

Dynamic warm up

Our last article discussed the benefits of adhering to a consistent static stretching program. We feel that static stretching is a crucial aspect in training for all athletes, however today we would like to discuss the principle of a dynamic warm up and its potential benefits. We are often asked what is the best way to warm up prior to a game or athletic activity? At this time, research is suggesting that a dynamic warm up prior to athletic activity is the most optimal way to prepare yourself for your sport on game day. A dynamic warm has many benefits for each athlete. First we will discuss what a dynamic warm up actually is.

A dynamic warm up is sequence of progressive exercise movements, going from low to moderate intensity, using multiple body parts and movement patterns. The goal of a dynamic warm up is to prepare the body for the upcoming activity. A dynamic warm up can last anywhere from 5-20 minutes. It is usually recommended to perform the exercises to the point of just breaking a sweat. A dynamic warm up usually focuses on proper running form and takes place between two lines that are a selected distance apart. We feel that a 20 yard distance is optimal, however distances may vary depending upon your particular setting. You may want to use a shorter distance for your younger or less advanced athletes.

Here is an example of a 15 minute dynamic warm up exercise routine. (see attached pictures of exercises for more specifics) Begin with low level intensity exercises and gradually progress the speed and intensity until your athletes have just begun to break a sweat. The following exercises are usually performed within a 20 yard distance: Arm circles, running form arm swings, 50% intensity jog with perfect running form, butt kick jogging, cariocas, high knees, side shuffles, skipping, jumping jacks, hip rotation, lunges, and rapid foot taps. These are just a few of the examples of exercises that you can incorporate into a dynamic warm up program. Your own imagination and creativity are the only limiting factors.

During a dynamic warm up the athlete is actively moving various body parts through a specified range of motion. The muscles of the body control the direction of movement, speed, and amount of stretch applied.

The benefits include:

- Improved dynamic performance in power and athletic function.
- Improved balance, posture, alignment, eccentric control, gait, mobility, and stability
- Increased total body preparation prior to the upcoming activity
- Increased blood flow to muscles.
- Possible injury prevention

To view our dynamic warm up please click on the attachment. Remember to only select exercises that you feel would most benefit your athletic population. Remember each athlete is an individual and some athletes may be better equipped to handle specific exercises than others. Keep in mind the age, experience, and condition of your athletes. A dynamic warm up should only be used as a warm up or part of a cool down. You should never try to fatigue your players prior to participating in a game.

Our next article will discuss plyometrics

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