

Why You Should *Warm Up*

Before You Work Out

By Candice Graham

Diving right into your workout routine may seem like the best way to take advantage of your time, but skipping a quick warm up can hinder the effectiveness of your exercise and cause injury. **Warming up only takes about 5-10 minutes, and it can leave you energized and primed for activity.**

**POSITIVE WAYS A PRE-WORKOUT
WARM UP CAN BENEFIT YOU:**

- prepares muscles for workout by increasing blood flow
- increases the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to your muscles, which results in better performance
- helps to slowly raise heart rate, minimizing stress on the heart
- prepares you mentally for the upcoming activity
- reduces the chance of soft tissue injuries by increasing their elasticity
- lubricates joints for easier movement and flexibility
- increases blood temperature, which can allow you to work out longer
- prompts hormonal changes in the body responsible for regulating energy production

So what’s a good way to warm up? Try doing a less intense version of your planned workout – basically anything that gradually raises your heart rate and gets your muscles ready for activity will get the job done.

Should you cool down? Although some studies show that cooling down doesn’t appear to prevent injury and muscle stiffness, all are agreed that cooling down can’t hurt. Cooling down can allow for gradual recovery of heart rate and blood pressure, so try to take a moment to bring your workout to a slower pace and a reduced intensity toward the end.



STOP & STRETCH

Take a brisk walk or slow jog to warm up your muscles, then do dynamic stretches – slow, controlled movements like arm circles or hip rotations as opposed to still, held stretches. Then you'll be primed and ready for your workout.

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