

Warm Up

There are a number of tactics to warm-up the body pre-exercise. Here are some ideas:

1. Warm up your body by moving in a low impact way- if you are going for a run, start with a walk that gets progressively faster and turns to a very light jog. This is not the time to sprint up the hill- (or the dipesa stairs!). Keep going for 5-10 minutes at this slow steady pace, or until you feel like your body is heating up from the inside (maybe you are ready to take your sweatshirt off). If running is not in your mix- we have included some other ideas to warm up your body pre-activity: (see warm up exercises on page 5 to 7)
2. Stop and circle all the joints around- starting with the ones that are going to get the most impact and progressing up through the whole body.
3. After your body is warm, incorporate a few gentle stretches that will serve to decrease the chance of muscle injury. These stretches should be light. Hold them for 15-30 seconds in a comfortable mild stretch. This is not the time to try to increase your muscle length!
4. After you have completed these steps, you should feel warm, moderately stretched, and ready to attack your physical challenge.

Cool Down and Rebalancing

Upon return from any physical challenge, one should assume that the workout or exercise is not finished until the cool down, rebalancing and stretching have taken place.

Cool down: This should be at least a few minutes of slower paced exercise that allows the muscles and heart rate to gradually return to normal.

Stretches: The goal of post exercise stretching is not the same as that of the pre-exercise stretches, although some of the same stretches can be used for both. The intent post exercise is to prevent muscles from shortening as they get stronger with exercises, to prevent unwanted tightness post exercise and is also the ideal time to work on increasing muscle length for muscles that may already be too tight.

Re-balancing: The goal of re-balancing is to restore balance to the body and muscles post exercise. This will help increase longevity of your joints, muscles and ligaments, and minimize the event of repetitive strain injuries from improper care and constant demands on your body!

Re-balancing s best done lying down. Although it is more convenient to do exercises in standing, it is nearly impossibility to truly re-balance the body unless you are able to feel and contract your abs which is best done when one is able to lie down. It is worth it to make re-balancing a priority- take 5 minutes before you hop in that shower to balance and align your body!