

ASK THE DOC: MARCH 2023

TOPIC: **PRE-MATCH WARM-UPS & POST-MATCH RECOVERY**



WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO WARM UP?

When getting ready to play any type of sport or physical activity, warming up the muscles and preparing the joints for the load and stresses we are about to place on them is important. Dynamic warm-ups (moving exercises) are more beneficial than a static warm-up of stretching; therefore, it is recommended to get the blood flowing with light jogging, exercise bike or elliptical. Since tennis involves the lower body, core (with particular emphasis on rotation) and upper body, warming up all of these essential parts is necessary.

Lower body - Once you have a nice light sweat going, get the glutes and quads activated using walking front and lateral lunges. Additionally, walking single leg reverse deadlifts (pictured below) will wake up the posterior kinetic chain, including the hamstrings, glutes and low back muscles. Hip circumduction (making large circles with the leg while the knee is flexed) helps loosen up the hips for the rotation and change of direction needed to compete.

Core and upper body - While doing lunges, consider twisting over the knee to add a rotational component to the lunges and activate your obliques (pictured below). Planks on your elbows will wake up the core and adding a rotation component with the upper body opening up to the side and then back down into a plank position will warm up everything from the glutes to low back and obliques. Using elastic bands in a slight squatted position, rotating with the band side-to-side in both directions, will get you ready to twist while serving and striking the ball. For the arms and shoulders, using the bands for rows and external rotation with the shoulder abducted (pictured below) is recommended.

Find a routine that works for you. The goal is to enter playing with a warmed-up body that is not fatigued while having the joints and muscles prepared for the stresses about to be placed on them. For some, the Achilles may be tight or low back may be sore. If that is the case, spend more time getting these areas loose in order to compete at your highest level and prevent injury.

YOU DIDN'T MENTION STRETCHING. WHEN SHOULD I STRETCH?

Static stretching is most helpful after playing. With exercise and strenuous activity, muscles tighten up as they fatigue and attempt to recover. It is important to keep muscles limber and joints flexible; therefore, stretching at the end of activity will help prevent stiff and sore joints and better prepare you for the next competition or training session. Again, stretches should include a routine for the lower body, core and upper body.

WHAT ARE THE BEST OPTIONS FOR RECOVERY?

There are a lot of recovery tools and methods out there and it has become a very large industry. However, there isn't much supporting evidence that it makes a clinical difference in recovery. Maintaining mobility, hydration, proper nutrition and rest are necessary for the body to truly recover. This should include a stretching program, light mobility exercises and getting adequate sleep. Beyond that, there are many options that may make you feel better in the short term including ice baths, massage, cupping, etc., but have yet to show impact on long term results.

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EXERCISES AND STRETCHES

SHOULDER ABDUCTION WITH EXTERNAL ROTATION WITH BAND



Attach band to a sturdy post roughly at chin height. Grasp band with left arm and elevate the elbow close to 90 degrees from torso. Rotate hand in an upward motion until forearm/hand are roughly perpendicular to the ground. Rotate hand back down to starting position. Repeat same process with the right arm.

2-3 sets of 10-12 reps

ROTATING LUNGES



Start with feet close to hip-width apart. Bring right foot forward while keeping opposite foot planted on the ground. Lean into and bend the right knee while keeping the left knee close to full extension. Once the left knee is close to touching the ground, rotate the trunk towards the right knee. After this is completed, return trunk to neutral position and step forward with the left leg, returning to starting position. Repeat same process with left foot stepping forward.

2 sets of 8-10 reps on each leg

EXERCISES AND STRETCHES

REVERSE WALKING DEADLIFTS



Begin with feet hip width apart. Shift weight to right leg. Begin bending forward at the waist with arms extended and left leg extended. Continue bending forward until torso, arms and leg are close to parallel to the ground. Bring left leg down into starting position. Take 1 step backwards with left leg and repeat same process this time keeping left leg on the ground.

2 sets of 8-10 reps on each leg

