

Before beginning drills or starting games, it is important for players to properly warm up. A warm-up period raises players core body temperature, stretches their muscles and helps them transition to full speed drills or game action.

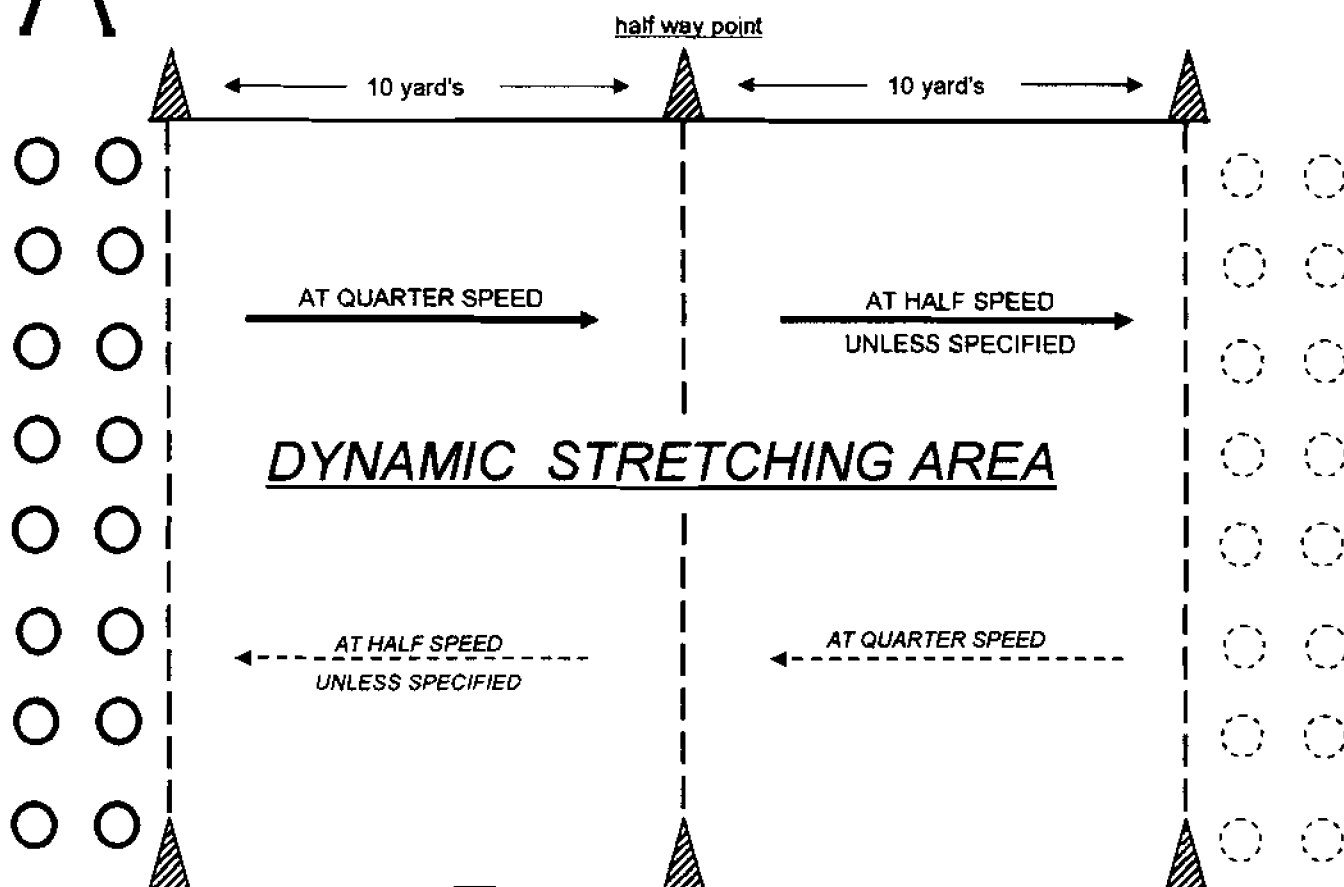
The intensity of the warm-up period gradually increases with each drill. It begins with jumping jacks, which are a great team exercise allowing the coaches to organize the team and see if anyone is absent. After jumping jacks move to **Dynamic Stretching**, which emphasizes football movements while stretching muscles to prevent injuries. These exercises are done on the move at quarter and half speed.

On the coaches command, the players do a series of stretching drills. They will start at one-quarter speed on the first whistle toward the half way point. On the second whistle (Blown at the half way point), they increase to half-speed. On each second whistle a new group of players will begin the exercise (it is their first whistle). When all of the players have completed an exercise, the coaches call out the next one and they work their way back across the field.

You should be able to do this in about 10 to 12 minutes so as not to cut into your valuable practice time. It may take longer the first week or so. Below is an example of the Dynamic Stretching area you will need and on the following page are some stretching examples for you to use. *Remind the kids that this is not a race and to try to stay even in their lines.*



Jumping Jacks: Everyone should know how to do jumping jacks. If you don't, please google it.



DYNAMIC STRETCHING EXAMPLES



Leg Kick: The players walk toward the field, and on each step, they kick their legs as high as possible. On the second whistle, they increase to half speed and perform leg kicks by skipping (*or bounding*) the rest of the way.



High Knees: The players run, using an exaggerated motion that brings their knees up as high as possible on each step. They pump one arm forward and the other one backward each time they bring a knee up.



Back Kicks: The players run using an exaggerated motion to bring each leg all the way back so their heel hits their backside. They pump their arms in a natural motion.



Monster Walk: The players reach out so their arms are extended and their hands are in front of their bodies. With each step forward, they touch their hands with their toes in a forward kicking motion.



Shuffle / Carioca: The coach should emphasize proper football stance during these two drills. Nose over their toes and maintain a balanced crouched posture. On the second whistle, they turn to face forward and run the rest of the way. This drill will need to be done twice, once leading with right then the left shoulder.



Back Pedal: The players run backwards staying on the balls of their feet. They pump their arms in a natural running motion. On the second whistle, they turn to face forward and run the rest of the way.

TEAM COOL DOWN

The cool down period at the end of each practice can be done while you go over the days practice-- good, bad, and, ugly, and prepare them for the next time you meet (or you can tell them how wonderful they are and how well they listened, assuring you to be showered with praises by the parents).



UP Dogs: If you are unfamiliar with this yoga pose, I can explain it, but not on one page, so skip it. This is a good one to work on upper body strength and flexibility.



Crossover: The players cross one leg over the other while rolling their back downward to touch toes. Alternate right over left then left over right.



Thigh Stretch: The players pull one leg up trying to touch their heel to their butt while keeping their knees together.



Butterflies: The players put their feet together and use their elbows to push downward on their legs.