

Soccer Specific Warm Up

Muscle stiffness is thought to be directly related to muscle injury and therefore the warm up should be aimed at reducing muscle stiffness. Warming up should at least consist of the following:

- 5 to 10 minutes jogging with/without a ball (for younger age groups everything should be done with a ball) - to increase body temperature
- 10 to 15 minutes dynamic stretching exercises - reduce muscle stiffness
- 10-15 minutes possession style game

Dynamic stretches are more appropriate to the warm up as they help reduce muscle stiffness. Static exercises do not reduce muscle stiffness.

What are the benefits of a warm up?

Performance may be improved, as an appropriate warm up will result in an:

- Increased speed of contraction and relaxation of warmed muscles
- Dynamic exercises reduce muscle stiffness
- Greater economy of movement because of lowered viscous resistance within warmed muscles
- Facilitated oxygen utilization by warmed muscles because hemoglobin releases oxygen more readily at higher muscle temperatures
- Facilitated nerve transmission and muscle metabolism at higher temperatures; a specific warm up can facilitate motor unit recruitment required in subsequent all out activity
- Increased blood flow through active tissues as local vascular beds dilate, increasing metabolism and muscle temperatures
- Allows the heart rate get to a workable rate for beginning exercise

Soccer Specific Cool Down (do not skip)

Warming down should consist of the following:

- 5 to 10 minutes jogging/walking with a ball or without (for younger age groups everything should be done with a ball)- decrease body temperature and remove waste products from the working muscles
- 5 to 10 minutes of static stretching exercise - decrease body temperature, remove waste products from the working muscles and increases the range of movement.

Static stretches are more appropriate to the cool down as they help muscles to relax and increase their range of movement.

What are the benefits of a cool down?

An appropriate cool down will:

- aid in the dissipation of waste products - including lactic acid
- reduce the potential for Delayed Onset of Muscle Soreness (DOMS)
- reduce the chances of dizziness or fainting caused by the pooling of venous blood at the extremities
- reduce the level of adrenaline in the blood, allows the heart rate to return to it's resting rate