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## Dynamic Warm-up

By Dr. Kris Sheppard

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The days sitting and doing long stretches before activity are dead. We now know that the typical type of static stretching involving long holds can actually impair performance and may result in injury. Like many trends in health care and fitness we have now done a 180, fortunately now, the new advice is based on dozens of research publications examining the effect of different types of stretching on athletic performance and injury. Research has shown that long stretches will inhibit the muscle from activating. Think of the muscles like elastic bands, if you stretch them for a long time they lose their ability to recoil. It is thought that a similar process happens when you stretch a muscle. However, the reason for this is neurological not mechanical, meaning that you are not actually physically stretching the muscle and disrupting it's ability to recoil like the elastic band, but you do trick the brain & nervous system into getting the muscle to relax by decreasing nerve output to muscle. For athletic performance this is the opposite of what you want. You want the muscle primed and ready to contract and relax quickly, not lengthened or relaxed. So how do you prime the muscle and joints for performance? Think dynamic vs. static, a dynamic warm-up is a series of controlled movements in different planes. You want to move the joints involved in activity in every motion possible. For the Runner my dynamic warm-up goes as follows: Walking lunge, leg swings forward/backward and side to side, hip circles, split jacks or jumping jacks, lateral lunge or lateral band walk, cat-camel and scorpion. For those who feel that it takes them a long time during a run to 'feel good', you will definitely benefit from spending 10 minutes before each workout to go through these series of movements. Check out our website [www.absoluteendurance.com](http://www.absoluteendurance.com) for more resources on a dynamic warm-up.

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