



WYRE FOREST PICKLEBALL COACHING

Warmup Before Playing Pickleball

We all know we should stretch more. But pickleball is such fun we want to jump on the court and start playing. Stretching prevents injury, helps recovery, and can improve performance, though, so it's an essential part of every practice that is being suggested by any first aider to their patients. Best of all, it only takes a few minutes before and after playing to maximise the benefits of stretching. Here are ten warmup stretches you should do every time you play pickleball.

Dynamic stretching should happen before an athletic performance to increase muscle temperature and decrease stiffness. Dynamic stretching involves tightening muscles through the full range of motion or moving while stretching. Static stretching is for after an athletic performance to increase the flexibility of the muscles. For more information on static and dynamic stretches, click [HERE](#).

Fast Warm Ups and then start Dinking (5 minutes)

1. Hip pendulums, forward and back leg swings, as well as side to side swings across the body (hold steady against a wall)
2. Shoulder shrugs and rotations back and forward
3. Arm swings of at least your dominant playing arm
4. In addition, use normal static muscle stretches before and after playing.

Avoid running backwards on court, reaching low to locate the ball or jumping in the air, remember the mantra, "if it's low let it go" and "if it's high let it fly". When the ball rolls onto another court shout "ball on court". Take breaks and drink water.

Longer Warm Ups and then start playing! (10 minutes)

1. Jogging

It sounds basic, but jogging a few laps around the court or back and forth across the courts is a great way to warm up your legs and prevent injury. Start by jogging first, then add a backpedal. Avoid tripping over your feet. Next, add a couple of sprints at the end to increase the difficulty. Going backward and forwards, speeding up, and slowing down are great ways to increase mobility and practice the direction changes you will experience on the pickleball court.

2. Butt Kickers and High Knees

Although you look a little funny doing them, butt kickers and high knees are a great way to increase knee and hip flexibility while warming up for pickleball. First, start from one sideline



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and jog across to the other, trying to touch your heels to your butt. If you can't reach, just go as far as you can. With all dynamic stretches, don't force anything. Do the same for high knees, but bring your knees as high as you can towards your chest.

3. Side Steps

One of the most common movements in pickleball is the sidestep or side shuffle. Many players get stuck with cement feet at the kitchen line and lunge for the ball rather than taking one or two side steps to hit a balanced dink or volley. To practice, shuffle sideways across the court, staying as low as possible. Then, shuffle back facing the same direction. Visualising stepping over and keeping the paddle in front to hit a pickleball makes this warmup even more practical. You can side shuffle fast or slow to practice moving fast or getting a lower, deeper stretch. Many players unintentionally cross their feet when hitting. However, the fastest way to reach a dink or volley hit far from you is to shuffle sideways and contact the ball as far in front as possible.

4. Hamstring Kicks

Also called Frankensteins, this stretch is great for hamstring flexibility. Walk from sideline to sideline while kicking one straight leg up at a time and trying to touch your toes. Again, if you can't reach, just go as far as possible without forcing anything.

5. Lunges

Lunges are also a great exercise for warming up, increasing strength, and gaining flexibility. Walk from sideline to sideline by lunging one leg forward at a time. Add a torso twist to the lunge to make this an even better stretch. Also, lunges and squats are among the best ways to gain leg strength, so adding this to a workout routine is a great option.

6. Arm Circles

We haven't talked about arms yet, but warming them up is essential for any pickleball warmup routine. First, hold your arms out to the side and move them in small circles forward. Slowly increase the size of the circles until you are moving them in as large of circles as your flexibility permits. Next, switch to moving them backward, starting with small circles and then slowly increasing until you go as far as possible.



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7. Arm Swings

I call this stretch the Michael Phelps. Start by holding your arms out to the side and pulling them back as far as possible, opening your chest. From here, swing them forward, hugging yourself. Repeat this motion several times, going as far as you can in both directions.

8. Torso Twists and the Sumo Stretch

We all know pickleball uses a lot of core and back muscles, so we need to make sure we stretch those. Standing in an athletic position, rotate your torso as far as it will go, keeping your arms in front. Swing back and forth between the left and right sides. Squat like a sumo wrestler and twist as you stretch for a slight variation.

9. Reaching in 4 Directions

Another stretch is reaching towards the sky, extending both arms as high as possible. From there, reach down, trying to touch the toes. Stand up and reach up again, this time dipping to the right and left sides to feel the stretch down the side of your body.

10. Wrist and Ankle Circles

Ankle injuries especially are one of the most common injuries in pickleball. To prevent wrist and ankle injuries, rotate them in clockwise and counterclockwise directions to finish your stretching routine.