



Warm Ups/ Cool Downs

Warm Ups

A good warm up helps athletes to reach a state of physical and mental readiness as well as lower their chance of sustaining an injury.

Benefits of Warming Up

Physical

- Increases blood flow to muscles
- Increases heart rate
- Increases breathing rate
- Increases body/muscle temperature

Mental

- Increases focus on the practice or competition ahead and remove distractions
- Helps athletes to mentally review skills already learned

Examples of Warm Up Activities (10-20min)

1. Aerobic Activity (5 min)

jogging forward & backwards, jumping jacks, high knees

Helps to increase heart rate and energize the body.

Should start at a slow pace and gradually increase.

2. Dynamic Stretches (5-10 min) lateral lunges, leg swings, arm circles

Focus on the muscle groups that you will be using in your sport.

3. Sport Specific Movements (5-10 min)

Focus on skills/movements that are core to your sport.

Opportunity to review skills that will be used later in the session.

Cool Downs

A good cool down is equally as important as a good warm up as it allows your athlete's body to slowly and safely return to a normal state.

Benefits of Cooling Down

- Decrease heart rate and breathing rate
- Decrease muscle and body temperature
- Reduce muscle soreness
- Increase rate of recovery from exercise
- Improve flexibility

Cool downs are also a great opportunity to reflect with your athletes and praise them for their hard work.

Examples of Cool Down Activities (10-15min)

1. Light Aerobic Exercise (5-10 min) jog-to-walk

These exercises should decrease gradually in intensity.

2. Static Stretches (5-10 min) hamstring stretch, overhead tricep stretch

Focus on muscle groups used in your sport.

Hold each stretch for at least 30 seconds to mild (but not painful) discomfort.

Overall

Warm ups and cool downs are a great way to engage your athletes - ask them which games or exercises they would like to try next time!

References: Mayo Clinic (2019) "How to Warm Up and Cool Down"
ViaSport (2015) "Best Practices: Warm Up and Cool Down"