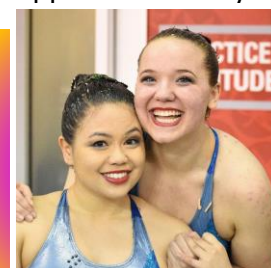
USA Synchro has began implementing its own LTAD model for synchronized swimming. LTAD begins with our new pre-school program through the active for life stages based on the various research and studies available and what other sports and countries have created. The principles which underpin the LTAD are equally applicable to people of all ages and abilities whether they are participating in elite sport or recreational physical activity.



The 10 S's...

LTAD looks at **10 S's** of Training and Performance that describe 10 distinct capacities of the athlete. The first five focus on physical literacy: Stamina, Strength, Speed, Skill and Suppleness (flexibility). The next five focus on the holistic development: (P)sychology, Structure/Stature, Sustenance, Schooling, Socio-Cultural.

Each of these 10 capacities is trainable throughout an athlete's lifetime. However, research shows that there are sensitive periods of accelerated adaptation to training when each of the first five capacities is especially receptive to training. If these sensitive periods are missed, the athlete may never grow to have as much stamina, strength, speed, skill and suppleness as they could have had. There are also other considerations in trainability.



What are Grade Levels?

The Grade Level Program is designed to monitor the skill development of the athletes and coaches. The program offers an analytical approach to provide educational opportunities in areas we may be weak.

As of 2020, USA Artistic Swimming offers 6 grade levels. No other levels are planned at this time. Each level is targeted for a specific age and skill ability to compete at multiple competition levels. The plan, as of 2020, is to continue to only require Levels 1&2 for National Junior Olympics.

With the decrease of physical education at schools, the grade level system encourages the development of general athletic skills required for synchronized swimmers.

What is my role as a Parent?

A Parents' role in managing the athlete's schedule decreases as the swimmer becomes older and more independent. Each year the athlete will take on more responsibility in regards to their training.

Parents should take an active role in helping the athlete understand the culture of their team, like being on time to practice and being a supportive teammate. More importantly, continue to teach your child about humility, self-confidence, work ethic, fitness and the responsibility of being a part of a team. These are the skills which will build a champion in and out of the pool.

It is important that parents continue to offer unconditional support and a positive approach while allowing the athlete and coach to make the best decisions with respect to training and competition.



General Information



=> Member of USA Artistic Swimming

=> A swimmer may compete as many grades as they want or need per year.

=> Athletes must pass a grade level before being able to move up to the next one.

=> Grade level evaluations are done at a club or association level event.

=> Athlete's progress is monitored in the USA Artistic Swimming database.

=> An athlete can participate with another club or association in a grade level competition.

=> Assessors must be a Level 2 or higher Coach and a Level 2F or higher Judge and have been trained on the skills to be assessed.

=> The Grade Level Manual can be found on the USA Artistic Swimming website under Resources – Coaches.

=> Competition fees are \$15/Level 1, \$20/Level 2, \$25 for Levels 3-6.

=> Hosts may want to consider adding a sponsor fee to help offset expenses.

=> An athlete may retake a level as many times as needed.

=> Grade level certifications never expire.

=> All Levels requirements can be found in the Grade Levels Manual.



1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909
Phone: (719) 866-2219