

[IMAGE]

Injury Prevention Made Easy

By Editorial Staff

Between children and adults, sports participation may be at an all-time high, which is good for our health in terms of physical fitness, but bad in terms of the increased injury risk, particularly since many people, young and old, don't follow correct warm-up and cool-down protocols. But let's change all that right now by learning a lesson from the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the global governing organization for soccer. Check out a few of the recommended injury-prevention exercises from FIFA ("FIFA 11+") that apply to participants of just about any sport. These exercises are easy to do and require nothing more than a few cones or similar field markers, a partner (for a few of the exercises), and if you're a soccer player, a ball. (The following examples can be done alone and without a ball):

- *Quick forwards and backwards*: Arrange 6-10 cones in a straight line, approximately 5-6 meters apart. Run quickly to the second cone with small, quick steps and then run backward quickly to the first cone. Keep your hips and knees slightly bent the entire time. Continue running two cones forward and one cone backward until you get to the end of the course. Do two total sets.
- *The bench*: Lie on your stomach, supporting the upper body with your arms. Place your feet vertical to the ground. Lift your stomach, hips and knees so your body forms a straight line, from your shoulders to your heels, parallel to the ground. Your elbows should be directly under your shoulders. Tighten your abdominal muscles and buttocks, and pull your shoulder blades toward the center of your back. Lift your right leg an inch or so from the ground and hold for 15 seconds. Return to the starting position, relax and repeat with your left leg; then repeat the entire routine for each leg.
- *Vertical jumps*: Starting position: feet hip-width apart and hands on hips. Slowly bend hips, knees and ankles until the knees are flexed to 90 degrees. Lean your upper body forward and hold this position for 1 second, then jump as high as you can. As you jump, straighten your entire body. Land softly on the balls of your feet and slowly bend your hips, knees and ankles as far as possible. Repeat the routine for 30 seconds, rest and then repeat for 30 seconds.
- *Bounding*: This exercise involves springing as high and far forward as possible with alternating take-off legs. Stand on your take-off leg with the upper body upright. The arm on the take-off-leg side should be in front of your body, such that if viewed from the front, the hip, knee and foot of the

take-off leg are in a straight line. Spring up and forward as far as possible off the take-off leg; as you do so, bring the knee of your trailing leg up as high as possible while bending the opposite arm in front of the body. Land softly on the ball of the foot with a slightly bent knee. Cover approximately 100 feet, alternating take-off legs; rest (jog back to the starting position) and repeat.

To watch videos demonstrating (with positioning / execution narration) the entire FIFA 11+ injury prevention program, [click here](#) (exercise demonstrations will load one video after the next). For more tips on injury prevention, talk to your doctor.

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