

UPPER CORE & SHOULDERS

PART 1

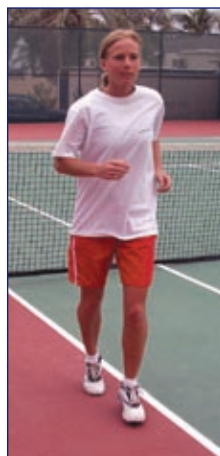
Whether you are getting ready for a match or just hitting, following the advice below will help you to optimize on court time and prevent injuries. Part 1 of this 3-part series outlines upper back and shoulder warm-up. Part 2 will outline lower body and core warm-up and part 3 will outline on court warm-up strategies and post play stretching tips.

"Always Warm-Up to play or practice, don't play to Warm-Up."



Some form of general warm-up should be done before hitting a single ball. Slowly but methodically warming the body's tissues helps prevent injuries that may be caused by going too hard, too fast, too soon with cold, un-lubricated muscles and joints. Start with an easy jog around the outside of the court and add in some crossovers and side shuffles.

"One of the main contributors to injury in the club player is the complete absence of any Pre-Play Warm-Up Routine."



Upper Core & Shoulder Warm-Up:

Proper warm-up prepares the muscles you will use in training and prepares the joints for movement and dynamic stability throughout a full range of motion. Tennis specific movements to help improve the relaxation-contraction coordination of the joints prime movers and stabilizers leading to more efficient movement and performance.

Try doing 10 repetitions of shoulder shrugs, arm swings and thread the needle rotation exercises. These warm-ups will help to get the correct muscle sequence firing, stabilize the shoulder girdle and lubricate the joints.

FIT TO PLAY

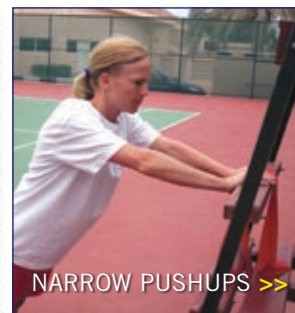
"Warm-Up"

By Carl Petersen B.P.E., B.Sc.(PT)

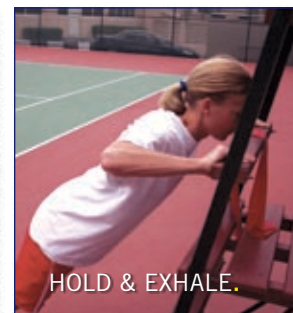
Try doing some dynamic push ups against the fence or wall. Do 2 sets of 6 reps with a narrow hand position, medium and wide. Also, take your stretch cord and do stretch cord rows, external rotations and diagonals to warm-up the mid-scapular and post cuff muscles. Try 2 sets of 5-10 repetitions.



WIDE PUSHUPS >>



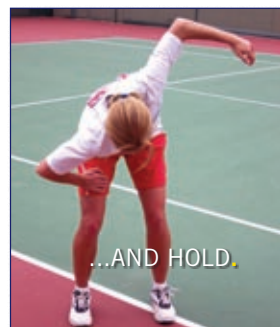
NARROW PUSHUPS >>



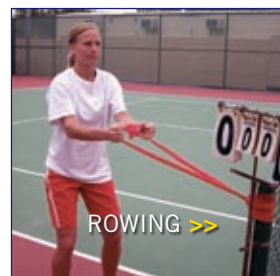
HOLD & EXHALE.



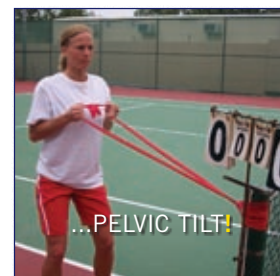
THREAD THE NEEDLE >>



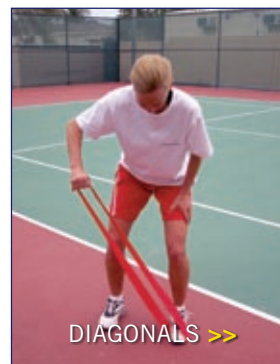
...AND HOLD.



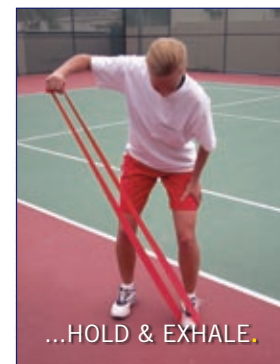
ROWING >>



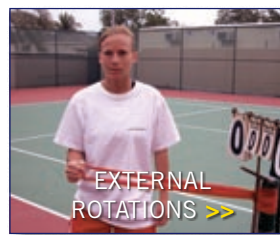
...PELVIC TILT!



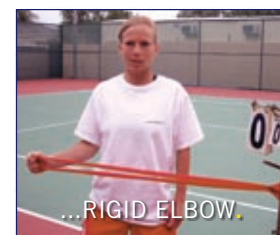
DIAGONALS >>



...HOLD & EXHALE.

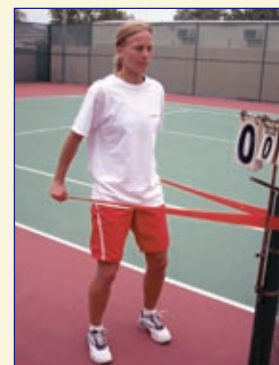


EXTERNAL ROTATIONS >>

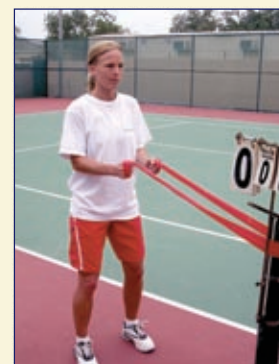
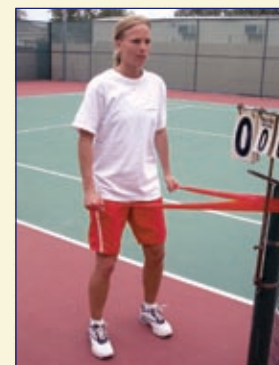


...RIGID ELBOW.

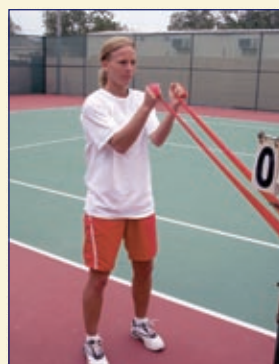
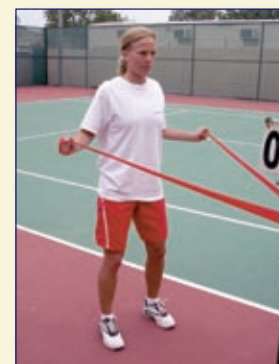
To help improve the function and control of your upper core (scapula & shoulder) use your stretch cord and do exercises to form the letters I, T & W. Try 2 sets of 5-10 repetitions.



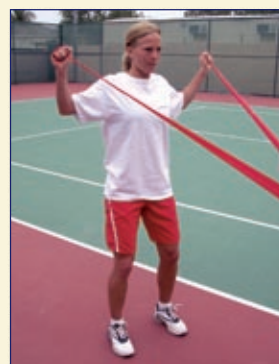
LETTER I



LETTER T



LETTER W



Pre-Hit Conform Stretching:

Dynamic warm-up is your best activity before playing. However, once you are warmed up you can do some gentle conform stretches to maintain muscle length or stretch out muscles that still feel tight. These types of stretches are not aggressive enough to tear and weaken muscle fibers. Hold the stretches for 15-20 seconds at the point of tension only (NEVER PAIN).



PECTORAL STRETCH



FOREARM STRETCH

Cool Down & Recovery Workout:

After you finish playing, use a gradual cool down to take your body back to its resting state and to clear lactic acid and other waste products from the muscles. Try going for a fast 15-20 minute walk or spin on an exercise bike with no resistance. The next issue will focus on Lower Core warm-up.

Carl Petersen P.T. is a Partner and the Director of High Performance Training at City Sports & Physiotherapy Clinics. He and coach/exercise model Nina Nittinger have co-authored Fit to Play-Tennis. Information available at www.fittoplay.com or by calling (604) 606-1420.

