



## Icy Temperatures, Frozen Performance

Cold tightens. Cold slows. It freezes you up, making your muscles sluggish and unprepared. This has two major implications for your strength-training and matches:

1. **Cold, tight muscles are more prone to injury.** Constricted into limited mobility, muscles tend to strain and pull under stress. Imagine trying to stretch a rubber band over a very big box. If you pull it hard and fast, it'll snap in half. Slowly warm it up, and it will stretch to take the force of your pull. Now imagine putting that rubber band in the freezer for a while first. That's your muscles in the winter. Flash-frozen rubber bands.
2. **Cold muscles don't perform as well.** They don't operate at maximum range of motion, they don't access their full potential strength, and they're generally less ready for action. Consider your warm up a gentle awakening for your sleepy muscles, followed by a slow cup of coffee, chased by a jolt of espresso. Warming up muscles is the wake-up call that lets you get the most out of your workout.

## Turn Up the Heat

Much of the power of the warm up, especially in the winter, lies in the “warm” part. **Increasing muscle temperature loosens muscles for injury-preventing flexibility and mobility.** It also eases them into movement so they can access their full range of motion. Properly warmed up muscles can execute exercises with proper form, for better results and fewer injuries. Warm muscles are also more responsive. They contract and relax more quickly, allowing for better performance.

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Proper warm ups also increase all-over body temperature, so your body can work according to its amazing integrated design. **If you're the tin man, a good warm up is your oil can, getting the joints and muscles flowing so they can work together at maximum efficiency.** Not only is this key for building functional, full-body strength, but it's also vital for injury prevention. Nothing in the body works in isolation, and one unresponsive link in the chain can cause a major malfunction. A good warm up keeps your body running like a well-oiled machine.

## Light a Bonfire, Not a Match

Warming up only works if you do it right. **I hate to break it to you, but a couple of static stretches and a five-minute jaunt on the treadmill isn't going to cut it.** In fact, static stretching can actually decrease the efficacy of your strength-training workout, though to what degree is up for debate. Some studies conclude that while static stretching doesn't hurt, it doesn't help either. Others, however, fall firmly in the anti-static stretching camp, concluding it's actually detrimental to power output and prevents maximum performance.<sup>1,2</sup> Either way, sitting and doing a couple half-hearted attempts at touching your toes isn't going to cut it.

Neither is that just-enough-to-break-a-sweat treadmill run. A recent study found

that as far as performance is concerned, a five-minute cardio warm up had the same effect as no warm up at all.<sup>3</sup> A high-intensity, fifteen-minute warm up *reduced* strength. The lower intensity fifteen-minute workout, however, created a strength increase. **Long and mellow trumps quick and intense,** bringing the desired increased body temperature without the pre-routine fatigue.

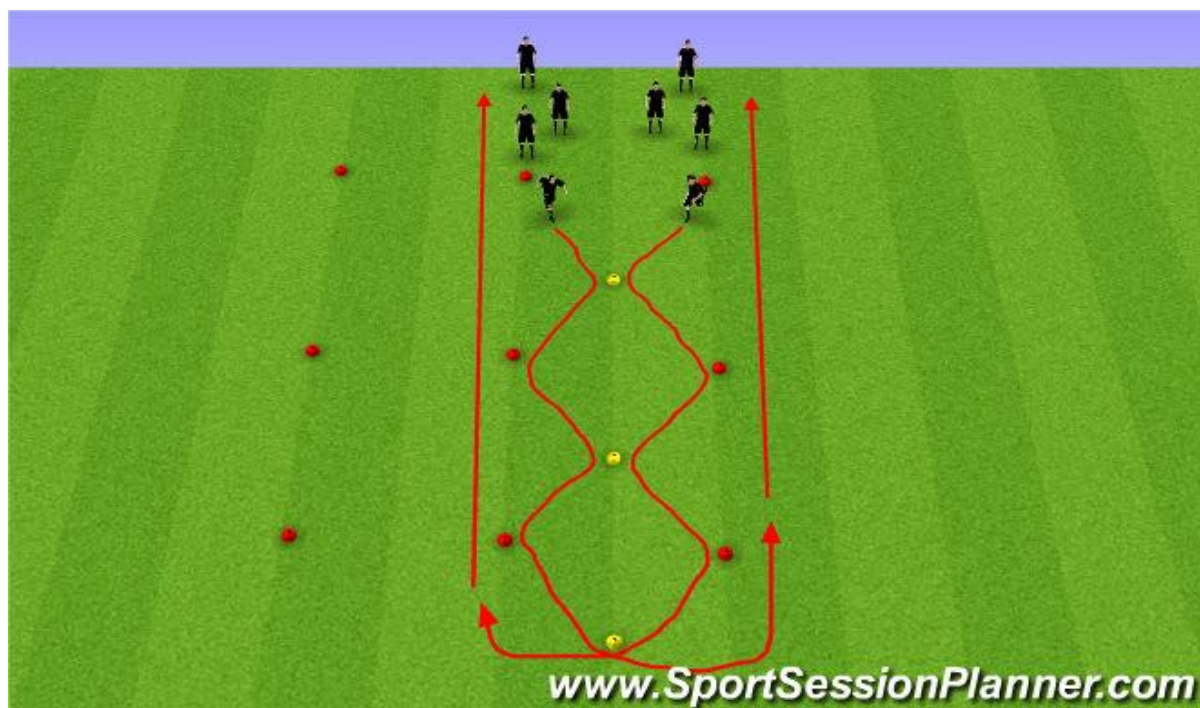
## Bodyweight Is Best

Bodyweight mobility exercises make the ideal warm up. As dynamic stretches, they provide the kind of movement [proven to enhance muscular performance](#). They increase heart rate, but are of adjustable intensity, so you can craft the kind of longer, lower-intensity warm up found to be most effective. **Best yet, bodyweight exercises are inherently focused on functional strength and mobility**, making for an excellent full-body warm up.

For a fun and effective warm up, start with these four mobility-boosting exercises. These enjoyable sequences of movements will help you gently ease into your match and give you a pleasant start on even the chilliest winter days. **Start slow, gradually picking up speed as you build heat.** The sequences grow more active as the warm up progresses, so moving through them in the order is recommended.

Match warm up. 30 minutes all inclusive.

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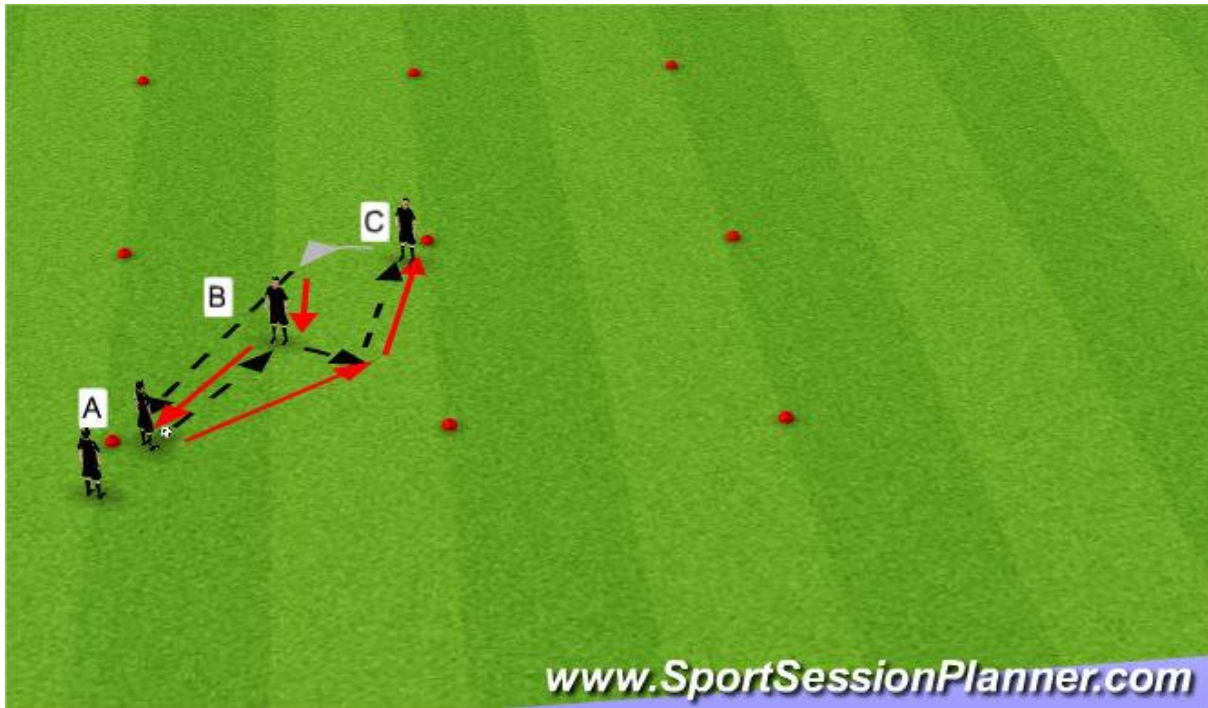
### Dynamic running (5 mins)

Markers at 10m intervals. Split players into 2 lines.

Pairs zig zag as shown, calling each other's names as they set off - next pair start when 1st pair pass 1st yellow marker. Do 2 circuit for each of the following

1. Jog in all the way.
2. Sideways facing to yellow marker, sideways back to back to red marker
3. Forwards to yellow, and backwards to red.
4. High knees, heel flicks
5. Inside leg lunge, outside leg lunge
6. Jog , sprint.
7. Jog , sprint, header at final yellow marker.

Should last 5 minutes.



### Tiki taka passing (5 mins)

Tiki taka , 4 groups of 3 or 4 players in the grid.

A passes to B and moves forward to receive Bs layoff.

B replaces A (or joins back of queue).

A passes to C and follows pass.

C receives from As pass and plays long back to new A.

C becomes new B.

Play for 5 minutes.



### Creativity on the ball (5 mins)

Diagonally opposite players pass across the area and move to receive, then dribble in to do the same move (eg right scissor, go left) and then pass in to next player.

Players waiting their turn pass in small triangle whilst watching for their turn.

Play for 5 minutes using 2 or 3 different moves.

### Mini Rondos (5 mins)

2 rondos as shown. Players aim to get the ball from one short side to the other continually. End player must change each time. Any player losing possession becomes the new runner. Play for 5 mins, keep the players supplied with balls.



### Big Rondo (5 mins)

2 defenders and 1 playmaker. Outer players must feed the playmaker who must attempt to switch the ball from one side to another - 1 pt for 90 deg, 2 pts for 180 degs. Focus on patience and keeping possession. Change players regularly - those who lose possession become defenders. Play for 5 minutes , keep players supplied with balls.