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A warm-up should be the first physical activity in every training session or competition. A good warm-up helps you to reach a state of physical and mental readiness.

A proper warm-up should include:
- Aerobic activity
- Dynamic stretching

After you complete the aerobic activity, you will want to dynamic stretch. Stretching for flexibility is very effective in the cool-down.

**HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**
- Try to do about **15-20 repetitions** of each exercise.
- Many of these stretches can be **done in place or across the playing area**.
- Select a few that **focus on different muscles**.
Sample Warm-Up

AEROBIC ACTIVITIES
Aerobic activities are whole body movements should last about 5 minutes and increase the heart rate. Select a few exercises from the list below:

- Butt Kicks
- Forward Jacks
- High Knees
- Jumping Jacks
- Light Jog

DYNAMIC STRETCHES
Dynamic stretches consist of active, controlled movements that take body parts through a full range of motion. If you don't have enough time, select a few that focus on the different muscles used in your sport:

- Arm Circles
- Arm Swings
- Heel Walks
- Hip Circles
- Power Skips
- Toe Walks
- Torso Twists
- Walking High Knees
- Walking Lunges
- Wrist Rotations
Butt Kicks

DIRECTIONS

- Walk or jog while kicking your heels up to touch or nearly touch your glutes.
- Quickly alternate legs. Keep arms bent at the elbows and swinging back to front.
- Start slowly with a walk and then speed up to a jog or run.
- This exercise can be done in place or while moving around an activity space.
**DIRECTIONS**

- Stand with one foot in front of the other and your arms down by your sides.
- Jump up and switch your feet. Swing your arms sideways over your head.
- Jump to bring your arms back to your sides and switch your legs back to the starting position.
High Knees

DIRECTIONS

- Walk or jog while raising your bent knee up to the level of your hip or higher.
- Quickly alternate legs. Keep arms bent at the elbows and swinging back to front.
- Start slowly with a walk/march and then speed up to a jog or run.
- This exercise can be done in place or while moving around an activity space.
DIRECTIONS

- Jump up and spread your legs apart as you swing your arms over your head.
- Jump again and bring your arms back to your sides and your legs together.
Light Jog

DIRECTIONS

- Lightly jog around your training area.
- Make sure you are also swinging your arms the whole time.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Alicia Gogue
Arm Circles

**DIRECTIONS**

- Stand tall with your arms straight down. Slowly make large circles with your arms in the forward direction.
- Repeat exercises in the backward direction.
**DIRECTIONS**

- Start in a standing position with your feet apart and stretch your arms out to the sides making a “T” shape.
- Cross your arms in the front of the body and reach as far back as possible to touch your shoulders or back.
- Uncross your arms and return to your starting position.
Heel Walks

DIRECTIONS

- Start in a standing position.
- Shift your weight back onto your heels.
- Lift your toes off the ground.
- Stay on your heels and walk forward for 15 - 20 steps.
Hip Circles

DIRECTIONS

• Start in a standing position with your feet apart and knees slightly bent.
• Place your hands on your hips.
• Slowly rotate your hips, making big circles in one direction. Do not move your feet.
• Repeat the exercise in the other direction.
Power Skips

DIRECTIONS

- Stand with your feet hip width apart.
- Lift your right knee and spring up off your left foot, hopping into the air.
- Switch sides. Lift your left knee and spring up off your right foot, hopping into the air.
- Continue in a “skipping” motion and swing arms back to front.
Toe Walks

DIRECTIONS

• Start in a standing position.
• Shift your weight onto the balls of your feet.
• Raise your heels off the ground to stand on your tiptoes.
• Stay on your toes and walk forward.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Justin Hunsinger
**Torso Twists**

**DIRECTIONS**

- Start in a standing position with your feet apart.
- Stretch your arms out to the sides making a “T” shape.
- While keeping your arms out straight and your hips facing forward, turn your upper body and head slowly to one side, return to center, then turn to the other side.
Walking High Kicks

DIRECTIONS

- With a tall posture and straight back, walk forward and kick one leg out in front as high as you can.
- Keep arms out to your sides or in front, whichever is better to keep your balance.
- Switch sides and kick the other leg in front of you.
- Continue to alternate legs as you walk forward.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Justin Hunsinger
Walking Leg Sweeps

DIRECTIONS

• Stand with your right heel out in front, toes pointed up, and your leg straight.
• Bend forward and reach down toward your right foot and scoop with your hands.
• Step forward and return to a standing position. Repeat with your left heel in front.
Wrist Rotations

DIRECTIONS

- Put your arms out straight to your sides or in front of you.
- Make circles with your wrists in one direction and then the opposite direction.
Benefits of a Warm-Up

A warm-up should be the first physical activity in every training session or competition. A good warm-up helps you to **reach a state of physical and mental readiness.**

**Physical and Mental Benefits**

- Increase heart rate
- Increase breathing rate
- Increase body and muscle temperature
- Greater blood flow to the active muscles
- Shift focus from life to sport
- Connects the mind and the body