**WARM-UPS & COOL DOWNS**

Before we hit the water, we need to prepare our bodies for the exercises we are about to undertake. Warm-ups are an important component of our exercise regime in preparing our bodies for exercise and helping to prevent injuries. Warm-up exercises should include dynamic stretching of the large muscle groups which are used in paddling as well as cardio fitness exercise to increase blood flow to the muscles.

Dynamic stretching is crucial to get your muscles well-lubricated and ready to fire. A light run is beneficial to raise your total body temperature and get your body ready for vigorous activity. Active stretches such as arm/shoulder circles, hip circles, leg swings, squats, lunges, side-steps, etc. all help get your body loosened up and prepared for paddling. A good indication that you are warmed up is when you begin to sweat – that’s why it’s called a ‘warm up’!

The following video offers some exercises we can incorporate into our warm-up regime.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJ7XH2xK2Zc&feature=youtu.be>

When you've finished paddling, it's important to cool down with stretching and gentler exercising to transition your body from hard work to rest. Stopping suddenly after a session can mean blood pooling in your muscles, dizziness and cramps. Cooling down after paddling allows for a gradual recovery of pre-exercise heart rate and blood pressure, reducing the chance of injury and keeping your body in check by ridding the body of lactic acid build-up.

**WEIGHT TRAINING**

Weight training can be undertaken to improve a paddler’s strength and if you feel so inclined utilize this 24-week weights program. Please make sure you read all the material to get a full understanding how the program works and how it can help your paddling. It is very important to focus on maintaining good technique rather than just to lift as heavy a weight as possible. Remember to check with your doctor before you start and to talk with a trainer at your gym to ensure you are using the correct technique.

» [Weight training introduction](http://www.dragonhunters.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Weight-training-introduction.doc)

» [Weight exercise groups](http://www.dragonhunters.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Weight-exercise-groups.doc)
» [Weights plan](http://www.dragonhunters.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Weights-plan.xls)

(credit to Dragon Hunters)

**INJURY REHABILITATION EXERCISES**

Below are a couple of exercise programs specific to injuries that are often associated with dragon boating. It is advantageous to paddlers to use the 7 days rotator cuff program on a regular basis to strengthen the shoulder area. It is not necessary to have an injury to undertake this program as it helps build the muscles around the rotator cuff.

» [7 Day Rotator Cuff Program](http://www.dragonhunters.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/7DayRotatorCuff.pdf)

» [Rehab program for tennis elbow](http://www.dragonhunters.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Rehab-For-Tennis-Elbow-The-Super-7.doc)

(credit to Dragon Hunters)