



Soccer Warm-Up/Stretching Exercises

Why? To avoid serious injury and to play at your peak right from the starting whistle.

Warm-Up: 5 to 10 minutes of light activity, such as jogging

> STRETCHING GUIDELINES

- > Don't bounce or jerk when you stretch
- > Gently stretch to a point of tension — NO PAIN
- > Hold stretches for 30 seconds, Repeat 3-5 times



> NECK CIRCLES

Slowly rotate your head in a circular motion. After 10 repetitions, repeat in the opposite direction.



> QUADRICEPS STRETCH

In standing, reach back with your right arm and grab your right ankle. Bring your heel toward your buttock while maintaining upright standing. Hold and repeat on opposite leg.



> SPREAD EAGLE STRETCH

Start in a sitting position, with your legs as shown. Slowly lower yourself to the center with a straight back. Hold. Now reach towards your right leg with both hands. Hold. Repeat to the opposite side.



> TRUNK ROTATION / PIRIFORMIS STRETCH

Start in a sitting position. Cross your bent leg over your other straight leg. Take the opposite arm of your crossed leg and fix your knee with your elbow. Turn your trunk away from your knee towards the opposite shoulder while pushing your knee with the elbow. Hold and repeat to the opposite side.



> CALF STRETCH

Start in a step position, your back leg straight and your arms propped on your thigh. Push the heel of your back leg toward the floor until you feel a stretch in your calf. The wider you step the more you can stretch. Hold and repeat with opposite leg.



> HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

Lunge forward leading with your right leg. Drop your left leg to the ground. Place your hands on your right thigh and lean forward with your hips. Hold and then repeat with opposite leg.



> BUTTERFLY STRETCH

Your legs should be bent and spread. The bottoms of your feet should touch each other. Push your knees down with your arms until you feel a stretch in your inner thigh. Hold.

Soccer Specific Strengthening Exercises

Why? Proper strengthening of the hip, knee, and ankle can result in decreased incidence of injuries.



> SINGLE CALF RAISES

Stand upright and bend left knee and use to maintain balance. Rise up on your right toes. Repeat 30 repetitions and then switch to the other side.



> SQUATS

Stand upright with feet apart and pointing forwards. Weight through the heels. Slowly bend your knees and then return to starting position. Maintain a straight back. Perform 30 repetitions.



> LUNGES

Lunge forward leading with your right leg and drop your back knee straight down. Maintain a straight back so your shoulders are over your hips. Return to standing and then lunge forward with your left leg. Repeat and perform 30 repetitions.



> HAMSTRINGS

While kneeling have a partner hold onto your ankles. Maintaining a straight back, lean forward leading with your hips. Then return to upright kneeling. Perform 3 sets of 10.



> SINGLE LEG SWINGS

Stand on right leg with your knee slightly bent. Maintain balance while swinging left leg forward and back. Repeat on other leg. Perform 3 repetitions of 20 seconds each. Then perform same exercise while swinging leg side to side in front of you. 3 repetitions for 20 seconds each.

> BUNNY HOPS

Hop forward landing on the balls of your feet and bending at the knee. Then hop backwards. Perform 20 repetitions. Then hop to your left and back to the right with the same pattern as above. Perform 20 repetitions.

Agility Exercises

Why? Sport specific exercises train the knee and ankle joint to deal with situations encountered in a game.

> FORWARD/BACKWARD SHUTTLE RUN

Set up 2 lines of cones spacing them 10 yards apart. Space them so you will run diagonally from one line to the other. Run forward from the first cone to the second and then turn backwards and run to the third. Repeat. Use 10 cones and run through the course 3 times.

> BOUNDING RUN

Run from one sideline to another bringing your knees up high towards your chest. Keep your knees slightly flexed and land on the balls of your feet. Perform 30 seconds.

Proper Hydration

Proper hydration is vital to optimal sports performance. Even mild dehydration can impair body temperature regulation enough to compromise performance. Sweating plays a critical role in helping the body dissipate heat during exercise. This heat dissipation maintains the body temperature within the proper range. Water and electrolytes such as sodium, chloride, and potassium are lost in sweat. Water lost in sweat is derived from all fluid compartments of the body, including the blood. Therefore, exercise in even a mildly dehydrated state (1% of body weight) can place a greater strain on the heart and cardiovascular system and can cause an unusual rise in heart rate. This in turn limits the body's ability to transfer heat from the exercising muscles to the skin surface where heat can be dissipated to the environment.

Fluid consumption during prolonged exercise is recommended to prevent dehydration. Generally, for exercise lasting less than 1 hour, drinking water is all that is necessary. For athletic events lasting longer than 1 hour, the ideal fluid is a carbohydrate-electrolyte solution (i.e. sports drink) that serves the dual purpose of replacing sweat loss and providing carbohydrate fuel.

Sweat rates can vary from 0.5-3.7 liters/hour, depending on several factors, including exercise intensity, air temperature, wind, humidity, amount of clothing, heat acclimation of the athlete, and individual variations. Because sweat rates vary so greatly, it is difficult to make generalized recommendations for the amount of drinking necessary to replace sweat losses during exercise. However, some simple suggestions to prevent dehydration include:

- > Drink adequate fluids during the 24-hour period prior to an athletic event. Urine should be fairly light-colored or almost clear. However, athletes who are urinating every 45 minutes (or more frequently) may be drinking too much.
- > Drink about 300-500 ml (10-17 ounces) 2 hours before an athletic event.
- > Drink regularly during practice and pre-match warm-ups.
- > During exercise try to drink fluids at a rate matching sweat losses.
- > Drink cooled fluids (approximately 59-72°F).
- > Consider weighing before and after an athletic event. Weight lost during the event correlates to lost body water that must be replaced. Each pound of weight lost should be replaced with 16 to 24 ounces of fluid.

Sources

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