

Long-term athlete development

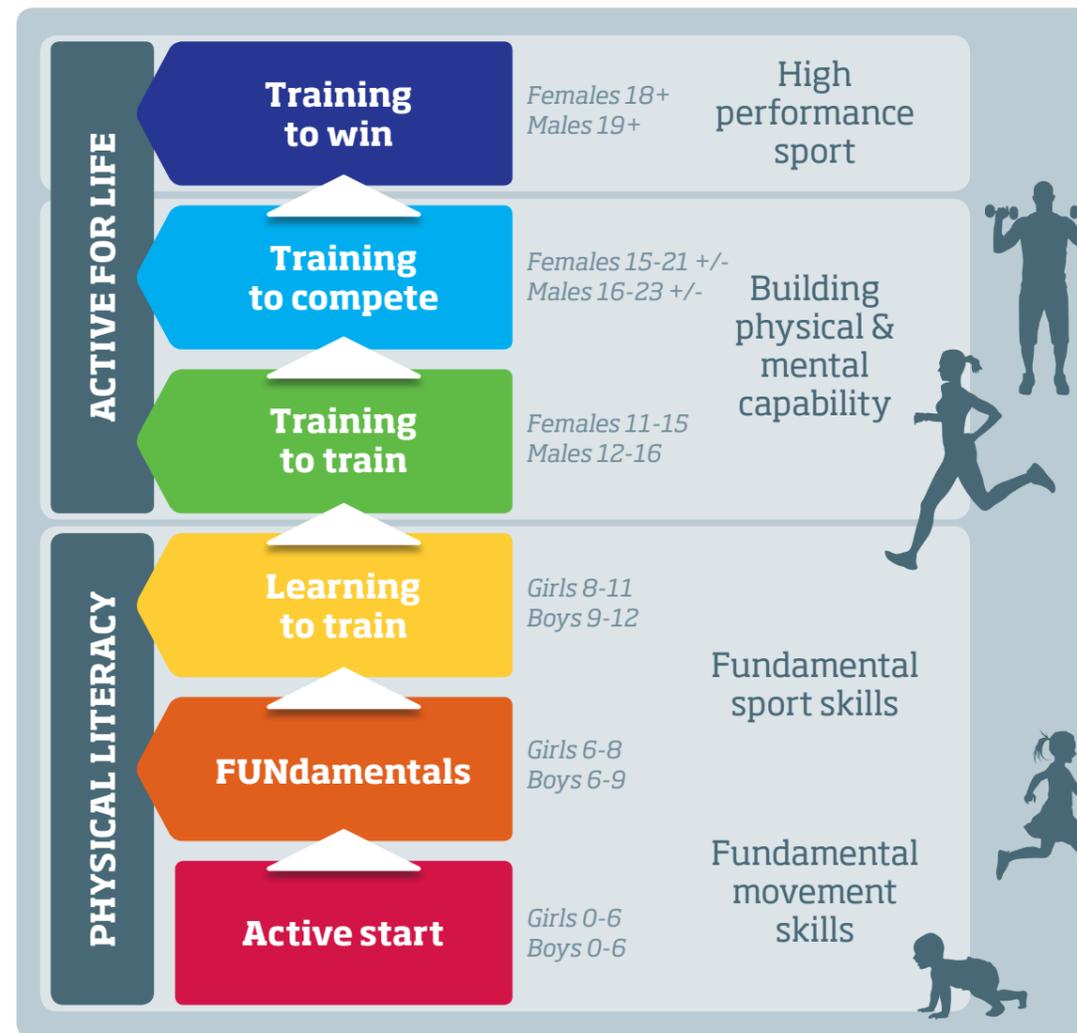
What, why and how

What is LTAD?

The LTAD model is a **participant-centred approach to the delivery of sport**. It seeks to **maximise everyone's participation and potential in sport, not just that of performance athletes**. It does so by providing a **seven-stage progression** from childhood to adulthood **focusing on key common principles of individual physical and psychological development** (see figure). The model includes the key features of the sporting experience that should be present at each stage to ensure personal potential is maximised.

In a nutshell, LTAD consists of **4 main phases** broken down into 7 stages.

- **PHASE 1** focuses on children and young people and the development of a **broad range** of FUNdamental Movement Skills (FMS) such as throwing, catching, running or jumping and Fundamental Sport Skills (FSS) like spacing, marking or basic team strategies for success. This is called Physical Literacy. These **generic skills can then be turned into sport specific skills** and tactics in due course. Active Start, FUNdamentals and Learning to Train are the three stages involved.
- In **PHASE 2**, young athletes concentrate on building the necessary physical and mental capability to be able to progressively increase performance and sustain the demands of a more intense sporting experience. This phase is sometimes referred to as the **'Building the Engine'** phase. It entails the Training to Train and Training to Compete stages.
- **PHASE 3** revolves around the **maximisation of performance** in a competitive environment. This is the Training to Win stage.
- **PHASE 4** is more like a **parallel track** for those who do not enter the performance pathway or those who have been through the other 6 stages and now wish to continue taking part in sport and physical activity for the rest of their lives. The Active for Life stage can be **accessed at any time**.



Why LTAD?

LTAD helps sports organisations, coaches and teachers plan and structure their activities in a way that ensures it fulfils the specific needs of the participants.

Particularly with regards to children, the FUNdamental movement skills and physical literacy gained early in life will have a major impact on the future development and participation of the individual.

By focusing on the specific needs of the participants at their different stages of development, LTAD helps coaches and teachers:

- Maximise enjoyment and individual potential and development by focusing on the building blocks of each stage and building a solid base of generic movement and sport skills
- Match the content of the sessions and programmes to the individual needs of the participants
- Avoid the dangers of imposing adult programs on young children (i.e. burnout, injury, dropout.)
- Maintain a healthy balance of competition and training
- See competition as a means to an end (participant personal improvement), and not an end in itself (just winning)
- Ensure that participants have a wide array of skills which allows them to try different sports and indeed swap sport if they wish

How to implement LTAD

