

Baseball Tips: Get Moving with Dynamic Warm-up

If you have been to sport science presentation lately it is likely that you have heard some information about dynamic warm-up and flexibility training. This is an area of training that is receiving more and more attention in the sporting community and many of the conclusions that have been drawn about this type of warm-up are directly applicable to baseball.

Traditionally, pre-practice and pre-competition warm-up routines have typically focused on sustained static stretching (ie. 30-60sec holds). While this type of stretching is still important for maintaining flexibility and joint range of motion, it really should be performed after play, not before practice or competition. This is a relatively new way of thinking about stretching and flexibility, but research has shown that sustained static stretching can reduce the force and power the muscle can generate and that this impaired function may last for twenty to thirty minutes. Therefore, the traditional practice of team pre-game sustained static stretching needs to evolve.



One of the most pervasive myths in sports is the belief that static stretching before activity improves performance and reduces the risk of injury. Over a decade of biomechanical research on the acute and long-term responses of muscle to stretching shows that this traditional teaching is flawed. Stretching is most effective for increasing range of motion when conducted during the cool-down phase of a workout.

Dynamic warm-up is an essential element of any pre-practice or pre-competition routine and helps prepare the body and mind for the dynamic demands of today's baseball game. An effective warm-up does six very important things for baseball players.

1. Increases body and muscle temperature:

Makes tissues more pliable and allows them to work more efficiently.

2. Increases blood flow:

Gets the heart, lungs and muscles ready for vigorous activity and the demands of baseball.

3. Improves oxygen availability:

Our body needs oxygen to perform. A warmed-up athlete is better able to deliver oxygen to the working tissues.

4. Improved muscle contraction/reflex time:

Wakes up the nervous system and gets the brain talking with the muscles more effectively.

5. Stretches muscles actively:

Prepares them for the dynamic forces experienced during practices and games, and engrains proper movement patterns and the coordination needed in baseball.

6. Prevents injury, while improving performance.

A dynamic warm-up, which involves active movement with dynamic stretching, accomplishes all of these tasks. So get up, get moving, and get in the game.

Once the Dynamic Warm-up has been completed, the team can then move to more skill specific preparation and drills:

- partner throwing progressions
- skill stations (ie. batting, fielding, etc.)
- pitcher/catcher specific progressions
- team infield/outfield pregame routine