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10-Minute Warm-Up for Any Workout

March 26, 2013 | By [Danielle Kosecki](#)

You may have heard that [stretching](#) before a workout is ill-advised, but jumping straight into your sweat session can be just as bad. No matter what type of routine you do—running, weight lifting, the elliptical, or Pilates—performing a 10-15 minute warm-up is essential to preventing injury and maximizing performance. What’s best? A sequence of dynamic movements.



“Dynamic stretching has been growing in popularity because it engages the muscles in a similar way to the workout itself,” says [Franci Cohen](#), a New York City-based personal trainer, nutritionist, and exercise physiologist. “Because you're moving through the stretches, your heart begins to pump more blood to working muscles, body temperature rises, and the muscles become more elastic.”

To prime your body for whatever workout you're doing, try this 10-minute dynamic stretching routine created by Cohen. “These moves, especially the front kicks, will warm up your hamstrings and increase hip flexion, IT band elasticity, and core stability,” she says.

Jog to Butt-Kicks

Begin by jogging in place for two to three minutes at a steady pace. Alternate the jog every 20 seconds with hamstring curls (a.k.a. butt-kicks). Make sure the heels of your feet touch your glutes (you don't have to grab your ankles).



Toe Walk

Walk on your toes for 60 seconds to increase ankle motion and strengthen the calves (no need to hold

weights).





Squat with Arm Swing

Squat down slightly and while rising swing your arms forward. Repeat for 60 seconds.

Arm Circles/Windmills

Extend arms out to the sides like a “T”. Perform 20 small circles in each direction, then 20 big circles in each direction. This should take about 1-2 minutes.



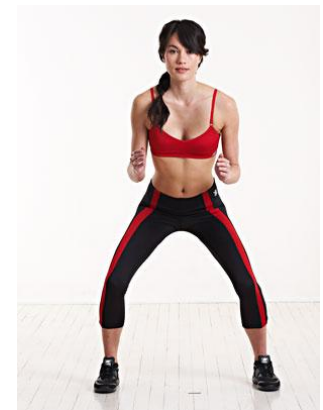
Straight Leg Front Kicks

Stand tall. Keeping your knees straight, alternate kicking each leg up, leading with the ball of your foot. As your hamstrings warm up, begin increasing your range of motion by kicking higher and stronger. Make sure to extend the leg as fully as you can without locking during each kick. Perform 25 kicks on each leg (50 total).



Side Shuffle

Give yourself about 10 feet of space. Shuffle to the right for 3 counts, then touch the floor, and shuffle to the left. Repeat the right/left shuffle 16 times. This can also be done on a treadmill, switching shuffle direction every 10 seconds.



Exercisers that stretch on off days experience greater strength gains than those who don't. Add [Stretching Exercises That Build Strength](#) to your fitness plan for faster results.