

Special Olympics North America

Softball Warm-up and Stretching Exercises

Warm-ups (5 minutes)

Run the bases – half speed, make sure that each athlete touches the base, gets blood flowing and gets athletes used to touching the bases as they run. Jog to the outfield and back.

Stretching (10 - 15 minutes)

Feet and Ankles

- Kneel on all fours with the toes underneath you
- Exhale and lower the buttocks backward and downward

Lower Legs

- From a push-up position, move the hands closer to the feet to raise the hips and form a triangle. This position can also be modified by resting the elbows or head on the floor.
- At the highest point of the triangle, slowly press the heels to the floor, or alternate slowly flexing one knee while keeping the opposite leg extended.

Hamstrings

- Lie on your back with the legs flexed and the heels close to your buttocks.
- Inhale and extend one leg upward.
- Exhale and slowly pull the raised leg toward the face, keeping the leg straight.

Adductors

- Squat with the feet flat on the floor about 12 inches apart and the toes turned slightly outward.
- Place the elbows on the thighs, exhale and push the legs outward with the elbows.
- Remember to keep the feet flat on the floor to reduce strain on the knees.

Adductors

- Sit on the floor with the legs spread as wide as possible.
- Drop one arm and raise the other arm overhead.
- Exhale, rotate the trunk and bend from the hip, leaning the upper torso onto the leg.
- Note: You may feel this stretch in the lateral portion of the torso.

Quadriceps

- Stand holding onto something for balance. Flex one knee and raise the heel to the buttocks.
- Slightly flex the supporting leg, exhale and grasp the raised foot with one hand (same side hand as foot that is raised).
- Inhale and slowly pull the heel toward your buttocks.

Hips and Gluteals

- Stand with the legs spread about two feet apart. Flex one knee, lower the body and place the opposite knee on the floor.
- Roll the back foot under so that the top of the instep rests on the floor.
- Place the hands on the hips (or one hand on the forward knee and one hand on the buttocks) and keep the front knee bent at a 90-degree angle.
- Exhale and push the front of the hip of the back leg toward the floor.

Lower Torso

- Stand with the legs spread about three feet apart and the hands on the buttocks.
- Arch the back, contract the buttocks and push the hips forward.
- Exhale, continue arching the back, drop the head backward, open the mouth and gradually slide the hands below the buttocks.

Upper Back

- Sit on the floor with knees slightly flexed, upper torso resting on the thighs, elbows under the knees and the hands grasping the thighs.
- Exhale, lean forward and pull back on the thighs while keeping the feet on the floor.
- Note: This stretch should also be felt between the shoulder blades.

Neck

- Rotate the head so that the eyes are looking out directly over the shoulder.
- Perform this stretch in each direction.
- Do not allow the athlete to use their hands or arms to push the stretch beyond what they can achieve by simply turning the head.

Shoulders

- Sit or stand with one arm flexed behind the back and grasp the elbow from behind with opposite hand.
- Exhale and pull the elbow across the midline of the back. Grasp the wrist if the athlete is unable to reach the elbow.

Arms

- Sit or stand with one arm flexed, raised overhead next to the ear with the hand resting on the shoulder blade.
- Grasp the elbow with the other hand, exhale and pull the elbow behind the head.

Wrists

- Kneel on all fours, flex the wrists and place the palms against the floor with the fingers pointing toward the body.
- Exhale and lean backward.