



# THE 5-MINUTE PRE-RUN WARM-UP

No equipment, no space needed — done entirely in a car park before you run. 10 moves, roughly 5 minutes door to door, so you head out already moving well instead of cold.

**Why dynamic, not static:** Holding a stretch before you run can temporarily reduce muscle power and isn't shown to prevent injury. Dynamic movement does the opposite — it raises muscle temperature and blood flow and switches on the nervous system, and a well-known 2010 meta-analysis found active warm-ups like this improved performance and cut injury risk substantially compared to static stretching or no warm-up at all. Save the static stretching for after your run.

## THE SEQUENCE — DO THESE IN ORDER

| #  | Move                       | Dose        | Why                                                 |
|----|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | High Knees                 | 20 sec      | Raises heart rate and warms up the hip flexors      |
| 2  | Butt Kicks                 | 20 sec      | Warms up the hamstrings and quads                   |
| 3  | Leg Swings (front-to-back) | 10 each leg | Dynamic hamstring/hip flexor range of motion        |
| 4  | Leg Swings (side-to-side)  | 10 each leg | Opens the hips, wakes up the glutes                 |
| 5  | Walking Lunge with Twist   | 6 each leg  | Stretches hip flexors, mobilizes the upper back     |
| 6  | Walking Knee Hug           | 6 each leg  | Dynamic glute and hip stretch                       |
| 7  | Single-Leg Calf Raise      | 8 each leg  | Activates the calves for push-off                   |
| 8  | Tibialis Raise             | 12-15 reps  | Wakes up the shin muscles that control foot landing |
| 9  | A-Skips                    | 20 sec      | Primes running coordination and rhythm              |
| 10 | Ankle Pogo Hops            | 15-20 sec   | Wakes up the calves and Achilles for impact         |

**Total time: about 4-5 minutes.** No rest needed between moves — walk straight from one into the next. If you're short on time, moves 1-4 alone still cover the essentials in under 2 minutes.

Feeling stiff or sore anywhere specific today? Add a few extra reps to whichever move targets that area before you set off — there's no downside to a slightly longer warm-up on a rough day.

## HOW TO DO EACH EXERCISE — A COMPLETE BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Never done these before? Here's exactly what each one looks like, step by step. None of these need to be fast or perfect on day one — a slow, controlled version done correctly is more useful than a fast, sloppy one.

### 1 High Knees

Stand tall, then jog gently on the spot (or move slowly forward). As you jog, lift each knee up toward your chest as high as feels comfortable, pumping your arms like you would when running. Land lightly on the balls of your feet each time. Keep the rhythm light and quick rather than forcing your knees painfully high.

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### 2 Butt Kicks

Stand tall and jog gently on the spot (or move slowly forward). Instead of lifting your knees, kick each heel backward and up toward your glutes as you jog. Keep your knees pointing down toward the floor rather than swinging forward. Keep it light and easy — this isn't a race.

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### 3 Leg Swings (front-to-back)

Find something you can lightly rest a hand on for balance — a wall, fence, or your car. Stand tall on one leg and swing the other leg forward and backward like a pendulum, keeping it fairly straight. Let the movement come from your hip, not from bouncing your whole body. Do 10 swings, then turn around and repeat on the other leg.

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### 4 Leg Swings (side-to-side)

Facing your support (wall, fence, or car), stand tall on one leg. Swing the other leg out to the side, then back across the front of your body, like a pendulum moving sideways. Keep your chest facing forward the whole time. Do 10 swings on one leg, then switch to the other.

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### 5 Walking Lunge with Twist

Take a large step forward and lower down into a lunge, letting your back knee drop toward (but not touch) the ground, front knee tracking over your foot. As you sink into the lunge, rotate your chest and arms gently toward your front leg, then rotate back to face forward. Push off and step through into the next lunge on the opposite leg, continuing to walk forward. Repeat 6 times on each side.

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### 6 Walking Knee Hug

Take a step forward, then lift one knee up in front of you and grab it with both hands, just below the knee. Gently pull it up and in toward your chest, feeling a light stretch through your hip and glute. Hold for a second, let go, step forward, and repeat by hugging the other knee as you continue walking. 6 times on each leg.

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### 7 Single-Leg Calf Raise

Stand on one leg — hold a wall or your car lightly for balance if you need to. Slowly rise up onto the ball of that foot, lifting your heel as high as you can, then lower back down under control until your heel taps the ground again. That's one rep. Do all 8 reps on one leg before swapping to the other.

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### 8 Tibialis Raise

Stand with your feet roughly hip-width apart, both feet flat on the ground. Keeping your legs straight, lift the front of both feet up off the ground as high as you can, rocking your weight back onto your heels, then lower your toes back down. Repeat for 12-15 reps. If balance is tricky at first, do it with your back lightly against a wall or car.

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### 9 A-Skips

Skip forward slowly, driving one knee up to about hip height while hopping briefly off the ground on the opposite foot, then switch. It's a light, bouncy skip rather than a run — think exaggerated skipping like a child would, not sprinting. Keep it relaxed and rhythmic for 20 seconds.

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### 10 Ankle Pogo Hops

Stand tall with your feet together. Hop up and down on the spot using only your ankles — keep your knees almost straight (a very slight bend) and imagine you're a pogo stick, spending as little time on the ground as possible between hops. Keep the hops small and quick, landing on the balls of your feet each time, for 15-20 seconds.

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