

Descriptions of Bridge Program Work Out Programs

Warm-Up

A proper warm-up and cool-down are part of every work out. Exercise intensity is gradually changed to affect the heart rate and muscle temperature. Five to ten minutes of medium intensity activity is recommended- Cool-Downs help bring the body back down to a resting state. Since the muscles are warm after a workout or skating session, this is a great time to work on flexibility.

Why warm up?

Skaters will eventually warm up if they get on the ice cold right out of the car, but it may take the better part of the session to get going. Precious ice time could be better used more efficiently on skills rather than getting ready to skate.

A warm up routine will help increase body temperature which helps make muscles more extensible (stretchable), and allows the nervous system to work more quickly and with better control. A warm up helps skaters have better body awareness while on the ice, allows muscles to stretch more easily, and decreases the risk of on-ice muscle or tendon injuries.

When to warm up?

When skaters first get to the rink, or after a long break between sessions, it is important to warm up before getting on the ice. The following warm up will take about 8-10 minutes to complete.

The only equipment the skaters needs is a good pair of cross trainer sneakers. A jump rope is desirable but not necessary. Find an open area at the rink with rubber matting. Do not jump on concrete floors.

The warm up starts off easy and gradually becomes more demanding by using repetitive body movements, short stretches then ends with quicker movements.

Cool-Down (Core and Flexibility)

A cool down incorporates exercises that gradually bring the body back towards a resting state. Core exercises and Flexibility are two phases of the training that work great as cool down exercises.

First of all, both need to be practiced several times per week, and by putting them in the cool-down, the athlete is assured to fit them into the training program! Figure skating requires excellent core strength and flexibility.

By building good habits to improve core strength and daily stretching, the young athlete will be better prepared to attempt more difficult skills on the ice.

Cardio Training

Cardio training is also known as aerobic training. Continuous, rhythmical and repetitive exercise that uses large muscle groups will train the same muscles used in skating. Examples include jogging, biking, in-line skating, or using cardio equipment such as cardio steps or an elliptical machine.

To elicit a training effect, the cardio workout needs to be at a moderate exercise intensity several times per week. As a guideline for the intensity, the athlete will be able to hold a brief conversation while exercising aerobically. If the athlete is not able to speak one full sentence at a time, then the intensity is too high and should be slightly reduced.

For young athletes under 10 years old, 15 minutes is recommended; the time increases from 20-60 minutes in pre-teens, teens and adults. As conditioning improves, higher exercise intensities are achieved without increased effort, helping to improve performance.

Strength Training

According to the American College of Sports Medicine, vigorous exercise is "safe and recommended" for children. Qualified adult supervision is imperative when training children. Prepubescent athletes are usually under 12 years old, and have not yet developed secondary sex changes.

Several studies demonstrate that children are able to improve strength, balance, flexibility, endurance and agility with practice through specific and appropriate exercises using correct technique. Additionally, adequate balance between strength and flexibility can help prevent musculoskeletal injuries.

Prepubescent children and newcomers to body conditioning can strength train 2-3 times per week using light resistances or body weight. As skill and strength increase, heavier resistance can be used. Moderate-intensity jumping drills are also effective for building strength, power, and stamina. The best results are obtained by performing 2-3 sets of up to 15 repetitions for each exercise.

