

# Why warm up?

Children need to warm up and cool down when they're playing sport, just as much as adults do.

Here are the warm-up rules for before and after physical activity.

## Why warm up?

The warm-up prepares the child for activity and increases his or her body temperature, heart rate and breathing rate. Each warm-up should be supervised and involve movements used in the sport itself, and start at low intensity then build up. Usually it takes five to 10 minutes.

Stretching activities should be included because they reduce the chances of injury and increase muscle flexibility. There are seven rules for stretching:

- Warm up before you stretch
- Stretch before and after exercise
- Stretch all muscle groups that will be involved in the activity
- Stretch gently and slowly
- Never bounce or stretch rapidly
- Stretch to the point of tension and discomfort, never pain
- Do not hold your breath while stretching: breathe slowly and easily.

## Why cool down?

Cooling down helps reduce soreness and stiffness. Stretching afterwards is good for flexibility and relaxing muscles. After training, players should cool down by doing a less intense activity, such as a few minutes of easy jogging or walking, plus five minutes of gentle stretching.

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