

ANATOMY OF A RACE WARM UP



RACE WARM-UP ESSENTIALS:

Optimal performance preparation depends on efficient two-way communication through nerves that connect the brain and the muscles. The cardio vascular system needs time to synch with the nervous system and send signals to the muscles to increase blood flow (oxygen delivery). A good warm-up opens these lines of communication.

- An average warm up should last 25-30min; 30-40min for a sprint race and as little as 15min for a very long race
- The shorter the race the longer the warmup, the longer the race the shorter the warm up
- A race that starts hard (up a hill or a short mass start), requires a more intense warm up
- A proper warm up starts slow and builds up over time
- When possible, include some mobility and dynamic stretches in your warm up, but these are second priority to warming up “your engine”. Static stretches are not useful

TIMING:

- Time your warmup to end 10 minutes before the start of your race
- For classic racing, you need to test your race skis. The skis are typically ready for pick up 30 minutes before your start. Pick up the skis and try them for 1 or 2 of your intensity repetitions. Return them to the wax bench if they need adjustments. Finish your warm up with your non-race skis

SPECIFICITY:

- Plan your total warm up time based on the length of the race and how hard you need to start
- Start the intensity segment in your warm up after about 5-10 minutes of slow skiing/running...
- The intensity segment is best done “interval training format” with a 3-4 minute recovery between each effort, and a progressive buildup effort such as:
 - 1 X 2min at Z3
 - 1 X 1min at Z4
 - 1 X 45sec at Z5
 - 2 X 30-45sec at Z6 IMPORTANT: Do your last intensity at the pace you want to start your race
- Generally speaking, it’s not a good idea to do short sprints (5-10sec) in your warm up as it is counter productive to what you are trying to achieve. If you need to energize yourself, do a few sprints, but not at the end of your warm up

OTHER WARM UP CONSIDERATIONS:

- A good warm up is more than just physical, it helps manage the pre-race jitters and builds confidence
- Do your warm up on your own as it helps you get in a routine, rhythm, and get into your competitive mindset
- Have your equipment and other scheduled activities ready before you start your warm up. This way you just need to change some clothes, a last bathroom break, and make your way to the start (factor in the time it takes to travel to the start)
- Make sure you hydrate a bit in your warm up. Using a sport drink is a good idea, don’t over hydrate
- Keep track of your warm ups on Training Peaks. Evaluate them just the same you do for races

What’s your warm up for a very short race such as a sprint?

What’s your warm up for a race lasting 15-40 minutes?