

Warming up – cooling down

Warming up

Often overlooked by the beginner, warming up can reduce the chance that you will develop an injury and it should be an integral part of your preparation whenever you go out for a run.

A typical example would be to walk for 60–90 seconds, building up the pace every 10 seconds or so before breaking into a gentle jog for half a mile (or whenever your body is beginning to warm up) before stopping and going into your stretching routine.

Your stretches should cover all the major muscle groups, particularly the legs and back, remembering to hold each stretch for 10–15 seconds without bouncing.

Cooling down

Just as important is cooling down. Once your running distance is complete, you should not just come to an immediate stop – this encourages the muscles to contract too quickly and could cause an injury. They should be eased down and stretched out gently.

The correct procedure, once the run is finished, is to drop your speed down to a jog for 30–60 seconds further, before slowing down to a brisk walk, reducing the speed every 10 seconds or so. You should then stretch all the major muscle groups before you get cold, but this time they should be held for slightly longer (15–20 seconds), again without bouncing.

Reproduced from www.realrunner.com. © Copyright 2002.