



READY. SET. WORK RIGHT.

BY NICOLE BRUCE, MS, LAT, ATC



Do you wonder why athletes spend an hour or more stretching and warming up before a game? Even in motorsports, drivers complete a parade lap before the race to check track conditions, ensure their vehicles are operating smoothly, and most importantly to prepare their tires for the strenuous demand ahead. If athletes dedicate so much time to warming up for 2-3 hours of competition, just imagine how important your pre-shift stretching is for an 8-10 hour shift!

A STRONG START

As an industrial athlete, your body experiences a variety of demands and stresses throughout the day. The best way to be prepared? Get PREPARED with the first letter of the acronym—[P] the Pre-Shift Warm-Up. A proper warm-up has been proven to reduce injuries, improve performance, and prepare the body for physical activity by doing the following:



- **Improving Flexibility:** Stretching gets your body moving, lubricates your joints, and increases range of motion.
- **Increasing Circulation:** Blood flow brings fresh oxygen and nutrients to your muscles, ensuring they're ready to go when it's time for heavy lifting.
- **Reducing Muscle Stiffness:** Light movement like stretching makes your muscles more pliable, so reaching high or low is less of a challenge.
- **Increasing Muscle Temperature:** Muscles that are warmer produce more power and work more efficiently than colder muscles.
- **Preparing You Mentally:** A warm-up activates your central nervous system, enhancing focus, coordination, and signaling the body to be ready for physical activity.


THE SMART WARM-UP

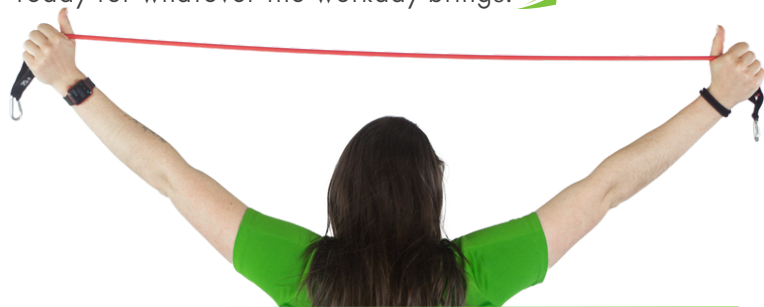
Now that we covered the benefits of pre-shift stretching, what's the right technique for a great warm-up? Efficiency is a key term in the industrial setting because everyone wants maximum production with minimum waste. Here are important steps to make sure you are getting the most from your pre-shift warm-up:

- **Length of Time:** A great warm-up lasts at least 5-10 minutes. The benefits we just mentioned take time to

activate, and anything less than five minutes isn't enough to be effective.

- **Don't Force It:** Avoid forcing your body into a stretch or holding it too intensely. Focus on controlled movement and gradually increase your intensity and range of motion.
- **Be Specific:** If your job requires a lot of bending and lifting, get your hips and legs moving. If you are reaching overhead, mobilize your shoulders and neck. Also, taking a couple "practice reps" of common job tasks during the warm-up is a great way to evaluate yourself before starting your shift.
- **Mix it up:** A variety of dynamic and static movements make for a full-body warm-up. Dynamic stretching involves active movements through a full range of motion, like lunges or arm circles. Static stretching involves holding a stretch for a sustained period. Both are beneficial movements for the body.

A few minutes of movement before your shift can make all the difference by keeping you flexible, focused, and ready for whatever the workday brings. 



Nicole Bruce, MS, LAT, ATC || Nicole is a Washington state native. She graduated from Eastern Washington University with a Bachelor's Degree in Exercise Science and a Master's Degree in Athletic Training. She worked three years in Division I college athletics before joining Work Right. She's always had a passion for exercise and training. So much so, when she vacations, she packs extra clothes and tennis shoes to hit the gym, go for a run, or check out new hiking trails.

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