

Warm up

Concept:

A warm-up is designed to prepare an athlete's body for the demands of any physical activity, or competition.

Objectives:

- Improve the body's ability to perform athletic movements.
- Decrease the risk of injury during training.
- Mentally prepare for the work about to be done.

Effects:

- Raise body temperature- warms muscles and makes them more flexible.
- Increase metabolic rate- prepares muscles for energy use.
- Increase heart and respiratory rate- allowing the body to transport energy faster.
- Prepare the muscles and nervous system for exercise- decreasing the risk of injury.

Guidelines for the Warm up:

- The warm-up should be slow. You should never reach a level of fatigue.
- The warm-up should be progressive. It should start out general (total body) and then get specific (specific muscles, joints, etc.)
- The warm-up should be tailored to the activity you intend to do. Different activities require different emphasis during the warm up!
- The warm-up should work to stretch muscles and improve range of motion in joints. It is important not to forget that you must warm up BOTH muscles and joints!
- The warm-up should NOT include difficult, complex, or unknown movements\exercises. Remember, the warm up is intended to be a gradual preparation of the body for activity.
- The duration of a warm-up is variable (5 min to 15min) depending on the type of activity you are preparing for, external conditions (time of day, weather\temperature, resources available, etc), and on the person warming up.
- You should not let much time pass between the warm-up and the activity. If you do, you risk cooling down and negating the benefits of the warm-up.

Elements, or parts of a warm up.

1.) General warm up

Light physical activity, like walking, jogging, about five to ten minutes and result in a light sweat. Helps increase the muscle temperature.

2.) Joint mobility

Swings, circles and rotations, for all the joints of the body, focusing on those that are going to be used more intensely during the main part of the physical activity.

3.) Sport specific warm up

In this part, the athlete is specifically preparing their body for the demands of their particular sport. During this part of the warm up, more vigorous activity should be employed. Activities should reflect the type of movements and actions which will be required during the sporting event.

4.) Stretching

Finally, a correct warm up should finish with a series of dynamic stretches. However, this form of stretching carries with it a high risk of injury if used incorrectly. Dynamic stretching is more for muscular conditioning than flexibility and is really only suited for well trained athletes. Dynamic stretching should only be used after a high level of general flexibility has been established.