

## **Remember To Warm Up This Spring**

by Jaime Swanson, DPT

As the weather gets warmer, you may be getting outside and exercising and enjoying more outdoor activities. Before beginning your exercise or activity, take anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes to get in a good, dynamic warm-up. A dynamic or active warm-up will prepare your muscles for more demanding activity. A good warm-up raises your body temperature and makes your muscles, tendons, and ligaments more flexible and elastic. This helps to prevent injury, and if you are performing exercise, this will prepare you for a better, more productive workout.

Your warm-up should engage the entire body. Try to avoid static stretching, as it is not recommended to stretch a cold muscle. This could lead to injury. The longer and/or more intense your exercise or activity, the longer and more involved your warm-up should be.

Your warm-up should begin with dynamic (active) movements that engage your muscles in front-to-back movements, side-to-side movements and rotational movements. After performing these types of movements for a few minutes, your warm-up should progress at an easy pace into the activity or exercise you are going to perform. For example, if you are going mountain biking, start with activities that engage your legs, core, arms, shoulders and back. Once you have performed these movements, progress into very easy cycling and continue to build your effort level.

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A little warm-up can go a long way toward preventing injuries... and toward maximizing your workouts. Check out our home exercise page for good dynamic movements and warm-up routines that you can perform before your next workout.

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