

It's Time to Warm Up

EVER WONDER HOW PROFESSIONAL sport players and celebrities keep up with those intense and frequent training hours? As a Chicago Luvabull's squad captain, I learned how to help my team stay strong to cheer on the Chicago Bulls at home games. It all begins with a ten minute warm-up of low cardio moves ending with extensions and stretches that build the needed endurance to stay strong.

Your body is a dynamic machine. It does not rocket into motion without some level of wear and tear, and at worst, potential injury. The perfect warm-up is a good investment to get prepared for a great work out and be ready to face the day.

First, relax

Prepare your body for a relaxed and then intense, yet rewarding experience. There's no need to rush. These first two minutes that do not count toward the ten minutes, but will help get you focused.

1. Relax, breathe in deeply and exhale slowly. Take your time and count slowly to 64. Relax your shoulders and stand up with an upright posture. Pull in the navel, with your shoulders back and hands at your sides. Count slowly to 32 or two counts of sixteen.
2. Roll your shoulders slowly backward in circular movements. Your arms may come up slightly as you do this. Relax and focus on making this a slow and gentle process. Repeat the same movements forward with four counts of eight.

Benefits of the warm-up

- Increased heart rate
- Warm up muscle temperature
- Greater flexibility
- Increases oxygen levels in blood vessels connected to muscles
- Improve overall mind, body and muscle efficiency
- Reduce risk of injury
- Reduces "bad stress" on your heart

3. Clear your mind of thoughts about anything and focus on your goal of completing your warm up. Do not think about the workout ahead or any other task. Focus on completing the warm up and think about the benefits to motivate you.

Prepare for your warm-up

Do not stretch muscles before your warm-up! Instead, wait until you've completed your 10 minutes of continuous movement and activity. This is long enough for your muscles to reach the perfect temperature by increasing your heart rate. With improved flexibility your muscles will contract better for weight training or your morning jog. Increasing your heart rate gradually before any exercise regimen minimizes unnecessary stress on your heart.

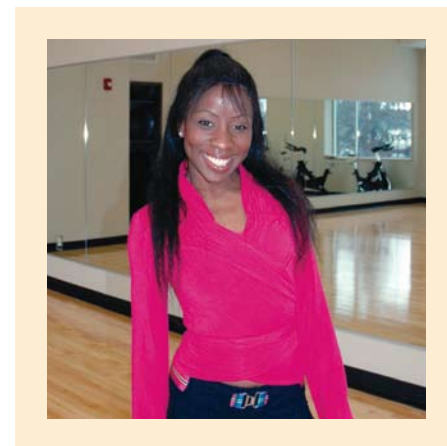
Beginner level warm-up instructions

The goal of the ten-minute beginner's warm-up is to complete it in ten minutes and to not exceed 20 minutes in total, which includes a brief rest between moves if needed. Here goes:

Four minutes of a march in place. Limit arm swinging. Step in same standing position as if you are about to walk but you remain in position. Replace each foot to the ground, raise alternating foot at an easy 20 degree angle, slight bend of knee.

Two minutes of a step together. Step your right foot out so feet are a shoulder width apart. Then bring left foot to join the right so legs are together. Do the reverse moving left leg back to stance position and bringing right foot over to left foot. Your arms will naturally sway.

Two minutes of the grapevine basic. Step your right foot out, with body momentum veering to right, then place your left foot place just behind the right one, so your legs are crossed. Right foot steps out again to the right, and uncross legs to standing shoulder width apart again and left foot step to tap the inside of right foot. Repeat movements leading



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with left foot back to original position.

Final two minutes are modified jumping jacks. March in place and raise arms straight above your head with each step, and then bring arms bent with palms of hands at chest level with next step.

After your warm-up

Rest for no more than 30 seconds after you warm up. If you rest after your warmup, your heart rate slows down, which slows down the vital levels of oxygen needed for performing your exercise.

Even if it is not cold outside, do not exceed more than 20 minutes for your warm up. In hot summer weather, keep your warm up to 10 minutes and find a shaded spot to avoid overheating.

If you ever feel any tightness or discomfort in your muscles while warming up, stop whatever you are doing. Take a moment to stretch the affected area gently while focusing on deep slow breathing simultaneously. Resume the warm up where you left off until it's complete. U