



Warming up for Ice Hockey

A proper warm-up is very important for ice hockey players of all ages. Warm-up exercises should combine skating and stretching before every practice or game.

A good warm-up:

- ☆ Reduces the risk of injury.
- ☆ Prepares the body for performing in practice or games.
- ☆ Takes at least 10 to 15 minutes.
- ☆ Proceeds gradually and with purpose.
- ☆ Increases the heart rate.

The athlete should warm-up before performing stretching exercises.

- ☆ Begin with a casual skate around the rink.
- ☆ Skate in both directions (clockwise and counterclockwise) to ensure use of the appropriate muscles, as well as the inside and outside edges of the skates.
- ☆ Skating backward and pivoting from side to side should also be included in the warm-up.

Note: When the price of time on the ice is a factor or limited ice time is available, jumping rope or jogging in place is a warm-up alternative.

Stretching

- ☆ Begin stretching after the warm-up. These stretching exercises can also be performed in the locker room prior to skating.
- ☆ Each stretching exercise should be done slowly.
- ☆ Hold each stretch for 15 to 30 seconds.
- ☆ Concentrate on the muscle being stretched.
- ☆ Begin with a slight stretch and hold it for the recommended time.
- ☆ Increase the stretch until you "feel" the stretch again and hold it for 15 to 30 seconds.
- ☆ Stretch slowly, relaxing and exhaling going into the stretch.
- ☆ Learn how to hold a position in a relaxed state.
- ☆ Ease up if you are unable to hold a position because the stretch is too great.
- ☆ Do not bounce when you stretch and don't stretch so far that you experience joint pain.

Hip flexor stretch:

- ☆ Put one leg forward with the knee bent.
- ☆ Extend the other leg backward, putting the knee on the ice.
- ☆ Lean slightly forward in an effort to feel the stretch in the hip area.
- ☆ Hold for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat with the other leg.



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Groin stretch:

- ☆ Sit upright on the ice.
- ☆ Bend the knees and bring the heels and soles of the feet together. Pull them toward the buttocks.
- ☆ Place elbows on the inside of both upper legs.
- ☆ Exhale and slowly push the legs to the floor.
- ☆ Hold for 15 to 30 seconds, relax and repeat.

Spinal twist stretch:

- ☆ Sit upright on the ice with hands behind extended hips and legs.
- ☆ Bend the left leg, cross the left foot over the right leg and slide the heel toward the buttocks.
- ☆ Reach over and place the right elbow on the outside of the left knee.
- ☆ Exhale. Look over the left shoulder while turning the trunk and pushing the knee back with the right elbow.
- ☆ Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds and repeat on the other side.

Modified hurdler stretch:

- ☆ Sit upright on the ice with both legs straight.
- ☆ Bend the right knee and slide the heel toward your buttocks.
- ☆ Lower the outside of the thigh and calf onto the floor.
- ☆ Place the right heel against the inside of the left thigh to form a 90-degree angle between the extended left leg and bent right leg.
- ☆ Exhale, bend at the waist, keeping the left leg straight, and lower your hands and torso onto the left leg.
- ☆ Hold the stretch for 15 to 30 seconds and repeat on the other side.

Lateral trunk stretch:

- ☆ While skating, with your feet shoulder width apart, hold the stick with both hands and put it above your head.
- ☆ Slowly, tilt the trunk to the right, hold for 15 to 30 seconds.
- ☆ Repeat the stretch for the opposite side.

Rotational trunk stretch:

- ☆ While skating, with feet shoulder width apart, put the stick behind your back, holding it with both elbows in the bent position.
- ☆ Rotate the trunk to the right for 15 to 30 seconds.
- ☆ Repeat on the opposite side.

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