



## **Athletic Coaches Need to Warm Up Too**

Coaching a school sport takes dedication, commitment, communication, and some physical abilities. Coaches are often ex-athletes who may have excelled in their sport. As we all know, however, we age, and the body does not always respond how we would like during physical exertion. Many coaches get injured during hands-on practices because their bodies are not as acclimated to the physical exertion. To lessen the likelihood of coaching injuries, practice an adequate warmup routine before practices and incorporate a cool down afterward.

Now, it is recommended that coaches include a warmup before rigorous practices and finish with a cooldown. The safe way to train is to slowly raise the body's temperature and loosen the muscles before doing anything strenuous, which is the intent of a warmup routine. Warmups should use dynamic exercises, like jogging, jumping, high knees, or squats, to prepare the body for physical activity. The goal is to get the blood flowing, especially during colder weather.

As practice ends, it is important to spend another five to ten minutes cooling down. The cooldown should include at least five minutes of cardio at a slower pace, for example walking on a treadmill. The cooldown is important because it helps reduce muscle soreness and the risk of injuries and brings your heart rate down. Static stretches, like a posterior capsule stretch, benefit the body when the muscles and joints are still warm. Stretching can help reduce the buildup of lactic acid, which can lead to muscle cramping and stiffness. Static stretching improves overall body flexibility and can be incorporated into a warmup. However, these stretches are proven to be more beneficial at the end of physical activity.

For the safest results, experts recommend only stretching the muscles relevant to the workout, limiting the time of each stretch, and starting with dynamic stretches. Utilize static stretches after practice during a cooldown. Ensure your coaches practice good warmup and cooldown techniques for their entire coaching staff to maintain a safe and healthy team.