

Dynamic Warm-Up for Soccer Players

Exercise	Description	
Jog	Jog forward with head up and slight forward trunk lean. Maintain a flat back position. Pace should be slow. Complete this for 4 x 20 yards.	
Straight Leg Marches	Lift your right leg in front of body to your left hand, with leg straight and trunk upright. Alternate and repeat moving forward for 20 yards.	
Knee to Chest	Pull your right knee towards your chest without leaning back. Stand up tall, squeeze your left glute, and drive your left foot into the ground. Hold for 3 seconds. Take a step forward with the right foot and repeat for 20 yards.	
Heel to Rear	Reach your right ankle back towards your right glute. Grab ahold of your ankle with your right hand and stand up tall. Reach your left arm straight up overhead. Hold for 3 seconds. Switch legs and repeat for 20 yards.	
Leg Cradles	Stand tall and bring right knee into chest. Grasp your knee and foot. Pull shin to waist height. Hold for 3 seconds. Take a step with the right leg and complete on the other side. Repeat for 20 yards.	
Forward Walking Lunge with a Twist	Lunge forward with right leg. Place left arm on the ground near the instep of your right foot. Twist torso and reach right arm to the sky. Hold for 3 seconds. Repeat on the other leg. Repeat for 20 yards.	
Inchworms	Get into a plank position with straight arms. Slowly inch your feet up towards your hands. Press heels into ground with legs straight. When you have inched up as far as you can, walk hands back out and repeat 10 times.	
Side Shuffle	Get into an athletic base with feet shoulder-width apart and hips down and back. Keep toes and knees pointing straight ahead. Side shuffle for 2 x 20 yards.	

Common Soccer-Related Injuries

- **Patellofemoral Pain (PFPS):** Patellofemoral pain is achy or sharp pain across the front of the knee due to abnormal tracking of the kneecap (patella).



The culprit: Weak hips/core, tight hamstrings/glutes/quads, poor lower body control, flat feet

How to fix it: Complete a thorough warm-up including foam rolling, ball rolling, or stick rolling, strengthen the hips and core, practice good squatting form, shoe inserts, taping, PT

- **Lower Body Muscle Strains/Apophysitis:** Muscular strains or apophyseal injuries (near the muscle attachment point) may occur while sprinting, cutting, or striking the ball when a muscle is contracted against too much resistance. This is most common throughout the hip/thigh.



The culprit: Muscle tightness, muscle weakness, muscle imbalances, poor warm-up, fatigue

How to fix it: Complete a good dynamic warm-up, cool down stretches after playing, and address asymmetries in hip strength, PT, rest

- **ACL Tear:** ACL tears usually occur while planting and twisting or changing direction. Usually the knee is not stabilized due to weakness or poor timing between the quadriceps and hamstrings, tearing the ACL.



The culprit: Weak hips and core, poor body mechanics and knee control, hormones, jumping/landing mechanics, fatigue, poor conditioning

How to fix it: Usually surgery is required but ACL injury prevention programs such as Fifa 11+ are available to help prevent these injuries in the future or to allow return after a tear

- **Ankle Sprain/Growth Plate Fractures:** Ankle stability is needed during sprinting, cutting, and striking the ball. An ankle sprain occurs when the ankle rolls inward (inversion sprain) or outward (eversion sprain). Salter Harris fractures of the growth plate are common in adolescent soccer players and often present like ankle sprains.



The culprit: Inadequate strength, flexibility, balance, control, trauma, poor footwear

How to fix it: Strengthen the core/hips/ankles, work on balance (especially on wobbly surfaces and with eyes closed), wear proper footwear

- **Concussion:** A concussion is a trauma to the brain resulting in neuro symptoms and altered brain function



The culprit: A hit to the head or body causing trauma to the brain (fall, injury, accident)

How to fix it: Rest, PT, OT, speech therapy, time out of sports and/or school, improve your posture, conditioning, and generalized core strength

Soccer Injury Facts

- Soccer has one of the highest sport injury rates (22%)
- Ankle sprains are the most common soccer injury in all ages
- Concussions are the most common soccer injury in players between 5-14
- Concussions in soccer result from player-to player contact 70% of the time versus 7% of times from heading the ball
- More than 200,000 ACL tears occur each year
- 70% of all ACL injuries are non-contact
- Female soccer players are 2x more likely to tear their ACL compared to males

Tips for Preventing Concussions in Soccer

- **Know the signs and symptoms of a concussion:** The sooner you remove yourself from play, the more likely you are to recover. Just because you didn't get "knocked out" doesn't mean you don't have a concussion.
- **Play heads up soccer:** Always watch the play happening around you, even when you aren't involved.
- **Posture:** Keep your head in a neutral position especially when heading the ball (no slouched posture or forward head positioning).
- **No blindsiding:** Don't hit people unnecessarily who can't see you.
- **Avoid excessive contact at practice:** This helps to decrease the forces through your brain because as few as 50-60 subconcussive blows to the head or body per week may lead to change in brain function over time.
- **Heading the ball:** Make sure you can maintain good posture (chin tuck) while heading the ball and learn proper heading technique. New recommendations suggest no heading for ages 10 and under.
- **Complete an injury prevention program:** Improving your posture, awareness, core strength, and visual tracking may decrease your likelihood of concussion.
- **Develop core strength:** A strong core (including hips, shoulders, neck, and abs) helps to stabilize your head during contact and helps your body to respond more quickly with unanticipated forces.
- **Growth and development:** If the athlete is smaller (especially pre-pubescent females) but plays against larger athletes, consider activity modifications until adequate strength develops.
- **Nutrition and hydration:** The better your nutrition and hydration, the more likely your brain can prevent and recover from a trauma.
- **Skip the head gear:** No research has shown these to be effective in preventing concussions.
- **Advocate for rule changes:** Children are not "little adults" and therefore should not play with the same rules as adults, train the same ways as adults, or have injuries managed the same as adults.



Signs & Symptoms of Concussions



- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Confusion or fogginess
- Difficulty concentrating
- Nausea/vomiting
- Loss of memory
- Loss of consciousness
- Poor coordination
- Mumbling/slow speech
- Drowsiness/sleepiness
- Imbalance
- Personality changes
- Irritability or mood swings
- Exaggerated emotions
- Seizures
- Changes in eye tracking
- Poor performance on the field or in school
- Ringing in the ears
- Double or blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light or sound
- Numbness or tingling

Fifa 11+

PART 1 RUNNING EXERCISES · 8 MINUTES



1 RUNNING STRAIGHT AHEAD
The course is made up of 6 to 10 pairs of parallel cones, approx. 5-6 m apart. Two players start at the same time from the first pair of cones. Jog together all the way to the last pair of cones. On the way back, you can increase your speed progressively as you warm up. **2 sets**



2 RUNNING HIP OUT
Walk or jog easily, stopping at each pair of cones to lift your knee and rotate your hip outwards. Alternate between left and right legs at successive cones. **2 sets**



3 RUNNING HIP IN
Walk or jog easily, stopping at each pair of cones to lift your knee and rotate your hip inwards. Alternate between left and right legs at successive cones. **2 sets**



4 RUNNING CIRCLING PARTNER
Run forwards as a pair to the first set of cones. Shuffle sideways by 90 degrees to meet in the middle. Shuffle an entire circle around one other and then return back to the cones. Repeat for each pair of cones. Remember to stay on your toes and keep your centre of gravity low by bending your hips and knees. **2 sets**



5 RUNNING SHOULDER CONTACT
Run forwards in pairs to the first pair of cones. Shuffle sideways by 90 degrees to meet in the middle then jump sideways towards each other to make shoulder-to-shoulder contact.
Note: Make sure you land on both feet with your hips and knees bent. Do not let your knees buckle inwards. Make it a full jump and synchronize your timing with your team-mate as you jump and land. **2 sets**



6 RUNNING QUICK FORWARDS & BACKWARDS
As a pair, run quickly to the second set of cones then run backwards quickly to the first pair of cones keeping your hips and knees slightly bent. Keep repeating the drill, running two cones forwards and one cone backwards. Remember to take small, quick steps. **2 sets**

PART 2 STRENGTH · PLYOMETRICS · BALANCE · 10 MINUTES

LEVEL 1



7 THE BENCH STATIC
Starting position: Lie on your front, supporting yourself on your forearms and feet. Your elbows should be directly under your shoulders.
Exercise: Lift your body up, supported on your forearms, pull your stomach in, and hold the position for 20-30 sec. Your body should be in a straight line. Try not to sway or arch your back. **3 sets**



7 THE BENCH ALTERNATE LEGS
Starting position: Lie on your front, supporting yourself on your forearms and feet. Your elbows should be directly under your shoulders.
Exercise: Lift your body up, supported on your forearms, and pull your stomach in. Lift each leg in turn, holding for a count of 2 sec. Continue for 40-60 sec. Your body should be in a straight line. Try not to sway or arch your back. **3 sets**



7 THE BENCH ONE LEG LIFT AND HOLD
Starting position: Lie on your front, supporting yourself on your forearms and feet. Your elbows should be directly under your shoulders.
Exercise: Lift your uppermost leg up and slowly lower it down again. Repeat for 10-15 cm off the ground, and hold the position for 20-30 sec. Your body should be straight. Do not let your opposite hip dip down and do not sway or arch your lower back. Take a short break, change legs and repeat. **3 sets**



8 SIDWAYS BENCH STATIC
Starting position: Lie on your side with the knee of your lowermost leg bent to 90 degrees. Support your upper body by resting on your forearm and knee. The elbow of your supporting arm should be directly under your shoulder. **Exercise:** Lift your uppermost leg and hip until your shoulder, hip and knee are in a straight line. Hold the position for 20-30 sec. Take a short break, change sides and repeat. **3 sets** on each side.



8 SIDWAYS BENCH RAISE & LOWER HIP
Starting position: Lie on your side with both legs straight. Lean on your forearm and the side of your foot so that your body is in a straight line from shoulder to foot. The elbow of your supporting arm should be directly beneath your shoulder.
Exercise: Lower your hip to the ground and raise it back up again. Repeat for 20-30 sec. Take a short break, change sides and repeat. **3 sets** on each side.



8 SIDWAYS BENCH WITH LEG LIFT
Starting position: Lie on your side with both legs straight. Lean on your forearm and the side of your foot so that your body is in a straight line from shoulder to foot. The elbow of your supporting arm should be directly beneath your shoulder.
Exercise: Lift your uppermost leg up and slowly lower it down again. Repeat for 20-30 sec. Take a short break, change sides and repeat. **3 sets** on each side.



9 HAMSTRINGS BEGINNER
Starting position: Kneel on a soft surface. Ask your partner to hold your ankles down firmly. **Exercise:** Your body should be completely straight from the shoulder to the knee throughout the exercise. Lean forward as far as you can, controlling the movement with your hamstrings and your gluteal muscles. When you can no longer hold the position, gently take your weight on your hands, falling into a push-up position. Complete a minimum of 3-5 repetitions and/or 60 sec. **1 set**



9 HAMSTRINGS INTERMEDIATE
Starting position: Kneel on a soft surface. Ask your partner to hold your ankles down firmly. **Exercise:** Your body should be completely straight from the shoulder to the knee throughout the exercise. Lean forward as far as you can, controlling the movement with your hamstrings and your gluteal muscles. When you can no longer hold the position, gently take your weight on your hands, falling into a push-up position. Complete a minimum of 7-10 repetitions and/or 60 sec. **1 set**



9 HAMSTRINGS ADVANCED
Starting position: Kneel on a soft surface. Ask your partner to hold your ankles down firmly. **Exercise:** Your body should be completely straight from the shoulder to the knee throughout the exercise. Lean forward as far as you can, controlling the movement with your hamstrings and your gluteal muscles. When you can no longer hold the position, gently take your weight on your hands, falling into a push-up position. Complete a minimum of 12-15 repetitions and/or 60 sec. **1 set**



10 SINGLE-LEG STANCE HOLD THE BALL
Starting position: Stand on one leg.
Exercise: Balance on one leg whilst holding the ball with both hands. Keep your body weight on the ball of your foot. Remember: try not to let your knees buckle inwards. Hold for 30 sec. Change legs and repeat. The exercise can be made more difficult by passing the ball around your waist and/or under your other knee. **2 sets**



10 SINGLE-LEG STANCE THROWING BALL WITH PARTNER
Starting position: Stand 2-3 m apart from your partner, with each of you standing on one leg.
Exercise: Keeping your balance, and with your stomach held in, throw the ball to one another. Keep your weight on the ball of your foot. Remember: keep your knees just slightly flexed and try not to let it buckle inwards. Keep going for 30 sec. Change legs and repeat. **2 sets**



10 SINGLE-LEG STANCE TEST YOUR PARTNER
Starting position: Stand on one leg opposite your partner and at arm's length.
Exercise: Whistle both to try to keep your balance, each of you in turn tries to push the other off balance in different directions. Try to keep your weight on the ball of your foot and prevent your knee from buckling inwards. Continue for 30 sec. Change legs and repeat. **2 sets**



11 SQUATS WITH TOE RAISE
Starting position: Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Place your hands on your hips if you like. **Exercise:** Imagine that you are about to sit down on a chair. Perform squats by bending your hips and knees to 90 degrees. Do not let your knees buckle inwards. Descend slowly then straighten up more quickly. When your legs are completely straight, stand up on your toes then slowly lower down again. Repeat the exercise for 30 sec. **2 sets**



11 SQUATS WALKING LUNGES
Starting position: Stand with your feet at hip-width apart. Place your hands on your hips if you like. **Exercise:** Lunge forward slowly at an even pace. As you lunge, bend your leading leg until your hip and knee are flexed to 90 degrees. Do not let your knee buckle inwards. Try to keep your upper body and hips steady. Lunge your way across the pitch (approx. 10 times on each leg) and then jog back. **2 sets**



11 SQUATS ONE-LEG SQUATS
Starting position: Stand on one leg, loosely holding onto your partner.
Exercise: Slowly bend your knee as far as you can manage. Concentrate on preventing the knee from buckling inwards. Bend your knee slowly then straighten it slightly more quickly, keeping your hips and upper body in line. Repeat the exercise 10 times on each leg. **2 sets**



12 JUMPING VERTICAL JUMPS
Starting position: Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Place your hands on your hips if you like.
Exercise: Imagine that you are about to sit down on a chair. Bend your legs slowly until your knees are flexed to approx. 90 degrees, and hold for 2 sec. Do not let your knees buckle inwards. From the squat position, jump up as high as you can. Land softly on the balls of your feet with your hips and knees slightly bent. Repeat the exercise for 30 sec. **2 sets**



12 JUMPING LATERAL JUMPS
Starting position: Stand on one leg with your upper body bent slightly forwards from the waist, with knees and hips slightly bent.
Exercise: Jump approx. 1 m sideways from the supporting leg on to the free leg. Land gently on the ball of your foot. Bend your hips and knees slightly as you land and do not let your knee buckle inward. Maintain your balance with each jump. Repeat the exercise for 30 sec. **2 sets**



12 JUMPING BOX JUMPS
Starting position: Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Imagine that there is a cross marked on the ground and you are standing in the middle of it.
Exercise: Alternate between jumping forwards and backwards, from side to side, and diagonally across the cross. Jump as quickly and explosively as possible. Your knees and hips should be slightly bent. Land softly on the balls of your feet. Do not let your knees buckle inwards. Repeat the exercise for 30 sec. **2 sets**

PART 3 RUNNING EXERCISES · 2 MINUTES



13 RUNNING ACROSS THE PITCH
Run across the pitch, from one side to the other, at 75-80% maximum pace. **2 sets**



14 RUNNING BOUNDING
Run with high bounding steps with a high knee lift, landing gently on the ball of your foot. Use an exaggerated arm swing for each step (opposite arm and leg). Try not to let your leading leg cross the midline of your body or let your knees buckle inwards. Repeat the exercise until you reach the other side of the pitch, then jog back to recover. **2 sets**



15 RUNNING PLANT & CUT
Jog 4-5 steps, then plant on the outside leg and cut to change direction. Accelerate and sprint 5-7 steps at high speed (80-90% maximum pace) before you decelerate and do a new plant & cut. Do not let your knee buckle inwards. Repeat the exercise until you reach the other side, then jog back. **2 sets**

Fifa 11+: <https://www.sportsphysiotherapy.org.nz/documents/Injury%20prevention/fifa%2011.pdf>