



## How to warm up correctly for an Aquathlon

We all know it is important to do an adequate warm up prior to training and racing. What is not so clear is why we need to warm up, and what is the best type of warm up to prepare you for your aquathlon workouts and the event itself.

### Why do a warm up?

There are 3 key benefits a warm up, according to experts:

1. To aid the supply of oxygen to muscles and therefore improve muscles ability to work under more intense effort
2. To raise your body temperature to help your muscles become more flexible and efficient.
3. To slowly raise your heart rate, preparing your heart for the added stress swimming and running will place on it.

### What should you incorporate in a warm up?

Here are 5 tips for achieving the perfect warm up before running:

1. Start with 5 to 10 minutes of easy running.  
This should feel slow and comfortable to get the blood flowing. This will aid the flow of oxygen to the muscles. Do not worry about how you feel at this stage, as often you will feel sluggish at the start of each workout.
2. Do 5 to 10 minutes of dynamic stretching.  
Static stretching before running can cause muscle and/or tendon injuries. It should be reserved for after running. Instead, after jogging slowly for 5 to 10 minutes, perform dynamic stretches to prepare your body for your run. Dynamic stretches include specific running drills and activation exercises which work on various aspects of the running technique. Some of the most often used exercises are high knees, bum flicks, leg swings, the grapevine, etc. There are a number of these drills on my website [www.emmacarney.com](http://www.emmacarney.com).
3. Do 6 to 8 x 80metre 'run-throughs' following your dynamic stretches.  
Your running drills should be followed with 4-6 'run throughs' – which are 60-80m run efforts at 80-90% max effort. Your focus should be on very good run technique and speed. This will ensure you have warmed your muscles up at full speed as well as jogging lightly.

With the swim - the warm up is similar. Know the course. If the race organiser allows it, have a swim over the course, paying particular attention to the entry and exit of the water. Look for navigation items and also currents, chop (waves/shore break) and water depth.



You should try to swim 10 minutes before your race. If this is not possible with course closures, incorporate upper body mobility exercises (like arm swings) into your run warm up dynamic drills.

4. When to start a race warm up

When warming up for a race you should begin your warm up 30-40 minutes before the race start. Begin with a 10 minute jog. Then, do your dynamic stretches, followed by some run-throughs.

5. Make your warm up a habit.

A warm up will help effectively prepare your body for your run while assisting you in injury prevention. Unless you are only doing a slow, easy recovery run, a warm up should be part of every run, every time.

While warming up is important, do not forget to also warm down to prepare your body for recovery and your next workout.

**A typical warm down should involve the following –**

When you have completed the intense part of your workout, jog easily for 10-15 minutes, followed by some static stretches. If it is a long run you are finishing, continue walking until your heart rate returns to normal. Then, do some static stretching.

After every workout or race, don't forget to eat something within 30 to 45 minutes after your workout generally 4:1 carbohydrates to protein is recommended and 500-750ml fluids.