Warm up
Strength and conditioning
Warm down

Always work within your limits. If you are uncomfortable then stop or take a break. Listen to your body. Make these practices part of your regular routine to help prevent injury.

WARM UP
Warm up is variable depending on activity.
Less intensive warm up – long runs, recovery runs, strength and conditioning.
Intensive warm up. Intervals, tempo/threshold runs and races.
Good warm up = good session/race

Warm up is not just physical.
When it comes to orienteering races or training then your warm up is an important time to focus, gather yourself, imagine the map and get yourself into race mode. Relax and put all negative thoughts out of your mind.
This should become part of your pre-race process, your ritual. It is different for everyone.

It is important to practice this process in your training so don't just leave it to race day. On your training runs take an old map and practice your process of reading the map, visualising the control, finding your attack point and planning your route.

Reasons for doing a warm up?
For most of us here injury prevention is number one. How many conversations do you have with orienteers whose races are somehow affected by a niggle here and a niggle there.
Many of these niggles could be avoided with an easy warm up that prepares your body for the hostility of an orienteering course.

Other reason for warming up are to maximise your potential. For those that want to be competitive then you need to be firing on all cylinders before you enter the start boxes. A decent warm up will increase your body and muscle temperature, your heart rate, blood flow and will also activate key muscles and joints. In a warm up a competitive athlete should reach the same intensity of activity that they are about to exert out on course.

The most effective warm up involves a gentle jog followed by some dynamic stretches. Dynamic stretches being active movements where joints and muscles go through the full range of motion and promote good running technique.

Jog for 5 minutes minimum followed by some easy dynamic stretches.
Start gently and observe your body.

Repeat each exercise twice

Walking high knees
Walking hamstring curls
Skipping
Skipping with high knees
Straight leg running

Rest for 1 minute

Lunges
High kicks
Side skips
Side skips with high arms
Running backwards

Rest for 1 minute

Running high knees
Running flicks

Ankles. Walk on sides and then rotate.

Strides. Over 40 meters slowly build up speed to a comfortable but steady pace and then slow down gently. Repeat 3 times.

STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING

Now we're warmed up we can think about strength and conditioning. This is basically everything that isn't your cardio vascular system and can be done in many ways. Weights in the gym, yoga, Pilates, circuit training

The purpose of S&C is to improve strength, speed, agility and flexibility. Not only will this improve your speed and stamina it will again help with injury prevention. S&C is especially important for those over 40 when muscles start to decline. Targeted S&C is also one of the best ways of overcoming many common injuries.

For orienteering we need good leg strength for powering up hills and across rough terrain, a strong core for dealing with the twists and turns and many obstacles in our way and finally ankle strength, agility and balance for dealing with the rough ground beneath our feet.

A typical session could either target one of these areas or work on all of them.

S&C SESSION

Below we have a session involving 10 exercises. The session can be repeated once, twice, three times depending on your ability. The duration or number of reps in each exercise can also be increased or decreased to further customise the session. Each exercise must be carried out slowly and under control.

Descriptions for most of these exercises can be found on the web.

Calf raises - calves

Glute bridge – glutes and hamstring

Lunge – glutes, quads, core

Side glute raises – glutes

Single leg balance – ankles

Hopping – ankle

Dead bug – abs, obliques, back

Bicycle crunch – obliques, abs

Superman – abs, obliques, back, glutes

Toe touches - abs

WARM DOWN

A warm down helps the body restore itself, reduces the build-up of lactic, regulates your heart rate and again – prevents injury. Stretching both creates and preserves increased range of movement required for sport.

Ideally it involves a gentle jog or walk for a minimum of 5 minutes followed by some gentle static stretches.

Important to do them slowly, no bouncing, no pain.

Remember to refuel, rehydrate and get warm as soon as you have finished your session.

Again, there are many stretches available on the web. You should look to stretch all of the following.

Hamstrings
Back of lower leg calf - soleus
Front of thigh - quads
Inside thigh -Adductors
Back of lower leg, calf – gastrocnemius
Outside thigh – IT band
Side of trunk