

The Warm-Up and Roles of Mobility, Flexibility and Preparation for Track and Field

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Your goal as a coach should be to help develop the highest functioning athletes, both for the immediate workout or competition, and for the athlete's overall career. (Short term vs. long term goals)

THE GOLDEN MINUTES

The warm-up is often lost in the workout, but should be a very critical component.

Use the warm-up to your advantage...if your athletes have physical deficiencies, the warm-up can be a valuable time to correct these deficiencies.

How to create a good track and field warm-up routine:

1. **Must first understand the basic functions of the body**

- The body is a series of joints, and each joint has a proper function—not every joint is supposed to be super-flexible or super-stable
 - Ankle...Needs to be mobile
 - Knee...Needs to be stable (ACL tears??)
 - Hip...Needs to be mobile**
 - Lumbar spine...stable
 - Thoracic spine...mobile
 - Scapulo-thoracic...stable
 - Gleno-humeral...mobile
- Don't forget that the body moves in multiple planes of motion!! Track & field athletes tend to emphasize just one plane, which may lead to injuries...

2. **Look at the particular athlete and their specific event to determine what needs to be improved upon**

- Hip mobility? Ankle mobility? Knee stability? Lumbar spine stability?
- Each athlete might be different
- Each even might be different

3. **Incorporate exercises into the warm-up to improve/correct these deficiencies**

- Why the warm-up? A warm-up should:
 - Increase core temperature
 - Increase muscle tendon suppleness
 - Contribute to the overall development of the athlete (balance, core strength, body control, running mechanics, reduced risk of injury)
 - Mental preparation

Voila! If done on a daily basis you will have a higher functioning athlete with fewer injuries.

As a bonus, the sample warm-up routine that follows can be used as an active recovery workout for de-load/taper days.

**Sample mobility circuit that can be used as a dynamic warm-up routine:
(If too long, do every other one, then switch on the off days)**

Begin with foam rolling to reduce the density of the tissue so it can actually move! More on this later...

1. Leg swings – keep core stable, foot flat
 2. Lateral squat – side lunge, keep feet flat
 3. Rotational squat – feet positioned 90 degrees to each other, keep feet flat
 4. Split squat – focus on knee/ankle positions, core control
 5. Single leg dead lift w/ reach – focus on straight line from fingertips to toe
 6. Tall plank w/ hip flexion – pull knee straight forward without rounding spine
 7. Push-ups – go deep!
 8. Wall angels – shoulder blades, elbows & hands touching the wall
 9. Quad stretch w/ forward lean – focus on balance
 10. Sideways cross-behind lunges – both directions, can add arm motions
 11. High knee jogging
 12. Straight leg jogging
 13. High knee skipping
 14. Side shuffle
 15. Carioca/grapevine
- Bonus! 16. Dead leg skips – great for coordination!