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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
- Frog Jumps
- High Knees
- Jog in Place

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
- Forward Lunges
- Hip Circles
- Torso Twists
- Walking Leg Sweeps
- 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

- Start by standing with your feet apart.
- Bend at your knees and hips to squat down. Touch the floor with your hands.
- Jump straight up in the air with your arms up.
- Land in a squat with your hands touching the floor.
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.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Tom Merz
Jog in Place

DIRECTIONS

• Jog in place.
• Make sure you are also swinging your arms the whole time.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Alicia Gogue
**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.
Forward Lunges

DIRECTIONS

- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and put your hands on your hips.
- Take a big step forward with your right foot and bend both knees so that your left knee is almost touching the ground.
- Push off your left leg and return to the starting position. Repeat with your left leg forward.
**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.
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 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.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Lindsey Wilkes
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.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Joe Wu
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