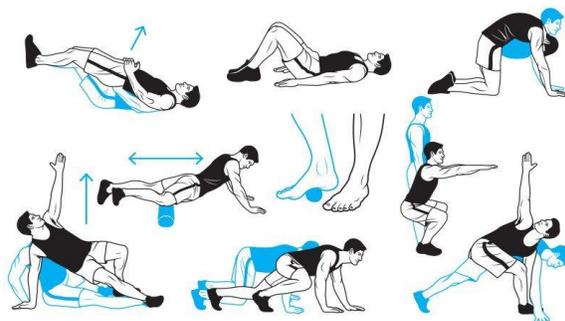


The 11 Moves That Help Athletes Get Better with Age

Stay in the game longer and stronger with a solid prehab routine, and go harder with a smart recovery routine

Among the most important things an athlete can do to preserve fitness for years to come is avoid injuries. Sprains, tears, and broken bones can resurface as nagging aches or weaknesses as you get older, preventing you from pushing yourself with the kind of high-intensity interval training that's so important for older athletes. Enter prehab, pre-exercise routines that prepare your body for the loads and stresses of a workout or race while also helping stave off injury.

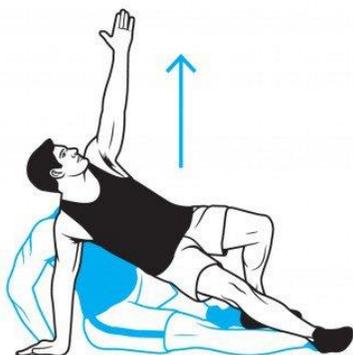


"It's a daily evaluation tool," says Eric Dannenberg, performance manager at Exos in Phoenix, "a way to make sure you can perform movements before you load your muscles."

Dannenberg recommends doing each of the following five exercises before every hard workout. They'll add about seven minutes of warm-up, but the payoff will be huge when it comes to longevity in your sport. "Greatness isn't one game or race," says Dannenberg. "It's consistency of habits over many years."

The Five Exercises You Should Do Before Every Hard Workout

Half Turkish Get-Up (unweighted)



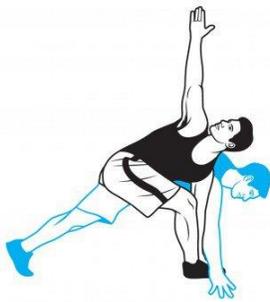
Lie on your back, right leg extended, left leg bent so your foot is flat on the ground. Use your right arm to prop yourself into an upright seated position, with your right arm straight and your left elbow resting on your left knee. Push through the ground with your left heel to raise your hips toward the sky. As you do, raise your left arm so that it points at the ceiling. Repeat by lowering your butt to the ground, returning your left arm to your knee, and driving your hips and arm back toward the ceiling.

Bear Crawl



On all fours, crawl forward ten steps, moving your opposing hands and legs forward at the same time. Stay low, with your back straight and your knees just a couple of inches off the floor. Finish by crawling backward the same distance.

Lunge with Twist



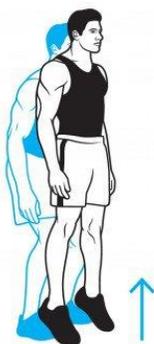
Step forward in a deep lunge. Plant both hands on the floor inside your forward foot. Keep your back leg straight. Raise your inside hand toward the ceiling so your torso twists upward. Plant your raised hand on the outside of your forward foot and straighten your forward leg to achieve a deep stretch in your hamstring. Finish by returning to the standing position, feet together. Repeat on the opposite side. Alternate for six total reps.

Bodyweight Squat



With feet a little more than shoulder width apart, lower your butt down and back as deeply as you can without rounding your back. Keep heels grounded. As you move down, raise your arms so they extend straight in front of you. Your knees should stay over your toes. Keep your head up and your chest out. Do six reps.

Pogo Jump



Bounce on both feet in a full upright position, as if you're on a pogo stick. Continue for 15 seconds, then rest for 15 seconds. Do two sets, adding height or speed to make it more challenging.

The Six Exercises You Should Do After Every Workout

Superstuds like Ned Overend don't get that way by charging relentlessly through middle age. They understand that at least half the game involves recovering properly, which allows for consistent hard efforts without the detrimental effects of overtraining. A nutrient-rich, plant-heavy diet and lots of sleep are essential, but a recovery plan that includes daily breathing exercises, foam rolling, and mobility work will help you rebound even faster.

"A lot of top athletes come in wanting to improve their movement and speed, but their nervous system is out of whack or they're broken down," says Miguel Aragoncillo, a strength coach at Cressy Sports Performance in Hudson, Massachusetts. "There are techniques to help you regenerate between workouts and correct the problems." Here are six of Aragoncillo's favorite recovery exercises. Do them immediately following a workout, in the evening before bed, or during a rest day.

90-90 Hip Lift



Lie on your back with your feet on a wall, knees bent at 90 degrees. Place a ball or foam roller between your knees. Tilt your pelvis slightly forward. Squeeze the ball or roller, and lift your tailbone a couple of inches off the floor. Repeat five times.

Payoffs: Improved posture; pelvic alignment

Deep Exhale



Lie flat on your back. Breathe in deeply using your diaphragm. (Your belly should rise and fall rather than your chest.) Exhale as deeply as possible, holding at the end for a few seconds. Repeat for five breaths.

Payoffs: Deeper sleep; relaxation

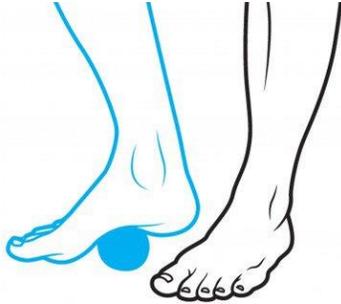
All-Fours Belly Lift



Get down on your hands and knees and draw in your breath, pulling from the front of your stomach toward your spine. Round your back, breathing into the stretch. Repeat five times.

Payoff: Improved breathing

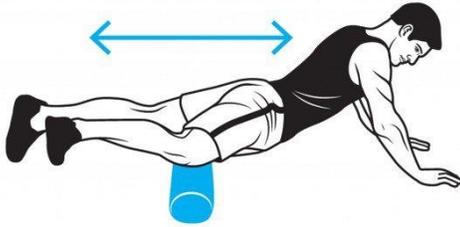
Plantar Fascia



Roll a small, firm ball under the arch of your foot, applying pressure as needed. Hold it against sore spots for several seconds as tolerable.

Payoff: Foot mobility

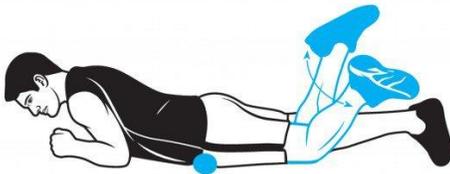
Adductor



Lie on your stomach. Place a foam roller under the inside of your upper leg. Roll back and forth, from groin to knee, gradually lowering your body weight onto muscles and soft tissue.

Payoffs: Balanced running mechanics; increased blood flow

Hip Flexor



On your stomach, place a ball just below your hip bone. Lower your weight onto the ball and roll it around that zone. Hold the ball against sore spots for several seconds

Payoff: Hip mobility