

DYNAMIC (ACTIVE) STRETCHING

What is dynamic (active) stretching?

Dynamic stretching involves the progressive, active stretch of muscles and joints through a sport specific range of motion. It involves gradual increased intensity of movement as opposed to static stretching, which involves lengthening a muscle to the end of its range and holding the stretch over a period time.

When is Dynamic (active) stretching appropriate?

Dynamic stretching is appropriate prior to physical activity, eg. pre-match and pre-training. Dynamic stretching can be incorporated into the warm up program.

Why is dynamic (active) stretching used?

Dynamic stretching exercises condition the muscles for dynamic movement by stretching and warming the muscle groups without lengthening muscle fibers. Dynamic stretching allows the muscles and tendons to be put through a specific range of movement, similar to movements that would occur during the game of rugby. The effect can be likened to stretching a rubber band. After stretching the rubber band, it returns to its normal length.

Static stretching is used to increase flexibility in an attempt to gradually increase the length and at the same time relax the muscle fibers. This effect can be likened to stretching a piece of blue tac, and after it is stretched it does not totally return to its original length and shape. Static stretching is an important part of the training/playing conditioning program and can be incorporated after exercise when the muscles are warmed and supple.

How to perform dynamic (active) stretches.

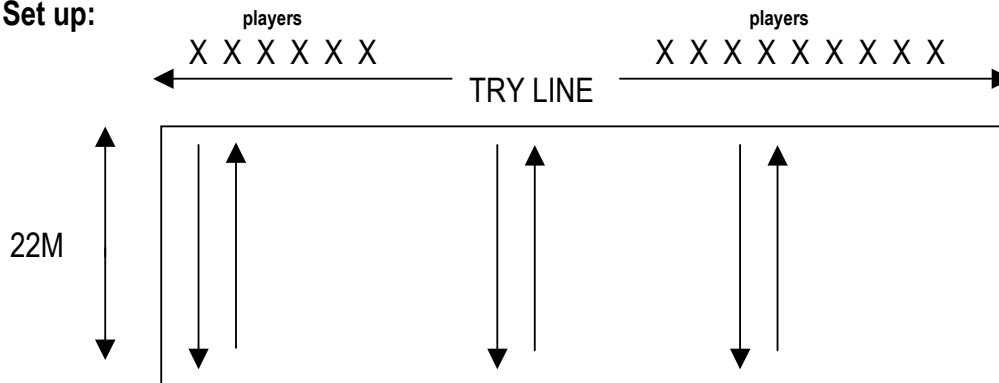
A dynamic stretching routine can be a series of exercises that progressively build from basic, medium intensity movements through to more intense exercises that move the muscles and joints through full ranges of motion. Muscle fibers need to be given time to gradually warm until they are ready for an intense stretch.

NB: The players need to be warmed before working into the dynamic stretching routine. A simple game performed at a low to medium intensity will produce a sweat on the players that is a general sign that the players are ready to stretch. Be sure to understand individual needs of the players. Stretching routines will differ for players with injuries or in rehabilitation phases.

DYNAMIC (ACTIVE) STRETCHING ROUTINE EXAMPLE

Equipment: 4 markers.

Set up:



- Players to form along the try line. Coach needs to view all players so that effective feedback can be given.
- On coach's cue, players are to perform the exercise demonstrated, followed by a slow jog up to the 22m line.
- **Remember that the total length of time stretching should last for 7 to 10 minutes.**
- **The coach needs to inform the players the number of repetitions required for each exercise.**
- **A good guide is to have each stretch held in the stretching position for 5 sec, then relax, before stretching the other side of the body.**

Below are some commonly used dynamic stretches. They have been rated in terms of how intense the movements are and where they should be positioned in a stretching routine. Remember that the intensity of the exercises performed should be progressive, finishing with the more complex exercises.

Dynamic (active) Stretches

1. Squat – low intensity / 8 repetitions



← **Photo (a)**
Starting position. Slowly squat into the position shown in the second photo.

Photo (b) →
Squat position. Heels to be on the ground in this position.



2. Pelvic thrusts – low to medium intensity / 8 repetitions



Photo (a)
Starting position, hands to side, knees 90 degrees. abdominals on.



Photo (b)
Phase 2, drive hips up, shoulders remain on the ground. Squeeze bum and hold

3. Calves - Low to medium intensity / 5 repetitions each leg



Photo (a)
Alternate heels touching the ground. Make stretch harder by walking hands closer to feet. Hold stretch for 5 sec then relax and stretch other leg.

4. Crucifix on back, opposite hand to opposite foot – medium intensity / 5 repetitions each leg



Photo (a)
Starting position



Photo (b)
Attempt to bring opposite foot to opposite hand whilst keeping back and arms flat.

5. Crucifix on front, opposite foot to opposite hand - **medium intensity / 5 repetitions each leg**



Photo (a) ↑
Starting position



Photo (b) ↑
Attempt to bring opposite foot to opposite hand whilst keeping shoulders and arms flat.

6. Bunny kicks – **medium to high intensity / 5 repetitions**



Photo (a) ↑
Starting position, knees off ground.



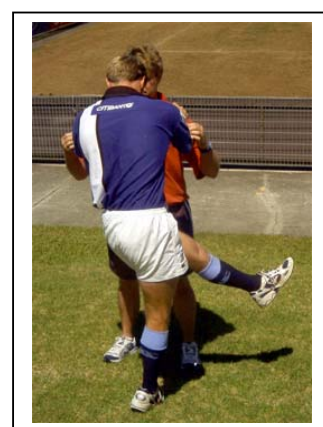
Photo (b) ↑
Flick feet , bending at the knees, Heels to hit bum. Hold abdominals on.

7. Partner swings – **medium to high intensity / 8 repetitions each leg**



← Photo (a)
Face partner and swing leg across.

Photo (b) →
Swing leg through and back to starting position keeping upper body upright.



8. Alternate lunges - **medium to high intensity / 5 repetitions each leg**

Starting position with feet together, hands on hips. Step forward into lunge.



← **Photo (a)**

Knee pointing towards the ground (right in this example) does not touch the ground. Push the pelvis forward, squeezing the bum whilst the upper body remains upright. Hold this position for 5 sec.

9. Quad stretch flick through – **medium to high intensity / 5 repetitions each leg**



← **Photo (a)**
Holding quad stretch for 5 sec. Knee in tight using the same arm as leg to hold the stretch.



← **Photo (b)**

Swing the leg through keeping balance.

10. Alternate straddle – **high intensity / 4 repetitions each leg**



Photo (a) ↑

Start in push up position with flat back, squeeze bum and hold abdominals on. Feet together.

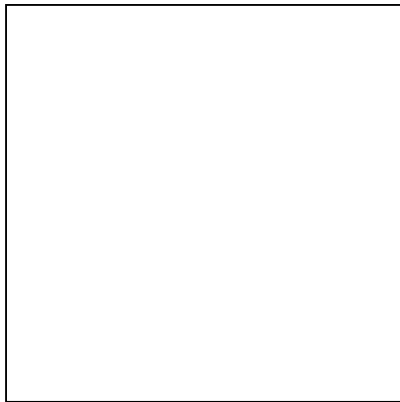


Photo (b) ↑

Attempt to bring foot parallel to hands. As the right leg moves back to starting position bring the left foot to the hands.

11. Hurdle Steps - medium to high intensity / 5 repetitions each leg

Starting position with feet together, hands on hips. Step forward into lunge.



← Photo (a)

Knee pointing towards the ground (right in this example) does not touch the ground. Push the pelvis forward, squeezing the bum whilst the upper body remains upright. Hold this position for 5 sec.

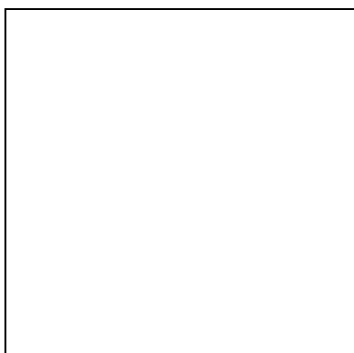
12. Lateral Sumo squats – medium to high intensity / 5 repetitions each way

Photo (a) →

Knee pointing towards the ground (right in this example) does not touch the ground. Push the pelvis forward, squeezing the bum whilst the upper body position for 5 sec.



13. Russian Kicks– high intensity / 5 repetitions each leg



← Photo (a)

Start in push up position with flat back, squeeze bum and hold abdominals on. Feet together.