



Warm Up and RUNNING DRILLS

A thorough warm up for running is often overlooked but remarkably important for improving performance and decreasing the chance of injury. Whether you are a track specialist or road runner the drills in this article will help to promote a more efficient running technique, improve range of motion and muscular function, whilst providing the appropriate intensity for your intended training session, writes Nick Richardson – Strength & Conditioning Coach SSC



Marching



Skips



Butt Flicks

Part 1) General Warm up

At this stage you are probably feeling cold, tight, sore and not ready to perform. The aim is to loosen the muscles and joints here and start to warm the body system. The following movements can be incorporated into the general warm up; the aim here is active preparation.

- Light to Moderate Jog 400m
- Leg Swings – Lunges – Squats
- Grapevine – Side to Side Skip – Backwards Run

Note: Static stretching is not specifically included in the 'active warm-up' however if you have any defined areas that require specific stretching in order to improve range of movement (flexibility) this can be added here.

Part 2) Drilling

The aim at this stage is to improve running efficiency and technique, enhance energy recoil from the ground and to promote a positive running gait (stride). E.g. running on the forefoot.

Marching:

Purpose: Promotes correct leg action and active foot plant

Description: Hands on hips - Drive heel to butt – Stomp on forefoot under hips

Cues: Front of shoe points in the direction of travel - Heel of shoe pulls up to butt
Sets & Reps: 3 sets x 15m

Knee Drives (skips)

Purpose: Promotes recoil (bounce from ground), switches on key muscles and is an active progression from the marching drill (drill 1)

Description: Similar to the march (drill 1) with a skipping action (small air time) included

Cues: Skip and actively plant foot back under hips
Sets & Reps: 3 sets x 15m

Butt Flicks

Purpose: Promotes correct leg action in the swing leg - Builds towards running specific action and tempo

Description: Running action with heel coming to butt - Slowly transitioning forward

Cues: Pretend there is a hurdle in front of each step – Fast leg recovery
Sets & Reps: 3 sets x 15m

Part 3) Running Specific Intensity

The final stage of the warm up should involve working your running efforts towards the intensity required for your specific run. This will be extremely individual depending on the distance and speed of the session. The golden rule here is basic, you must get up to your race or planned session speed prior to competing or participating.

For endurance-based athletes you should take your body close to or above session pace for a short duration. It takes time for your body to start delivering oxygen to your muscles at its most efficient rate, thus its important to prime the system by ramping up intensity to the desired level. This will improve the start of your session substantially.

- 2-6 minutes of near lactate threshold (beyond talking pace) running or of similar rate to the planned session

For track-based athletes the aim is to take your body to the speed at which you will run the session or competition.

- 4-6 efforts of 60-100m building intensity from 80-100%
- Maintain rest periods of 2-3 minutes between repetitions as the intensity increases