

# INJURY PREVENTION

## YOUTH RUGBY PLAYER

### Warm-Up and Stretching

**Light cardio:** Jogging, skipping, side shuffles

• **Dynamic drills:**

- High knees, butt kicks, carioca
- Walking lunges with torso twist
- Arm swings, shoulder rolls, hip circles

• **Rugby-specific movement drills:**

- Short sprints with changes of direction
- Tackle-shield footwork
- Quick reaction cone drills

**Stretching:**

- **Pre-practice:** Dynamic mobility only
- **Post-practice/match:** Gentle **dynamic recovery stretches** to aid circulation and reduce stiffness:
  - Walking quad pulls
  - Hamstring kicks
  - Hip openers
  - Arm swings and trunk rotations



### Strength and Stability Exercises

**Core Strength (stability in contact):**

- Planks, side planks, rotational med ball throws
- Dead bugs and bird-dogs
- Anti-rotation band holds

**Lower Body Strength (speed & tackling power):**

- Squats, lunges, and step-ups
- Romanian deadlifts and glute bridges
- Box jumps and broad jumps (with focus on soft landings)

**Upper Body Strength (for tackles & scrums):**

- Push-ups, bench press, rows
- Pull-ups/chin-ups
- Resistance band external rotations (shoulder health)

**Neck & Shoulder Stability:**

- Neck isometrics (against hands or bands)
- Shrugs and banded retractions
- Controlled wrestling/tackle drills for safe contact prep

**Agility & Balance:**

- Single-leg balance drills (catch/pass on one leg)
- Agility ladder and cone cutting drills
- Controlled deceleration and change-of-direction drills



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### Prevention Tips

- Always use safe tackling technique (head up, avoid leading with crown of head)
- Strengthen stabilizing muscles in shoulders, hips, and core
- Train landing mechanics for jumps and dives
- Take recovery days seriously — overtraining increases injury risk
- Prioritize neck strengthening to protect against concussion



### Technique and Skill Progression

- Master safe tackling, rucking, and scrummaging techniques under coach supervision
- Focus on body position: low, stable, and balanced during contact
- Drill safe falling and rolling to reduce injury risk in tackles
- Progress intensity gradually — don't overload volume too quickly



### Rest & Recovery

- Schedule at least 1–2 rest days per week
- Prioritize sleep (8–10 hours for youth athletes)
- Use active recovery: light jogging, yoga, swimming, or mobility work
- Address soreness with stretching, mobility drills, or foam rolling
- Report head injuries or concussion symptoms immediately — **never return to play the same day**



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