



Warming-up, Keeping 'warm', Warming-down – A Brief Overview

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All four areas of warming up etc are equally important and any one part should not be neglected or thought of as unnecessary. As all four elements work together to bring the body and mind to a physical peak, preparation for the player to play tag rugby is ensured. This process is aimed at maintaining a minimal risk of sports injury to the discerning player.

1) The General warm up

The general warm up should consist of a light physical activity. Both the intensity and duration of the general warm up (or how hard and how long), should be governed by the fitness level of the participating player. Although a general warm up for the average person should take about five minutes and result in a light sweat.

The aim of the general warm up is simply to elevate the heart rate and respiratory rate. This in turn increases the blood flow and helps with the transportation of oxygen and nutrients to the working muscles. This also helps to increase the muscle temperature, allowing for a more effective stretch. Which bring us to part two...

2) Dynamic stretching 1

Dynamic stretching involves a controlled, soft bounce or swinging motion to gently force a particular body part past its usual range of movement. The force of the bounce or swing is gradually increased but should never become radical, sore or uncontrolled.

During this part of an effective warm up it is also important to keep the dynamic stretches specific to tag rugby. Some of the stretches that can be completed are – Hamstring walks, Bum flicks, Squats, Lunges and Torso rotations. Picture and video examples of these stretches and others can be seen on the [IRB website in the rugby ready section](#).

It would be advisable to ask someone who is used to dynamic flexibility to lead this section.

3) Sport specific warm up

With the first two parts of the warm up carried out thoroughly and correctly, it is now safe to move onto the third part of an effective warm up. In this part, the player is specifically preparing their body for the demands of their particular sport.

During this part of the warm up, a more vigorous activity should be employed. Activities should reflect the type of movements and actions which will be required during tag rugby. For example you could do a cross over grid. In this drill you set up a square 10m x 10m and spread out evenly on all 4 corners. The drill starts with players at opposite corners running straight across as they get to the middle the player with the ball passes it to the player without the ball. This and more drill can be seen on the [IRB website in the rugby ready section](#).

**NB* - Only the non contact drills should be undertaken*



4) Dynamic stretching 2

Finally, a correct warm up should finish with a series of dynamic stretches. During this last part of an effective warm up it is also important to keep the dynamic stretches specific to tag rugby. This should result in the player reaching a physical and mental peak. At this point the player is most prepared for the rigors and enjoyment of tag rugby.

The above information forms the basis of a complete and effective warm up. However, I am well aware that this entire process is somewhat of an 'ideal' or 'perfect' warm up. I am also well aware that this is not always possible or convenient in the real world. Therefore, the player must become responsible for assessing their own goals and adjusting their warm up accordingly.

For instance, if you arrive late for training or a game don't join in until you are fully warmed up.

For people just looking to increase their general level of health and fitness, a minimum of 12 minutes would be enough. However, if you are involved in tag rugby at a higher grade you need to dedicate adequate time and effort to a complete warm up.

Example Warm-Up for a Tag Rugby player

- 3 laps of Tag pitch at slow pace (*include running sideways/backwards, high knees and kicking heels backward*)
 - 3 minute stretch involving dynamic flexibility
 - 5 x 20m length runs (*work from 50% sprint to 80% sprint*)
 - 5 x zigzag runs (*80% sprint*)
 - 1 minute stretch involving dynamic flexibility
 - Tag specific drills (*Building up to 100% pace*)
 - 2 minute stretch involving dynamic flexibility
- Total time – 12 / 15 min**

If there is a person on your team who is used to completing warm ups ask them to lead the warm up and as people get used to the warm up you can share the responsibility amongst the team.



Keeping WARM between matches

This is important if playing games in two different time slots as the body will become cold and flexibility will decrease if you do not keep warm between matches. The best way to keep warm is to complete mini warm ups with low intensity (The first 2 parts of the above warm up) that lasts 3 minutes.

It is best to complete this before the next match or if you have been in achieve for more than ten minutes.

Example Mini-Warm-Up for Tag Rugby

- 1 lap of Tag pitch at slow pace (*include running sideways/backwards, high knees and kicking heels backward*)
- 2 minute stretch involving dynamic flexibility

You may be tired between matches but keeping warm will help prevent injuries and improve performance.

What is a WARM-DOWN?

Every team should complete a warm down.

To often teams finish their match and head straight to the bar or home. An appropriate warm down will:

- aid in the dissipation of waste products - including lactic acid (Byproduct of exercise)
- reduce the potential for DOMS (Delayed onset muscle soreness)

An appropriate warm down would be...

- 2 minutes jogging/walking – *to decrease body temperature and remove waste products from the working muscles*
- 2 minutes static stretching- *to decrease body temperature, remove waste products from working muscles and to increase range of movement.*

The important areas to stretch are all the muscles of the legs and some upper body muscles. It is important to hold the stretches for longer than the warm up thus making the stretch static. Anywhere between 10 and 30 seconds is advisable. Again, the above stretches and more can be seen on the [IRB website in the rugby ready section](#).

As with other warming exercises, if there is a person on your team who is used to completing warm-downs ask them to lead the warm down and as people get used to it share the responsibility amongst the team.