

Warm-up, Cool Down and Stretch

They're more important than you know

Warming-up, cooling-down and stretching help to prevent injury in both training and game situations.

Warm-up and stretch

Your body needs the chance to adjust to an increase in physical effort, and it needs to prepare to work at its best for you.

- Start with some low-impact aerobic activity (such as jogging, cycling or skipping) for at least 10 minutes to get your heart working and your muscles warm.
- Intersperse your aerobic activity every 5-10 minutes with stretches.

Cool-down and stretch

Cooling down after a game or training increases your rate of recovery and decreases your chances of injury the next time you are active. Cooling down is also the best time to improve your range of flexibility.

- Get gently active again – about 5 minutes of easy aerobic activity like jogging, brisk walking or using the “low intensity” on a gym’s cardio equipment.
- Stretch for about 10 minutes following your easy aerobic cool-down, or you can intersperse your stretches throughout. If you want greater flexibility, use static stretches and hold for at least 30 seconds during the cool-down as this will help muscles relax and reduce tension.

See the Stretches for Running and Walking resource for more in-depth information.