



# SAFE EXERCISE

## GUIDELINES

### INTRODUCTION

Exercising safely is important for avoiding injury. When exercising, it is important to focus on what you are trying to do. For example, is exercise part of the warm-up, a conditioning activity or part of the recovery? In essence, what you are trying to do should be dependent on why you are trying to do it.

**The golden rule is to prepare the body, work it correctly and recover it afterwards**

### PREPARE THE BODY

Warm-up exercises aim to prepare the body for the planned activity.

**This means that exercises should:**

- ✦ Concentrate on increasing muscle temperatures
- ✦ Use movements that help switch on the relevant motor programmes

The best way to do this is to start gently with locomotor movements that involve large muscle groups, such as the legs, such as walking or jogging. Hurling and Gaelic football require a variety of foot patterns.

- ✦ Include heel taps, toe taps, side steps, and back steps should precede more complex moves involving foot crossover patterns
- ✦ Incorporate dynamic flexibility exercises to

stretch the muscles to be used in the activity, without losing the flow of the warm up

### WORK PROPERLY

Conditioning and game actions are best and safest when done with:

- ✦ Control
- ✦ Good Posture and Body Alignment
- ✦ If activities are performed too fast or too slowly the moving and supporting joints can experience excessive loads
- ✦ Too many repetitions of the same movement can compromise control and posture

Posture and correct body alignment are important in order to:

- ✦ Provide maximum support for the body with minimal strain
- ✦ Improve the efficiency of the action
- ✦ Reduce unnecessary stress on joints

### RECOVERY

Many coaches play down or ignore the importance of this part of an activity. This is the best time to teach stretching exercises and relaxation techniques to help restore the body to a normal functioning state. You can also use this time to reinforce points made during the session, or provide players with instructions on team play.

There are four sets of questions a coach or teacher should ask and answer in order to prepare a safe class:



- 1) What are you trying to do?
- 2) Is it relevant to the game or the aim of the session?
- 3) Is it effective? Does it do what you want it to do?
- 4) Is it safe? Does it do what you want it to do without affecting control or posture?

### EXERCISES TO AVOID

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#### Excessive loads of the neck and spine (Avoid)

- ✦ Neck circling and rolling
- ✦ Extreme neck movements —backwards (extension) or forwards (flexion)
- ✦ Bending forward to touch the toes or similar actions
- ✦ Bending forward without support and twisting
- ✦ Bending backwards to an extreme position

- ✦ Straight leg sit ups
- ✦ Straight leg raise activities
- ✦ Sits ups with feet or ankles held
- ✦ The plough position (feet over head to touch the floor)
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#### Excessive Load on Knees (Avoid)

- ✦ Full knee bends
- ✦ Locking knees (keep knee softly bent)
- ✦ Knee rotation
- ✦ 'Duck walking'
- ✦ Hurdlers stretch