

referred to as **performance skills**. Whether we call them skills, motor skills, sport skills, or performance skills, we all need to be able to perform them. We all need to be able to use our brains, our nerves, and our muscles to cause our bodies to move and do our daily activities. With **practice** we learn these skills and are able to function effectively.

With practice anyone can learn skills. However, the younger you are, the easier you may learn skills. We know that most basic skills and sport skills are learned in elementary and middle school. That's why teachers and parents encourage young people to learn skills early. People who learn skills early in life are more likely to be active for a lifetime than are people who don't learn skills early.

What Is Skill-Related Fitness?

Now that you've learned about skills, it's important that you learn about skill-related fitness. Skill-related fitness refers to abilities that help people learn skills. The six parts of skill-related fitness—agility, balance, coordination, power, reaction time, and speed—are described in table 2.1. Skill-related fitness isn't the same as skill. Having good skill-related fitness does help you to learn skills. For example, balance is important in many activities. If you have good balance, you'll be able to learn specific skills, such as in-line skating, more easily than if balance is hard for you. Different people have different skill-related fitness abilities based on their heredity, their

age, and the amount of experience they've had in a variety of physical activities. But balance practice can improve your general balance, just as skill practice can improve your performance of specific skills. Most people are good in a few parts of skill-related fitness and not so good in others. Later, you'll get a chance to assess your skill-related fitness. For now, look over the photos and descriptions of the parts of skill-related fitness on page 17. Think about activities you do that require different parts of skill-related fitness.

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Why Do I Need Motor Skills and Skill-Related Fitness?

There are many goals designed to help all of us to become healthy people. A major health goal is regular physical activity among all people, especially young people who are still in school. We know that adults aren't as active as young people and that elementary school and middle school students are more active than high school students. So finding a way to help young people stay active as they get older is an important health goal. Learning skills can help you to enjoy activities that you can use to stay active now and later in life.

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Balance is required for performing a wide variety of motor skills.

FIT FACT

In 2005, Anthony Gatto set a world record by juggling seven clubs for 2 minutes and 49 seconds. Learning this skill took a lot of practice.