

What's the Best Way to Warm Up for a Workout? | Dr. Andy Galpin & Dr. Andrew Huberman

I was taught that one should do higher repetition movements with lighter weights in order to warm up And then one of the things that did make a big positive difference for me in terms of strength and hypertrophy training was to do um a moderate repetition warm up with a fairly lightweight but then to actually keep the number of warm up repetitions fairly low and work progressively toward the first so called work set When you say 3 to 5 that's 3 to 5 work sets correct Are you also gonna tell me 3 to 5 warmups No Are you also gonna tell me it has to be done between three and 5 p.m. Uh So in terms of in all seriousness what does a good warm up look like And I realize this will vary depending on how cool your training environment is time of day et cetera But as a kind of umbrella for a good warm up what should people do The you've already sort of jumped the gun with both my answer It it is honestly very dependent upon the person So some folks respond very well to a minimum war Well others I've had lots of actually um professional fighters I've worked with where the I actually have a major league baseball player Uh right now he's one of the best pa pitchers in the game probably the best And the longer we warm up the better his numbers get we actually did a vertical jump test with him He's gonna kill me because he got so mad Uh I wanted to see how long it sort of took him to reach a peak vertical jump And most times this takes people something like 5 to 10 sort of reps Um and I said take it up all the way to a maximum vertical jump And then what I want you to do is continue to jumping until you have three consecutive jumps where you're down lower than 90% And so what we're trying to look at is sort of when is he gonna break Because in baseball he's gonna throw like 100 pitchers or so And we're trying to figure out when is his peak velocity on his fastball gonna drop and sort of base his conditioning on that It's a different style of conditioning It's power endurance It's really what it is Um he called me in the middle of it and I'm like oh we done whatever And he's just like no like how many of these am I supposed to do And I was like what are you talking about He's like I'm on rep 100 and 30 or something And I was like what And I'm like what rep did you peak on He peaked on rep 70 something like that 69 I think technically because he's goofy Um so he's a classic example I've worked him for many many years We have a ton of data on him A ton of biological data A ton of um neuromuscular stuff like all kinds of

stuff And it just the more he warms up an absurd amount of warm up the better he gets and the better he gets in power production and the better he gets in speed and velocity So his warm up prior to games is it's totally absurd Uh And and just the more volume we throw at him the better he does I have other folks you get past like two or three reps and fatigue are to set in and now you're actually like reducing power production So there is a ton of variation that goes in that I can give you some guidelines though You need to differentiate if you're training for speed power strength or approach speed Here's what if we understand a little bit about what's causing the adaptation that's going to tell you what you need to do or avoid For example volume is the primary driver in hypertrophy Intensity is the primary driver in speed power and strength All right What that means is you need to preserve intensity for the first three you need to preserve volume in the second one at most So if your warm up is so extensive in the hypertrophy training that it compromises your training volume because of fatigue Even if it compromises the last set of the last exercise then you're actually probably walking yourself backwards by doing that extensive You would have been better off starting your first working set slightly suboptimal right Because it's not really you're just trying to accrue volume at that point Strength and power is the opposite until you're moving very very fast or powerfully You're not really causing the adaptation So there's no point of starting a working set until you're really basically at 100% So the warm up should be as long as it takes you to get to where your mobility is in the right spot Like your joints feel good you feel fresh you feel activated and you really feel peak power Anything before that is a warm up set in the sport of Olympic weightlifting Um A lot of times the coaches will measure Barba velocity Travis Mash has done a fantastic job with this He's got a lot of data on what's called velocity based training Um Brian Mann at Missouri and and Miami tons of work here And generally those communities are not going to count any repetition as a working set until you exceed 70% of your one rep max where that's changed because of uh a lot of people doing the velocity based stuff is now they're basing that simply on an achieved velocity And so really the warm up is irrelevant They don't even it's sort of just like do whatever you want and we're gonna measure the barbell until you actually hit an outcome And now you're what a working set Um So different ways to think about it um Depending on what you're training for that'll give you a little bit of a guideline If you're training for anything past hypertrophy then really and especially even hypertrophy it just comes down to are you feeling um ready

to work Are you cold or are you moving to the correct positions And if all those things are fine I don't care if you start a little bit early and save some gas at the end of it Especially if you're a person like you who may be a bit more inclined to fatigue uh quickly uh relative to Trevor who's just has no response to fatigue whatsoever Is it useful to do more warm up at the beginning of a workout Say before the first exercise and then once one has achieved both local and systemic warm up in air quotes um then perhaps on the second or third exercise fourth exercise et cetera one or maybe even zero warm ups Yeah Fair point We generally think about warm ups in a couple of ways This is a really actually this is a very clever question You want to have some sort of general global warm up scheme Uh We tend to prefer dynamic warm ups So this is whole body movements rather than like sitting and stretching uh static stretching things like that So so something that involves momentum momentum or movement right So this is like uh think about this in like old gym class it's like your high knees and your and your butt kickers and just different things like that where you're moving in different planes Um you're moving joints through tons of range of motion You're you're getting a lot of movement there So you're getting the local warm up you're also getting the the total systemic activation everything else is going on there So that is what would be considered to be a general warm up Five minutes It is a very sufficient number perhaps 10 If you're a slow goer achy and some things like that and you really got to get the ankle warmed up If you're doing lower body stuff really make sure that that's moving correctly the hips and knees will follow Um upper body stuff really good The shoulder blades in the neck like making sure you're going there and the elbows will follow after that Um So 5 to 7 minutes of a general warm up a lot of the times like classic exercise science it will even just put you on a bike cycling for five minutes I don't like that Personally um dynamic movement is more preferred If you really just move for 5 to 7 minutes you'll be fine there Now specificity within each movement it's very important that your first exercise of the day is generally the thing you've prioritized That's oftentimes the most important you're going to do for it Oftentimes is also the most complex and the most moving parts So it tends to be multi joint Uh it tends therefore you need to have um movement precision and skill dialed right You don't typically start your workouts off with the forearm curl All right Like that's you don't need a tremendous amount of warm up to get going on that you're gonna start off with medicine ball throws or a snatch or some agility work You you need to have the whole system going because multiple joints are moving position

matters technique There's just a lot of skill requirement et cetera So the individualized workout um or the specific workout for the specific movement for that Very first one my general rule of thumb is like whatever it takes to move Perfect in that first exercise past that you don't necessarily need to do individualized warm ups for your next movements Unless it is a movement you're trying to learn or just even get a little bit better at drop the load a little bit Work on some uh accruing some practice reps Fantastic or it's another dissimilar complex movement So let's say your first exercise was uh a front squat and you got loader for that and now you're gonna move into a pull up but your mechanics aren't the best there And so you really need to change and do some maybe more specific activation warm ups for that or something else or it's running or or something totally different So yeah you don't learn to rewarm up for every single exercise as you go Generally once you're good to go um the same muscles that you're going to use in the next exercise are warm same joints then you're good to go