



## Warm Up So You Won't Wear Out

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From the vantage point of professional training, a warm-up is a must before every work out. Even so, many of my personal training clients like to think they can jump right into a training session without a warm-up. When it comes to excuses, they come up with the best efforts in the summer. Walking in from a sunny day, someone will say “I’m ready to work out! I don’t need a warm-up. I just walked from my car and it’s so hot outside I’m already sweating!”

Of course, I can’t blame them because it seems like good reasoning. Perspiration is definitely a sign that you’re warm. When temperatures rise, the body regulates its own temperature by releasing heat through the skin in the form of sweat. But the purpose of a warm-up isn’t just to make you glisten on the outside. A warm-up is meant to increase blood circulation and heat in the muscles that will be doing the work, which makes workouts easier and injury free. After a warm-up, muscles are more flexible and less likely to be injured. When you accidentally make an awkward move during an intense exercise, you can pull or tear a muscle or tendon, which can cause a lot of pain for a long time. If your muscles are warm and flexible from the warm-up, they’ll stretch when they’re pulled out of place, but they’ll be much less likely to tear.

A workout is much easier when it starts with a warm-up. During a warm-up, the body starts to use stored fuels such as sugar and fat. The increase in circulation during a warm-up will bring these nutrients to the working muscles faster, which will give them more fuel so they can do even more work. In other words, after a warm-up, you’ll be stronger and faster.

### "How To's" of an Effective Warm-up:

An effective warm-up moves the same muscles that are going to move in the workout, at a lower intensity, for about 10-20 minutes. This will increase circulation and heat in those muscles.

Any type of cardiovascular activity is an excellent way to warm-up; this increases your heart rate and increases blood flow through your entire body (not only the muscles work during the activity) and provides the longest lasting warm-up effect. Here’s how to know if you’re doing it right:

- Warm-up for a cardiovascular workout - do the same exercise that you plan on doing at a lower intensity for 5-10 minutes before going full-force.
- Warm-up for a strength training workout- start with at least 10 minutes of cardiovascular exercise, or do 5-10 minutes of exercises that involve large muscle groups.
- Warm-up for playing a sport - do something cardiovascular for 10 or more minutes and then do some exercises that use body parts that will be moving during the game.



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- As we get older, the warm-up should get longer to give the circulation adequate time to increase. Unfortunately our risk of injury goes up when we're older, so we should take a little more time in the beginning with the prevention part.
- Sweating is a good way to tell if you've warmed up enough, but it's got to come from the physical work you've done, not from the outside environment.

Knowing all of this, would you a.) choose to stand outside in the heat, or b.) sweat in the sauna to warm-up before exercising? The answer is neither! If we did that, we'd be missing out on all of the other great stuff we get with a real warm-up. So, even in this hot weather, take 10 minutes to warm-up. Your workout will feel better, you'll stay injury-free longer, and you'll get much more out of your exercise.

*It's recommended that you talk to your doctor before starting to workout. This is basic exercise information for the general public. If you have injuries or other physical limitations, this exercise may not be appropriate. A good rule of thumb: If it doesn't feel good- don't do it!*

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