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The Perfect Dynamic Warm-Up for Any Workout

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You know the fit saying, “Your workout is only as good as your warm-up?” Well, you should. Because it’s true! According to **Franci Cohen, who’s a personal trainer, certified nutritionist and exercise physiologist**, not only is skipping a warm-up dangerous to your muscles but also it’s detrimental to your entire workout. (And gosh knows I learned it the hard way last year ...) No matter what type of workout you choose, you should always warm up for 10 to 15 minutes to prevent injury and improve performance, she says. And you want your warm-up to be **dynamic** — not just static stretching.

“Dynamic stretching has been growing in popularity, as it engages the muscles in a similar way to the workout itself,” she says. “Because you are moving through the stretching, your heart begins to pump more blood to working muscles, body temperature rises, the muscles warm up and become more elastic, and the body truly does warm up!”

So what does a dynamic warm-up look like? Well, Franci has created a 10-minute warm-up for all of us for New Year New Rear Week!

“These moves, especially the Front Kicks, will warm up your hamstrings and increase hip flexion, IT band elasticity and core stability,” Cohen says. “You will not be over-stretched and your performance will increase. You can track your progress by the difference in time it takes you to run a mile. Results are almost guaranteed!”

The Perfect Dynamic Warm-Up: 10 Minutes

- 1. Jog-to-Butt Kicks.** Begin by jogging in place for 2 to 3 minutes at a steady pace. Alternate the jog every 20 seconds with hamstring curls (aka butt kicks). Make sure the heel of your foot touches your glutes.
- 2. Toe Walk.** Walk on your toes for 60 seconds to increase ankle motion and strengthen the gastrocnemius.
- 3. Squat with Arm Swing.** Squat down slightly and while rising perform forward arm swing. Repeat for 60 seconds.
- 4. 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 to 2 minutes.
- 5. Straight-Leg Front Kicks.** Focus on kicking with the ball of the foot, and 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).
- 6. Side Shuffle.** Give yourself about 10 feet of space. Shuffle to the right for three counts, then touch the floor, repeat to the left. Repeat the right/left shuffle 16 times. This can also be done on a treadmill, switching shuffle direction every 10 seconds.