

@k9performanceunleashed

HOW TO CREATE A WARM UP FOR YOUR DOG



WHY A WARM UP?

INJURY PREVENTION

A warm up increased blood flow to the muscles, making them more flexible and less prone to injury.

IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

A properly warmed up dog will perform better during training sessions, competitions, and work. Warming up helps improve range of motion and flexibility.

MENTAL PREPARATION

The warm-up is an excellent opportunity for your dog to engage with you! These exercises help foster communication between you and your dog, setting the tone for their activity ahead.

COMPONENTS OF A WARM UP

GENERAL

Purpose:

Get blood pumping

Examples:

- Walking
- Trotting
- Dynamic play

NEUROMUSCULAR

Purpose:

Activate stabilizer muscles & motor patterns

Examples:

- Posture sit
- Targeting
- Back up
- Light reps of planned skills

MOBILITY

Purpose:

Light stretching through range of movement

Examples:

- Bow
- Spin
- Figure 8s

WORK SPECIFIC

Purpose:

Mimic movements of the activity at less intensity

Examples:

- Sprint starts
- Jumps

STEP 1

GENERAL WARM UP

Duration: At least 2-5 minutes

Purpose: Gradually increase heart rate, blood flow and body temperature

Example: Walking, easy trotting

STEP 2

NEUROMUSCULAR ACTIVATION

Duration: 1-2 exercises of 5-10 reps

Purpose: Engage muscles and nerves to prepare the body for coordinated, efficient movement

Example: Back up, side stepping, cavalettis

STEP 3

MOBILITY

Duration: 1-2 exercises of 15-20s each

Purpose: Move through active range of motion in multiple planes of motion

Example: Spin, figure-8s, dynamic bow, dynamic paws up

STEP 4

SPORT SPECIFIC

Duration: 1-2 exercises of 5-10 reps each

Purpose: Prepare the dog's body for movements that will occur during this activity

Example: Jumps, sprint starts, weaves, box turns, heeling, short retrieves, tugging

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

AGE

Older dogs and puppies may require a longer warm up period.

FITNESS

A dog's fitness level plays a role in exercise selection—what might be an appropriate warm-up for a fit dog could easily be a full workout for an unfit dog.

WEATHER

Colder temperatures may require longer preparation to heat up muscles, while warmer weather might necessitate a lighter approach to avoid overheating.

PREVIOUS INJURIES

Dogs with previous injuries may require warm-up exercises targeting the affected area to ensure it is properly activated and ready for movement.

SAMPLE WARM UPS

SAMPLE 1: TRAIL RUNNING WARM-UP

1. 3 minutes of walking, then 2 minutes of trotting
2. 3 reps of 10 steps each direction: backward walking, walk forward
3. 5 steps each direction: side stepping
4. 3 cycles of figure 8
5. 5 reps of bow
6. Lateral direction changes

SAMPLE 2: DOCK DIVING WARM-UP

1. 5 minutes of trotting
2. 3 reps of 10 steps each direction: backward walking, walk forward
3. 5 steps each direction: side stepping
4. 3 cycles of figure 8
5. 5 reps of dynamic paws up
6. Sprint starts

SAMPLE 3: ADVANCED STRENGTH WORKOUT WARM-UP

1. 2 minutes of treadmill walking into 1 min at an easy trot
2. 10 reps of cone wrap figure 8s
3. 5 reps- Square walk (backing up steps, lateral stepping, forward steps, lateral stepping the other way)
4. 3 reps each direction turning on a plank
5. 5 reps 4 feet Paw pod targeting
6. 10 down to stands
7. 10 tuck sits