

### What is warming up?

In essence, warming up is getting the heart rate raised and blood flow to the muscle increased whilst also getting the body temperature raised (this is why you see Usain Bolt wearing several layers and a hoodie despite competing in warm climates).

**Do we need to do this?** A famous coach said that “you don’t see the lion and gazelle stretching and doing light efforts before they start chasing or running for their life” There are also studies that show stretching has no benefit on maximal output- however warming up becomes more important for both the body and the mind as you get older and faster, (it becomes especially important for the older paddler to warm up).

**How do we warm up?** It can be done in several different ways for different people.

Very young paddlers: Probably don’t need to warm up physically as they are not exerting a huge strain on their muscles, however warming up for these paddlers can be a fun activity, focusing the mind and practising coordination or skills in the boat.

Fast Teenagers: This is a point in life when the body is growing very quickly, limbs can literally grow longer in months so warming up is a **very** good idea both on and off the water.

Older paddlers: Unfortunately, it’s a definite must for the older paddler who wants to train hard at the beginning of a session and not just towards the end!

**Warming up:** On land. If we are going kayaking it would seem sensible to warm up in a similar way, we have the paddling machines which you can put the blocking sheets on and spin the wheel around fast for less effort and increase your heart rate.

You can also do static stretching and dynamic stretching- one where you aren’t moving but pulling on a muscle or muscle groups, or the second where you are actively moving.

Both should be done in a controlled way, start off slow working each muscle group and then repeat getting progressively harder and faster.

Typical exercises: Arm circles, backwards and forwards, twisting arms and trunk from side to side, hips moving around in a circle both forwards and backwards. You’d start off slowly and with reduced movement and get quicker with further stretch.

Short run: these are very good for getting the heart and lungs working – don’t go too fast as your legs may be jelly like in your boat.

Stretches: Muscles work by shortening, stretching is literally working them in the opposite way, start gently!

**Race warm up:** Each person’s warm up routine is going to be personal to them, however you need to try different things (in training not on race day) to see what works best for you.

Start gently and get progressively harder (especially as you get older). Try to mirror what you are going to race i.e. a Marathon is a very fast start (not a long-distance cruise).

Sprint regattas: you may wish to do your race distance early in the day, before your event at a slower pace?

Paddling to the start you might want to wear easily removable items of over layers, cags, gillets etc.

Make sure you are warm in your warm up, do not sit around in wet clothing getting cold. Wear more clothes than you need off the water, so the body isn't expending energy keeping you warm.

### **Warm down.**

These are only really needed for your faster top end training athlete; the idea is you do a certain amount of light movement at the end of your hard session to flush out your system of all the waste products the body has produced, an old rule of thumb was 10% of your session time i.e. 6 extra minutes for an hours session. This can consist of a gentle paddle (we often do this at Elmbridge), stretches and mobility work. Don't get cold on the warm down!

