



Adapting and Modifying

Make sure everyone is challenged and participates to their full potential while maintaining the integrity of the activity

How do you adapt or modify sport?

Being inclusive is about providing a broad range of options to cater for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Sometimes this may mean modifying a sport to provide a more appropriate version for a particular group of participants.

Modifying the rules or even the competition structure of a sport is nothing new. In fact, most national sporting organisations in Australia provide modified versions of sports for their junior programs. For example, Basketball Australia has developed Aussie Hoops, AFL provides Auskick, Cricket Australia provides In2CRICKET, Athletics Australia has Little Athletics and Hockey Australia has developed Minkey hockey — these are just a few examples of national sporting organisations modifying the way their sports are delivered to make them more inclusive, safe and fun for younger players.

This strategy also enables new rules and equipment to be introduced as players mature and their skills improve. Modifying sport to include people with disability is no different. In some cases, people with disability can be included with no modifications at all, and in other situations some modifications may be needed.

The purpose of adapting and modifying sport is to minimise or eliminate disadvantage caused by the environment in which a sport is played. Modifications may only be minor — where a change in a rule or piece of equipment is straightforward and immediate to implement — yet may provide significant assistance to an individual. Sometimes major modifications are necessary, particularly for people with high support needs. These modifications may require some planning in advance or may be ad hoc.



Remember, it is important to view all modifications as temporary: they should be continually reviewed and may need to be phased out over time. Modifications are just another step toward a program that is suitable for all abilities. Some modifications may become accepted as part of the regular program, like the modifications in the previously mentioned junior sport programs.

The TREE model

The TREE model is a practical tool based on the social environmental approach to disability. It is designed to help you modify your activities or programs.

There are four essential elements of an activity that can be modified to make it more inclusive.

Teaching style

Rules

Equipment

Environments



Teaching style

Teaching style refers to the way the sport or activity is communicated to the participants. The way an activity is delivered can have a significant impact on how inclusive it is. Using a combination of some of the following strategies will help to ensure you communicate in an effective and appropriate manner:

- Be aware of all of the participants in your group.
- Ensure participants are correctly positioned (for example, within visual range) to maximise the impact of your instruction and demonstration.
- Use appropriate language for the group.
- Use visual aids and demonstrations.
- Use a buddy system.
- Use appropriate physical assistance: guide a participant's body parts through a movement.
- Keep instructions short and to the point.
- Check for understanding.

Rules

Rules may be simplified or changed and then re-introduced as skill levels increase. There are several strategies you can use:

- Allow for more bounces in a game such as tennis or table tennis.
- Allow for multiple hits or a bounce in a sport such as volleyball.
- Have a greater number of players on a team to reduce the amount of activity required by each player.
- Reduce the amount of players to allow greater freedom of movement.
- Regularly substitute players.
- Allow substitute runners in sports such as softball and cricket.
- Vary time restrictions.
- Allow different point scoring systems.
- Vary passing styles: try bouncing, rolling or underarm toss, instead of overarm throw.
- Reduce competitive elements.

Equipment

Strategies for equipment:

- Use lighter bats or racquets and/or shorter handles.
- Use lighter, bigger and/or slower bouncing balls, or balls with bells inside.
- Use equipment that contrasts with the playing area: white markers on grass, fluoro balls.

Environments

Strategies for modifying environment:

- Reduce the size of the court or playing area.
- Use a smooth or indoor surface rather than grass.
- Lower net heights in sports such as volleyball or tennis.
- Use zones within the playing area.
- Minimise distractions in the surrounding area.

Things to consider

Remember the following points:

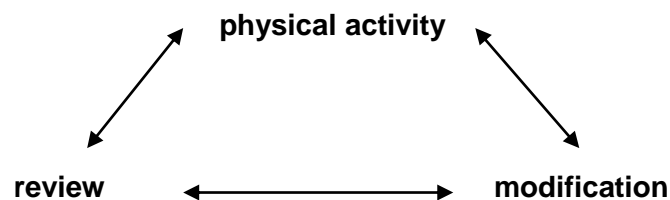
- Change part of an activity, for example, allowing a person with vision impairment to hit off a tee might enable them to participate in a game of softball or baseball.
- Changes do not have to be permanent: some may be phased out over time as skills and confidence increase.
- Try as much as possible to include all of the members of your group in the game. Question group members, when appropriate, as they will be your best source of solutions.
- Always maintain the integrity of the game: do not modify a game so much that it no longer resembles the game you were playing at the outset. Always be conscious of keeping all participants challenged. It may not be necessary to modify the game's rules or equipment for everybody to include one person — it may only require a change for that one person.

- There are situations where including everybody all the time may not be possible. Safety considerations are always a priority for each individual and the entire group. Use your common sense.

The inclusion process

The following model illustrates the process of inclusion and can help to identify the need for changes in how activities are delivered.

It also provides a way of checking the effectiveness of changes already made. It simply describes how you can examine what you do and work out how you can improve it. The process is cyclical: the regular program is reviewed, modifications are made and the new activity becomes an improved regular one. The ultimate goal is to finish with a program or sport that is inclusive but not actually labelled as such.



Reviews may happen in a variety of ways: they can be made by an individual as the activity is happening, or by a group of key people responsible for the program. The reviews may be minor or major.

In simple terms, the model depicts the need for change. If people with disability are excluded from an activity then changes need to be considered and action to take place to make things change. The inclusion process merely puts this within a framework and provides a focus for the change.

