

## Football Warm-Up



Sheffield

Therapy  
Centre

This warm-up protocol is designed to prepare you to arrive on the pitch in great shape and allow you to be at your best from the referees' first whistle.

### **Why do we warm up?**

We warm up to prepare the body physiologically and psychologically to perform a sporting activity. Ideally the warm up should be around 20 minutes, before flexibility or functional activities are undertaken. The warm up should gradually increase in intensity until the heart rate is around 70% of it's maximum. This should allow greater range of movement, increased flexibility, improved aerobic performance and overall improved efficiency.

Physiologically, the changes to our body are:

1. A rise of 2 to 3 degree rise in body temperature which can last for 45 minutes
2. The rise in heat makes muscles and tendons to become more extensible, which makes stretching muscles and tendons easier
3. Increased temperature also causes a rise in enzyme and metabolic activity, which improves the efficiency of muscles
4. Increased blood flow, which consequently increases oxygen to muscle tissue
5. Activation of neural pathways, which speeds up reaction time, and improves efficiency of movement during activities

### **The Football Specific Warm-Up (outfield players)**

#### **Walk / Jog (3-5 mins)**

**Functional movement preparation phase** – to be done with players in 2 lines between cones over a 15-20m distance. Players do the exercise on the way, then slow jog the recovery back:

- Exaggerated heel-toe walking
- Walk 2 steps and on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, perform a mini-lunge. You should end up alternating the lunging leg doing this.
- Jog and then every 5<sup>th</sup> step, perform a mini squat. Continue this to the end.
- Standing side on so that your left shoulder goes towards the end cone, cross the right leg over and in front of the left leg whilst jogging. Then cross the right leg behind the left leg. (Sometimes known as a grapevine movement or a kareoka) (Repeat facing the other way)
- Jog forwards and on every 2<sup>nd</sup> step with your right leg, bring your right hip and knee up and over an imaginary gate (Repeat on the left leg)
- Perform 2 easy side steps (facing forwards) to the right then left and continue this to the end

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- Perform 2 easy side steps (facing backwards) to the right then left and continue this to the end
- Heel flicks – flick your heel to your bottom on every 3<sup>rd</sup> step as you jog between the cones
- Knee lifts – lift your knee to waist height on every 3<sup>rd</sup> step as you jog between cones
- End this movement preparation phase with 3 straight runs of increasing intensity: 50%, 60% 75%.

### **Dynamic stretching phase**

- In facing pairs, holding each others right shoulder, Swing your left leg back and forth 20 times. Try to increase the height of each swing as you progress. Repeat on the right leg but holding your partners left shoulder
- In facing pairs again holding onto each others right shoulder. Swing your right leg across your body and then out to the side. (Be careful not to clash legs here). Repeat 20 times then swap legs as above.

It is now generally considered that static stretching is unnecessary before sport and it is thought can actually lead to reduced performance. However, some players like to stretch in this way so now is a good time to do this. Hold stretches for 5-10 seconds. Don't 'bounce' the stretch and don't stretch too deeply.

**Match readiness phase** – To be done with players in 2 lines over 10-12 cones laid out no more than 1 foot apart, Increasing heart rate.

- Fast feet – take tiny steps forwards placing both feet in between each cone but at high speed. Pump your arms to help your momentum
- Fast feet (sideways) – take tiny side steps over the cones placing 2 feet in between each cone. Pump your arms to aid momentum. Repeat facing the other way.
- Tiny jumps on the spot at the start of the cones, react to a shout of go and accelerate over the distance of the cones.
- Repeat the accelerations from a jumping start facing sideways (x2) and facing backwards
- Finish this phase with 2 longer runs over 30 – 40m building the pace through each run

### **Football drills and match play preparation phase:**

This phase can be left to the coaches discretion as there are a vast range of football and match scenario drills.