

## Why A Good Warm Up Can Make Or Break Your Training Day

But if I warm up I'll lose energy for my work out!!

Warming up is boring. Can I just skip to the part where I lift heavy things?

But I don't have time to warm up!

How many times have you echoed these words? Do you want to know how many times us coaches have heard these words from our trainees? Way too many! Instead of dragging your body half-asleep through your warm up or trying to conserve energy for your main workout, let's discuss why you should warm up.

### But what is a warm up anyway?

Let's imagine that you're cooking dinner. More specifically, you're cooking pizza for dinner. And for the sake of being diplomatic for a fitness post on a fitness website, let's say you're cooking a gluten-free, veggie-loaded, virgin-coconut-oil pizza (read : ew).

Now what's the first thing you need to do?

You need to get all your ingredients and utensils together, prep your meat and veg, fire up your oven, and then you can get started on the actual cooking.

Warming up before a training session is the same thing.

What do you need to do before you lift a heavy weight / play a sport / run a marathon?

You need to make sure your joints are mobile and ready for action ("get all your ingredients and utensils together"), prep your muscles for intense contractions ("prep your meat and veg"), ensure your body temperature is higher than it is when you are sitting on a couch ("fire up your oven!").

A good warm-up primes your body to perform better, and reduces the risk of injury.

**Good warm-up**

**Bad / No warm-up**

## The Quad

Redefining Fitness - Chennai's Most Sought-After Fitness Experience

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Better workout performance + using the 'right' muscles and getting more benefit out of your workout + reduced chance of injury

High risk of injury because your body isn't prepared to push hard + sloppy reps because you are probably still half asleep / not tuned in to what you are doing

And what happens to your body when you warm up?

A bunch of cool stuff, as it turns out. Including but not limited to,

1.

**The damage caused by daily life is reduced**

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Sedentary lifestyles mess with our bodies every minute. You can't spend 10 hours hunched over a laptop, stressing your spine, and then walk into a training session and expect to lift a ton of weight. A good warm up should address joints that take a beating when you spend long hours at a desk and put other muscles at risk.

2.

### **Your joints get lubricated**

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You know how when you get your car back after an oil change it drives like a smooth, brand new machine? That's exactly what happens to your joints when you warm up. A good warm up ensures that joints are taken through their entire range of motion in a controlled manner.

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And an added bonus : the soft tissue (tendons, ligaments, cartilage) surrounding joints become more pliable which means they are less likely to tear under a heavy load.

3.

### **Muscles get activated**

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Once your joints and surrounding soft tissue are well lubricated, the associated muscles are in a better position to do their job. And conversely, if you don't spend enough time working on joint mobility, you stand a higher chance of injuring yourself because your muscles are not primed for action. A good warm up will get your 'prime movers' or larger muscles ready for action, and your 'stabilisers' smaller muscles ready to provide support to the larger muscles.

4.

### **You perfect movement patterns**

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Can you imagine Nadal thinking of how to optimise his forehand wrist position while

facing set point against Federer? That's because he doesn't. Because he's done all his thinking and technique work in practise. Use your warm up to perfect movement patterns until they become second nature and you can safely load up the pattern.

5.

Your body temperature increases, your heart rate spikes, and well, you wake up enough to start a strong workout!

Convinced? Then, let's figure out how to warmup!

## How to design your warmup

As with most things fitness-related, you don't need the fanciest new fad, or the coolest looking exercise. We love including the following into our warm ups -

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### Joint mobility

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Like we mentioned above, getting your joints well oiled is key to a good warm up. Start off your warm-up by doing some isolated mobility work like Ankle rotations, Rocking, Thoracic spine extensions. Throw in some foam rolling too for a painful but effective massage.

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### Dynamic warmup

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Instead of static stretching (holding a stretch for long duration), do dynamic stretching because it involves continuous movement and your muscles are 'stretched' by gradually increasing range of motion with each repetition of the exercise.

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### **“Core” activation**

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We're using the term core here to mean glutes (butt muscles) and abs. These are two muscle groups that cannot be ignored because of the role they play in keeping your spine stable, and tying your body together to become a stronger unit overall.

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Exercises we like using here are Hollow Holds, Glute bridges, Plank variations, etc. There are a variety of different moves that will work; just make sure your glutes and abs are on fire before you start your workout.

### **On a final note,**

We're hoping we managed to set some lightbulbs off in your head and you had a Eureka moment about why warm ups are so important. Now here's something to think about - if you're already putting in the effort to train hard, you might as well put in a little extra time and effort in warming up and get a lot more in return!