

# LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN SPORTS

## WHAT ARE LIFE SKILLS?

Life skills are important social and emotional abilities that can help student-athletes navigate everyday life, cope with stressors, and find success in and out of sport. They can be taught as an add on or embedded in drills throughout practice.<sup>1</sup>

2, 3, 4, 5, 6

## LIFE SKILLS LEARNED THROUGH SPORT PARTICIPATION:

LEADERSHIP

TENACITY

CHARACTER

RESILIENCE

TEAMWORK

PROBLEM  
SOLVING

COMMUNICATION

EMOTIONAL  
REGULATION

EMPATHY

“LIFE SKILLS ARE TAUGHT NOT CAUGHT.”<sup>2</sup>

### STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING LIFE SKILLS

#### Be intentional:<sup>3,7</sup>

- Prioritize life skills development in your coaching philosophy.
- Build strong relationships.
- Model and observe the life skills you wish to teach.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for practicing life skills.

#### Give feedback:

- Make feedback relative to the life skill.
- Focus on improvement and effort.
- Provide feedback that is individualized, specific, congruent, and timely.

#### Use behavioral reinforcements:

- Give out tangible incentives to reinforce behavior and provide feedback (e.g., choose music for the bus, tokens/buttons) that matches the desired behavior.
- Use reinforcements in combination with other strategies (e.g., praise).
- Make sure they are practical, easily used, and distributed often.

#### Be sure to debrief:

- Facilitate life skill transfer by asking what, so what, and now what questions.<sup>8,9</sup>
- Use huddles, journals, and “teachable moments” to foster life skill application to other settings.

Interested in learning more? Visit [go.osu.edu/coachbeyond](https://go.osu.edu/coachbeyond) or email [coach\\_beyond@osu.edu](mailto:coach_beyond@osu.edu) for additional trainings and resources!

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# STRESS BALL BASKETBALL

You are going to play stress ball basketball! The goal is to make as many “baskets” as you can with 5 chances to shoot a stress ball. Use the table below to track your progress. Write your name and goal in the scoreboard below to begin!

Name	Goal ( <i>Out of 5</i> )	Total “Baskets” ( <i>Out of 5</i> )

Name one life skill you might teach using this activity:

## EXAMPLES OF DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

**WHAT?**

**SO  
WHAT?**

**NOW  
WHAT?**

<i>What happened?</i>	<i>Why is it important?</i>	<i>Where else can you apply learnings?</i>
What did we do in the drill?	How did [insert life skill] help you be successful?	You used [insert life skills] here. How can you use it outside of the gym?
What were the tactics, and/or techniques you used in this drill?	Why is it important we practice [insert life skill]?	Where else might [insert life skill] be helpful?
What life skills did you use in this drill?	Did you improve at [insert life skill]?	Where else can you practice [insert life skill]?

### References

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