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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

The aerobic activity in a warm-down should increase your heart rate. Some aerobic activities are high knees, jumping jacks and a jog around the playing field.

After you complete the aerobic activity, you will want to dynamic stretch the different muscles you'll be using.

**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 exercises 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
- 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:
- Forward Lunges
- Heel Walks
- Lateral Leg Swings
- Power Skips
- Toe Walks
- Walking High Kicks
- Walking Leg Sweeps
- Walking Quadriceps Stretch
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.
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 in place or around the track.
• Make sure you are also swinging your arms the whole time.
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.
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.
Lateral Leg Swings

DIRECTIONS

- Start in a standing position and hold onto something stable (e.g., wall, chair, fence) lightly with both hands.
- Swing/raise one leg out to the side with your foot flexed and then swing that same leg across your body in front of the standing leg.
- Repeat the exercises with the other leg.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Garrett Barnes
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 tip toes.
• Stay on your toes and walk forward.
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.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Lindsey Wilkes
Walking Quadriceps Stretch

DIRECTIONS
- Step forward onto your right foot and raise your left foot up behind you.
- Reach your left hand back, grab your ankle, and make sure your knee points down.
- Let go of your ankle, step forward with your left foot, and repeat on the right side.
- Keep walking and alternating sides.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Jimmy Tadlock
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