ACTIVE DYNAMIC WARM-UP

A dynamic warm-up coordinates all of your moving parts—muscles, ligaments, and joints—by challenging your flexibility, mobility, strength and stability all at once. Doing so is pivotal in getting you to the finish line as fun, fast and pain-free as possible.

The Goals of a Dynamic Warm-Up

1. Increase heart rate to get the blood pumping through the body and warm up the muscles.
2. Open up your joints, especially those within the hips, spine, feet and ankles.
3. Actively stretch your muscles to prepare them for what you'll be asking them for during the run.
4. Reinforce great posture.
5. Hit the ground running with all systems go when the gun goes off!

General Rules of the Warm-up

1. Always focus on form, balance and coordination. These drills are mini components of your running form and will enhance your skills when performed properly.
2. Time can vary anywhere from 2 minutes to 30 minutes. Depends on skill level and ability.
3. Interval distances for drills can begin at 10 meters and run up to 30 meters for advanced athletes.
4. Number of repetitions can increase with fitness and skill attainment.
5. Always begin with basic coordination, single limb movements and lighter momentum. As the warm up progresses, advance to multiple limb activities with greater range of motion, increased momentum and greater force application.
RUNNING DRILLS

Easy Skipping – Just like it sounds. Like when you were a kid. Designed to begin your warm up and loosen your knees, hips and ankles. Focus in on relaxed arm action and light on your feet.

Side Skips - Although running is an action which takes place to move you forward, your stabilizing muscles (adductors/abductors) play an important role as well. This drill is designed to work those muscles to build strength, coordination, and balance.

Video Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0QZoavQqW0
Time in video: 0:38

A March and A Skip - These two exercises are put together because it helps to master the A March before moving to the A Skip. A Skips further recruit the hamstrings and glutes for the active propulsion stage of running. Skip with high knees. As you bring your leg down, finish with a slight pawing motion as you pull backwards (in the video link, this tip is neglected, but is very important to the drill). Focus on initiating this pull from the glutes as the hamstrings join the motion. This ingrains the backward pulling motion important for running propulsion into your muscle memory.

Video Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8il_EjiBWQ

High Knees - The high knee drill works the loading phase of run. The key to performing this drill properly is to focus on driving the foot down and letting it spring back up off the ground. Keep an upright posture. Your feet should land under your hips. Use the same arm motion you would use during running.

Video Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0QZoavQqW0
Time in video: 4:00

Butt Kicks - The butt kick drill conditions and coordinates the hamstrings and glutes for a strong running stride. The butt kick drill should almost feel like a variation of running with high knees. DO NOT KICK BACKWARDS. Pull your heels up directly underneath you keeping the knee, heel, and toe up throughout the drill. Use the same arm motion you would use during running.

Video Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0QZoavQqW0
Time in video: 3:19

Carioca/Grapevine - Like side skips, this exercise is designed to further develop stabilizing muscles that play a secondary, but vital role in running.

Video Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0QZoavQqW0
Time in video: 1:01
**Heel Walks and Toe Walks** – These two drills work together to strengthen the ankle, calf and shin muscles. For heel walk, dorsi flex the foot by pulling your toes towards your shins and lock your knees. Then walk on your heels. This strengthens the shin muscles and will help in the prevention of shin splints. For toes walk, lock the knees again and raise up on the toes. Walk forward on the toes. This will help strengthen the calves and ankles.

**B Skip** - The B Skip is very similar to the A Skip but it includes extending the leg forward before the pawing motion. It is a little more difficult than the A Skip, but really helps to emphasize the pawing backward motion as your foot lands on the ground and pulls through. Also, like the A Skip, this exercise activates the glutes and hamstrings.

Video Link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcH97Dx8VCk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcH97Dx8VCk)
Time in Video: 1:23

**Hurdle Step Overs** – This drill is designed to work on arm action, knee lift, foot strike, hip mobility and coordination of mechanics. Set the hurdle on the lowest possible height and have them lined up back to back with the bottom rails touching the one behind and in front of it. Walk up to the hurdle and begin with either leg. Step the first leg (lead leg) over by lifting the leg up through the knee (like a high knee drill). Step the lead leg over the hurdle. Then bring the second (trail) leg through the motion over the hurdle. Lead with the knee towards the sky and bring it under the arm pit.

Video Link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Edz_o7FJxF4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Edz_o7FJxF4)
Time in Video: 08 seconds

**Leg Swings and Leg Kicks (Pendulum Swings)** – This series of motions is designed to loosen up the hip in 4 different planes of motion. It will also loosen the hip flexors, hamstrings, IT band and adductor muscle (inner thigh). Begin by standing with the legs together. Have your left or right arm against a wall, perpendicular to your body. Begin with letting the leg swing front to back and then left and right across the front of the body. Then switch legs and repeat.

Video Link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naW8u72lOzI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naW8u72lOzI)

**Accelerators** - Accelerators or strides can be used in multiple ways. For speed workouts, they can be used beforehand to get your heart rate up and to ingrain proper running form into your muscle memory. For most runners, they can be used as the latter. Do this drill after you have completed the prior drills. Focus on your form. Keep your posture upright, drive your knees, swing your arms at the shoulders. Keep your cadence quick, regardless of your pace. Picture yourself running smooth, light, and efficient. Start slow and gradually accelerate for about 80 meters to about 90% effort. Three repetitions should be fine.

Video Link: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAiAvupFT6g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAiAvupFT6g)
Time in Video: 3:18
Further Information

As you can see, some of the drills used the same video. Each video was selected because it used the best explanation and/or the athlete in the video performed the drill with the proper technique. Each video has other drills in them, all focused on improving running form. You can watch all the videos if you choose, keeping in mind which of them express the best examples of each exercise.

Take your time! You don’t have to rush any of the exercises. Again, focus on using the proper technique for each! Oh, and have fun and relax!

If you have questions about any of the information above or would like a more in depth explanation of these drills, please contact:

Justin Dilanni  
Pro Bike + Run  
Manager/Shoe Buyer  
USATF Level 1 Certified Coach  
Phone: 412-490-0881  
Email: justind@eliterunners.com

or

Matt Imhof  
Pro Bike + Run  
A.C.E Certified Personal Trainer  
USATF Level 1 Certified Coach  
Phone: 412-490-0881  
matti@eliterunners.com