This resource was supported by cooperative agreement #NU27DD001156 from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are the responsibility of Special Olympics and do not necessarily represent the view of CDC.
Warm-Up Directions

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
- Fast Feet
- Side Shuffle

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
- Torso Twists
- Walking High Kicks
- Walking Leg Sweeps
- Walking Quadriceps Stretch
- 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.
Fast Feet

DIRECTIONS

- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and your knees bent.
- Put your arms at your sides with elbows bent.
- Rise to the balls of your feet and run in place as fast as possible.
- Keep your feet moving quickly.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Joe Wu
**DIRECTIONS**

- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and bend your knees. Put your arms out at your sides.
- Step with your right foot to the side, and then bring your left foot in beside it.
- Do 5 shuffles to the right, then switch directions.
- Do 5 slides to the left, leading with your left foot. Keep shuffling from side to side.
Arm Circles

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.
Arm Swings

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.
**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.

Featuring Special Olympics athlete, Jayna Neal
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.
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.
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.
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