

Evolve Your Warm-Up, Part 2

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This is the second of a two-part series. In the first part I discussed the “why” of warming-up. This article will discuss how you should go about creating a proper warm-up.

Some people know why they should warm up before a training session; even fewer know how to do so properly. One thing that always needs to be kept in mind when constructing a warm-up is that you are preparing your body for movement, so you need to move your body. This includes exercises that move your joints through their full range of motion, as well as exercises that prime your central nervous system. Finally, the warm-up is a great time to perform joint integrity, stability, and pre-rehabilitation exercises in an attempt to correct imbalances and prevent future injuries while your muscles and mind are their most fresh.

In my opinion, the ground-based warm-up I created (see my Exercise Index) is a very effective warm-up for all ages and ability levels because it incorporates all of the above criteria. After completing that, moving on to a dynamic movement warm-up for five minutes or so would be ideal. The dynamic movement warm-up can consist of exercises such as skips, bounds, lateral slides, side runs, forward runs, backpedals, bear crawls, inchworms, cliff scalers, lunges (forward, reverse, lateral, and diagonal), box jumps, straight-leg walks, and different walks with bands around the ankles and/or wrists. These exercises all consist of very basic movement patterns and will hit home how we should properly move. These exercises are also great for priming the central nervous system to move the body explosively and powerfully. You can also include different types of dynamic stretches in this portion of the warm-up, such as leg swings.

Different joint integrity exercises that can be performed during the warm-up include: dirty dogs, thoracic mobility, bird dogs, horses (getting on and getting off), swimmers, single leg toe touches, Y's, T's and W's, external and internal shoulder rotation, field goals, John Travoltas, and 3-Point Balance Touches. Instead of explaining how to do all of these, I will refer you to my ground-based warm-up, which includes most of these exercises. The other exercises can be found on YouTube and in *The IMPACT Body Plan* by Todd Durkin. There are numerous stability exercises that can be performed during your warm-up. Some of them would be appropriate to include in the workout itself as well. I would recommend including at least one stability exercise in your warm-up, preferably done with bare feet to maximize proprioception and kinesthetic awareness. In fact, if possible, the entire warm-up should be done barefoot. This will help to strengthen the feet, which can serve to prevent future injury.

An example of the structure of a proper warm-up would be to first roll out your feet, legs, and any other parts of your body that are tight for about three to five minutes. This will get blood flowing to those areas and break up any fascial adhesions. Second, to move into some type of ground-based warm-up, focusing on

mobilizing the joints first and stabilizing the joints second. In other words, perform your joint integrity work early in the ground-based warm-up and your stability work towards the end. You can finish your ground-based warm-up with some aerobic work such as jumping jacks. Finally, finish off your warm-up with some type of dynamic movement training, focusing on technique and quality of the movements. By the time you finish your warm-up, you should be dripping sweat, not just have beads forming, and your heart rate should be 70 to 75% of your max heart rate. I know by the time I finish my warm-up my heart rate is around 150. All in all, my warm-up takes about ten to fifteen minutes to complete.

So there is the “how” for a proper warm-up. Apply these techniques to allow yourself to train at optimal intensity and achieve optimal results.

Get big or die tryin’.

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