

The Warm Up

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The warm up is possibly the most under rated part of the training schedule in Cheerleading and just about every sport for that matter.Â Just consider the following questions for a minute, try to understand why these things happen and what is causing them;

§ Have you ever wondered why some people seem to have a lot have minor injuries?

§ Or why others train for a few weeks then stop?

§Â Ever wondered why some people have horrific injuries such as snapped tendonsÂ & torn ligaments?

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Any ideas yet?

Put simply, itâ€™s all due to the warm up or rather the lack of a proper warm up.

The Elastic Band Theory

Image for one minute that the ligaments and tendons in your legs were Elastic bands after all they are very similar and perform the same way.

When you reach out, or stretch your leg the ligaments and tendons stretch just like an elastic band, so what do you think would happen if they are not warmed up correctly before you begin your exercise?

Answer: They snap!

The proof, try this out

1. Find yourself two elastic bands
2. Stretch one band as far as you can and measure the distance it reached.
3. Take the 2nd elastic band and put it in the freezer for a minimum of 30 minutes.
4. After 30 minutes take the elastic band out of the freezer and stretch it just like you did with the first.

Did it stretch as far as the 1st band? No

Did it snap? More than likely.

But you only stretched the elastic band once! Imagine if you stretched it 1000 times, every three or four minutes, do you think it will snap now. Well during exercise you use several different muscles, hundreds if not thousands of times.

You see when we use our muscles to move our limbs the ligaments stretch, allowing for this movement. Not just that but each ligament is made up of lots of strands, which is like having lots of different elastic bands connected to each joint.

As we move, these ligaments stretch and then return back to normal again, continually stretching and shrinking.

Now consider a cheerleading move such as the splits

It's only one move and it only takes 2 or 3 seconds to complete but imagine how many of these elastic band ligaments are stretched to the MAX, pulled to the very last sinew almost to the point of breaking.

You know this is true, that's why it hurts at the top of your legs – it's the ligaments being pulled to the point of tearing from the bone that causes this pain.

Now imagine what happens when you don't warm up properly?

The ligaments tear

And if it's a bad tear, then it can be worse than breaking your leg.

Remember: you can put a broken leg in plaster and walk on it but the only thing you can do with a ligament tear is rest until it mends.

This can take up to six months!

Don't be a moron & don't wait for your coach to tell you either - It's your body, protect yourself, WARM UP FIRST!