

Integrated Unit: Athletics – warm up / cool down

In the introduction to the athletics area of study it states that:

“It is suggested that all classes must start with a warm up and end with a cool down.”

Specific health related information may be included concerning warm up and cool down in any of the six units but ideally it should be done in unit 1 or 2 or perhaps both in each area of study.

WARM UP

Reasons for warm up:

- gets the heart rate up using vigorous aerobic activity, thus increasing blood supply to the major muscle groups.
- gentle stretching of the major muscle groups warms them up and prepares them for activity.
- reduces the risk of injury.

NB: Differentiate between **warm up stretching** which does not improve flexibility – it merely warms up the muscle and stretches it so that it is ready for the activity to follow, — and **developmental stretching** which is performed to improve flexibility when the body is fully warmed up and stretches are held for much longer e.g. 30 secs. – 1 min.

Students must be shown how to stretch **gently** – never into pain and **never** to use ballistic movements. If desired, the names of the larger muscle groups can be identified when stretching.

COOL DOWN

Reasons for cool down:

- gradual slow down of activity is safer than a sudden severe halt.
- heart rate slows down gradually thus helping to remove lactic acid from muscle groups (no need to go into how this process works at this stage).
- gentle stretching helps tired muscle groups to loosen out and also helps to break up lactic acid.

Typical cool down: jog – walk briskly – walk slowly (2 – 3 mins.) – gentle stretching