1. Warm-Ups

A warm-up should be completed before starting any form of moderate to vigorous exercise.

Effects of Warm-Ups:

- Increase blood flow to the working muscles.
- Increase heart rate.
- Increase oxygen intake.
- Increase the speed at which muscles react.
- Increase energy expenditure.
- Increase body temperature.
- Increase flexibility and range of motion.
- Reduce risk of injury.
- Improve co-ordination and concentration.

What needs to be in a Warm-Up?

A warm up should contain some light activity, which could include brisk walking or light jogging. The purpose of the jogging or walking is to stimulate the heart and lungs. If space allows, jogging is a great option. If space is limited, or your athletes find it difficult to concentrate for the duration, it may be more useful to include some simple games as a means of slowly increasing the activity.

Examples of Games:

Cups and Saucers

In a marked out grid, ensuring sufficient space for the number of athletes, place a number of marker cones out on the floor. Half should be in the regular position, saucers, and half in the upturned position, cups. With the group divided into two teams, the Cups and the Saucers, their objective is to turn the most cones into their team shape before time runs out!

Follow the Leader

This is a game we are all familiar with! In a large group, it can often be more manageable to create small groups of 3 or 4 athletes. One athlete is designated the leader, and the rest of their team, must follow their movements. Rotate the leader regularly. This game is great for a warm up as the coach can control the intensity, by requiring athletes to walk, walk quickly, slowly jog etc. while carrying out their movements.

2. Stretching and Flexibility

There are two main forms of stretching, either Dynamic (meaning they involve motion) or Static (meaning they involve no motion).

1. Dynamic Stretching should be performed after the light activity. This stretching is most beneficial after the active warm-up as the muscles respond better.

2. Static Stretching is important after sessions as it helps the muscles to relax and removes tension and stiffness. It is also very important on rest days as it can help increase flexibility and range of motion.

Further information can be found in the link below:

www.specialolympics.ie/WHATWEDO/SportsResources.aspx

3. Aerobic Fitness

Follow the F.I.T.T. Principle

F: FREQUENCY or how often the athlete trains?
3-5 times per week.

I: INTENSITY or how hard the exercise is?
Moderate to vigorous intensity exercise.

T: TIME or how long you exercise for?
30 to 60 minutes per session
(It can also be made up of 10 minute blocks throughout the day)

T: TYPE or what kind of exercise you perform?
Continuous, rhythmic use of large muscle groups to improve aerobic fitness.
E.g. jogging, swimming, cycling.

4. Strength

Follow the F.I.T.T. Principle

F: FREQUENCY or how often the athlete trains?
Training sessions should be performed 2 to 3 times a week but not on consecutive days.

I: INTENSITY or how hard the exercise is?
The strengthening exercises should be repeated 1 to 3 times (Sets) perfoming a number of repetitons per set.
Depending on the exercise, with easier exercises, more repetitions may be needed.

T: TIME or how long you exercise for?
Strength training sessions should last for 20 to 60 minutes
(Can also be broken into small blocks similar to aerobic fitness).

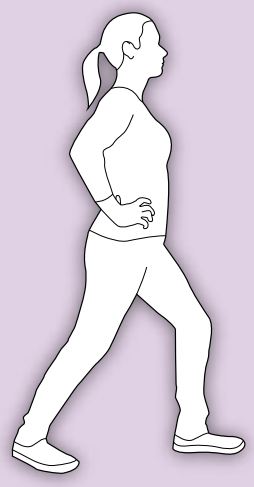
T: TYPE or what kind of exercise you perform?
They should involve all major muscle groups. There are many good body weight exercises which can be performed.

Examples of lower body compound exercises:
Squats, lunges, split squats, bridging, clams.

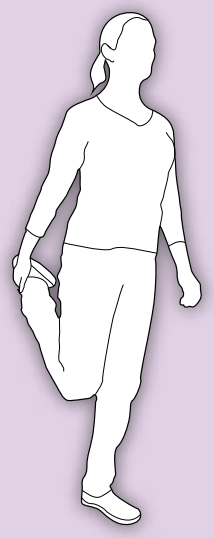
Examples of upper body compound exercises:
Press ups, seated wall slides, sit ups, planks, tricep dips.

Refer to our Strength Training resource for some simple examples.

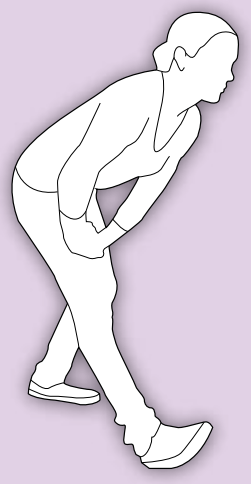
Sample Stretches



Calf Stretch

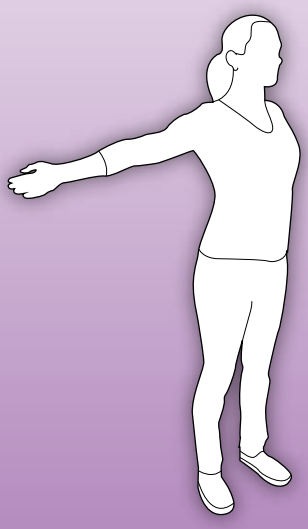


Quads Stretch

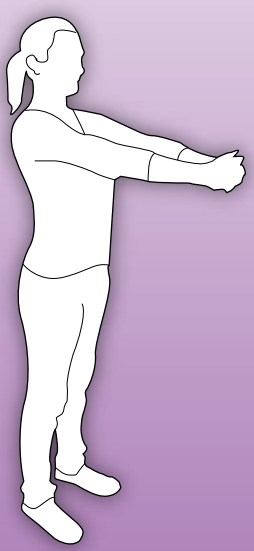


Hamstring Stretch

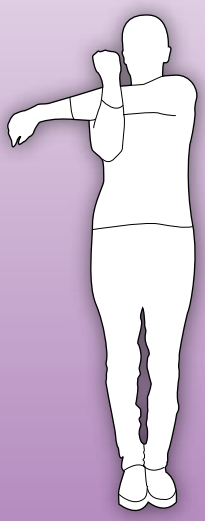
Groin Stretch



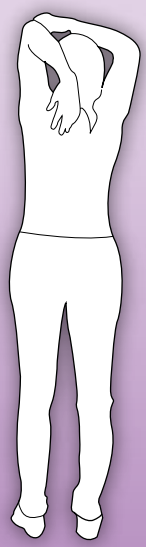
Chest Stretch



Back Stretch



Shoulder Stretch



Tricep Stretch

Special Olympics Ireland