

CHAPTER FOUR

The Warm-up

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*Preparation is everything...
because quality is a
function of time, care
and commitment.*

Ricky Harris

Warm-up Myths

Warm-up Myth #1:

“The more in shape you are the less you need to warm up”

The fact is that the more highly trained you are, the more finely tuned your body is. This fine tuning requires MORE not less attention not only to maintain but to exceed your previous limits. Figure skating and gymnastics are as demanding on the body as classical ballet, and yet many sports people do not seem to consider the long term effects of not warming up properly; consequently, more severe injuries are occurring in these sports at a higher rate than ever before.

Because of the strides taken in the past 30 years involving research in human kinetics and injury prevention in the dance world, most professional ballet dancers do warm-ups for at least a *full hour* to prepare themselves physically, mentally and emotionally before each performance. The demands on skaters are not less but even more extreme adding body torque at high velocities and landing jumps at up to seven times the weight of the person on a non resilient surface!

This should indicate that the more elite a skater you are, the greater time and care you need to take in your warm-up program.

Reflection:

Have I (or my students) bought into this myth?

If so, what concrete steps can I take to change this mind set?

Warm-Up Myth #2:

“The way to warm-up is to stretch”

Even professionals have a common misconception that a *stretch* and a *warm-up* are the same thing. They are not! A warm-up routine's main purpose is to raise the heart rate and increase blood flow to the muscles, ligaments and tendons *with the least amount of strain on those same muscles, ligaments and tendons.*

As all movement requires a certain amount of stretching and contracting, it may be a matter of semantics as to when a warm-up becomes a stretch: nevertheless, a true warm-up must come first; otherwise injury at some point will become inevitable.

While mild stretching is employed in a typical warm-up routine, full out