

## **THE COWBOY WARM UP**

Without an adequate warm-up YOU could be putting a career on the line during the upcoming workout. At the very least, an inadequate warm up may lead to a poor workout or strained muscle. When preparing to warm-up, it is important to remember several key points:

- 1) Never stretch a cold muscle because of the potential risks involved.
- 2) A muscle engorged with blood is a more flexible muscle. Always warm up a muscle before you stretch or begin to workout.
- 3) Static stretching should only follow an effective warm-up or come at the end of a workout.

The following outlines the benefits of a warm-up before a workout or competition.

- 1) Increases rate, efficiency and strength of muscular contractions.
- 2) Improves upon and readies the athletes needed coordination through related movements.
- 3) Acts as a preventive measure for injury.
- 4) Allows athlete to respond more quickly to external stimuli, which is important in practice and game situation.

Without question, a warm-up program will enhance athletic performance and reduce injury. The following guidelines should be used when developing your warm-up.

- 1) Activity should be intense enough to increase body temperature and cause a light sweat.
- 2) Warm-up should never cause fatigue.
- 3) Warm-up should include movements similar to actual activity.
- 4) A stretching program should follow the warm-up.

Suggested warm-ups include:

- 1) Jumping rope with a series of varying patterns.
- 2) A light jog where the athlete would perform different skills for a set time or number of yards around a court or field. Example- jog for 1 minute, shuffle for 20 seconds, jog for 1 minute, backpedal for 20 seconds, etc...
- 3) Performing light calisthenics such as push ups, sit-ups, and jumping jacks for 5 minutes.

Don't shy away from being creative with different drills that will qualify as good warm-up activities. **Refer to the website for specific warm up drills and exercises performed by Cowboy athletes!**

## **THE COWBOY FLEXIBILITY PLAN**

Flexibility is defined as an ability to move a limb around a joint through its full range of motion (ROM). Any flexibility program should be made up of stretches that include all major muscles and joints from a variety of angles. Application of this type of routine daily can greatly improve flexibility over the course of several weeks. A lack of adequate flexibility can actually hinder speed due to insufficient stride length and lead to injury from stress placed on muscles during the activity.

When stretching...

- 1) Always warm up first.
- 2) You want to progress through different stages of the stretch. The first step is the easy stretch, characterized by very mild tension in the muscle. Hold this position for 10 seconds and as the tension diminishes, move into the second stage, or the developmental stretch. More tension should be felt in this stage, but not to the point of pain. Hold this stage for 10-20 seconds.
- 3) Never stretch to the point of pain. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage or drastic stretch. Back off the stretch when you begin to feel pain.
- 4) Never bounce when stretching. This actually inhibits flexibility due to the body's protective measures against rapid stretching of the muscle. Always maintain a relaxed, normal breathing pattern when stretching.
- 5) Always stretch after each training session.

***Refer to the website for specific warm up drills and exercises performed by Cowboy athletes!***