



THIS IS *US*

# PREP TO PLAY

PLAYER MANUAL

**ENHANCE PERFORMANCE AND REDUCE INJURY.  
A PROGRAM FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS WHO PLAY  
COMMUNITY LEVEL AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL.**



In collaboration with



Sport and Exercise Medicine  
Research Centre

## ENHANCE PERFORMANCE AND REDUCE INJURY

- Information and content in Prep to Play was developed during a collaborative project between the AFL and La Trobe University
- Content is informed by best available evidence, as well as expert opinion from coaches, players and medical staff<sup>28</sup>
- Prep to Play is designed to give structure, guidance, education and resources to assist clubs to further develop their existing programs

The PREP TO PLAY strategy is a program informed by previous research<sup>20,21,22,29</sup> designed to reduce the risk of injuries and enhance performance.<sup>23,24,25</sup>

Coaches should go to [coach.afl/female-football](http://coach.afl/female-football) to access video resources which complement this coaching manual.

## THIS PROGRAM FOCUSES ON REDUCING SERIOUS KNEE AND HEAD INJURIES BY:

**1** Improving your muscle function and movement quality during change of direction and landing activities.

**2** Improving safe execution of ground balls, aerial contests, tackling and being tackled.



# PREP TO PLAY WHY DO WOMEN AND GIRLS NEED TO PERFORM INJURY REDUCTION PROGRAMS?



In all sports, women have a 2-5x greater risk of serious knee injury compared to males.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> In the first 2 AFLW seasons, this rate was higher again.<sup>5</sup>

AFLW players had a

**9.2x**

Greater risk of sustaining an ACL injury compared to male players in the AFL.

Women also had double the risk of sustaining a concussion in the first two AFLW seasons.

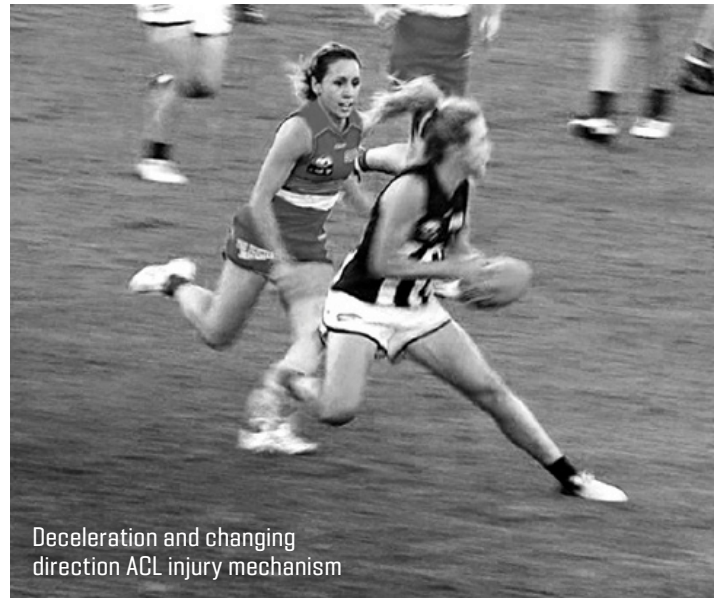
**70-80%**

of head injuries in AFLW occur during tackling (or being tackled), ground balls or aerial contests.

Despite limited injury surveillance data, serious knee and head injuries are a priority in community level football.<sup>26</sup>

**70-80%**

of ACL injuries occur in non-contact positions when decelerating and changing direction, or landing on one leg.



Deceleration and changing direction ACL injury mechanism



Landing on one leg ACL injury mechanism



# PREP TO PLAY BENEFITS



## ENHANCE PERFORMANCE\*

## REDUCE INJURY BY UP TO 50%\*

\* Benefits based upon similar programs <sup>20 21 22 23 24 25</sup>

### Increase athletic performance

Speed, vertical jump, agility, strength and coordination.



Increase your  
availability for games

Increase your team's  
chance of winning games



**INJURIES CAN BE REDUCED**  
But only when you stick with  
**THE PROGRAM!**

Benefits are greater if the program is  
performed at every training and match.

# PREP TO PLAY

## WHAT IS PREP TO PLAY?



Prep to Play is a research informed program designed to reduce your risk of injury and enhance your performance.

Your coach will use Prep to Play:

**EVERY TRAINING SESSION –**  
Dynamic Warm Up, Football Skills, and Strength Exercises

**MATCH DAY –**  
Dynamic Warm Up only (10 Minutes)

The activities for each component are provided on pages 6-19.

### **DYNAMIC WARM UP**

10 minutes at the start of every training session and game

**8 exercises to prepare you to train and play**

**PURPOSE:** to prepare your body and improve your athleticism

**YOUR ROLE:** Learn good technique and ask for feedback.

### **FOOTBALL SKILLS**

At least 5 minutes every training session

**PURPOSE:** To improve execution of tackling (and receiving tackles), ground balls and aerial contests

**YOUR ROLE:** Transfer your movement and footwork skills into football drills, and ask for feedback on your technique.

### **STRENGTH EXERCISES**

5 to 10 minutes before, during, or after every training session

**3 exercises to strengthen your legs and core**

**PURPOSE:** Help you jump higher, run faster and recover better

**YOUR ROLE:** Know what muscle groups you should be feeling in each exercise and follow the prescribed sets and reps.

### **EDUCATION**

2x10 minute education sessions with your coach, and/or physio

**PURPOSE:** To learn professional habits on and off the field that enhance performance and reduce injuries

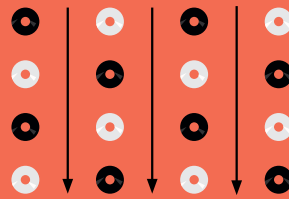
**YOUR ROLE:** Listen, learn and ask questions during education sessions. Implement new habits on and off the field.

# PREP TO PLAY DYNAMIC WARM UP PROGRAM

**DO ALL 8 ACTIVITIES –  
THEY ARE ALL IMPORTANT!**

Choose A, B or C  
for each activity

10 minutes every training  
session and match




Players start here and  
perform movements  
through the cones

16 cones  
(8 of each colour)

## JOG AT LEAST 200M AND AT LEAST 1 MOBILITY EXERCISE

**1**

**A**



**HAMSTRING SWEEP**  
Get low, sweep fingers to the grass, alternate sides.

**x5 EACH SIDE**


**B**



**LEG SWING**  
Swing leg forwards and backwards or side to side.

**x5 EACH SIDE**

**C**



**OPEN/CLOSE GATE**  
Lift knee to hip height. Sweep hip out to open sweep in to close, alternate sides.

**x5 EACH SIDE**

## DECELERATION

**2**

**A**



**STUTTER STEP**  
At each cone decelerate and rapidly move your feet on the spot for 3 secs.

**REPEAT x2**

**B**



**ONE LEG STOP**  
Get low and use short quick steps. Finish in athletic stance.

**x1 EACH SIDE**

**C**



**FORWARD 2 BACKWARD 1**  
Accelerate forwards 2 cones, then backtrack 1 cone.


**REPEAT x2**



## CHANGE OF DIRECTION

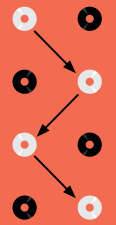
**3**

**A**



**45 DEG ZIG ZAG CUTS**  
Using short quick steps, get low and use outside leg to plant and push off.

**REPEAT x2**



**B**



**PARTNER ZIG ZAG - NO CONTACT**  
Start on cones next to each other. Zig-zag around cones avoiding contact with partner. Make it a race.

**REPEAT x2**

**C**



**PARTNER ZIG ZAG - CONTACT**  
Zig-zag around cones racing a partner. You can bump each other as you move through. Compete for a ball at the end.

**REPEAT x2**



# PREP TO PLAY

## DYNAMIC WARM UP PROGRAM

### JUMP AND LAND

**4**

**A**



**DOT THE i**  
Jump forward and then jump up straight away. Land in athletic stance.

REPEAT x10

**B**



**BOUNDING**  
Leap off right leg, landing on left leg, moving forward as you bound left to right.

REPEAT x10 EACH SIDE

**C**



**HOPS**  
Hop forward as far as you can. Keep foot, knee, and hip in line.

REPEAT x10 EACH SIDE

### JUMP AND LAND - CONTACT

**5**

**A**



**PARTNER PUSH**  
From a standing double leg start, jump high and have a partner bump you in the air. Land in athletic stance.

x5 EACH SIDE


**B**



**RUNNING PARTNER PUSH**  
Run, jump off 1 leg. Drive the knee closest to your partner up. Partner bumps you in the air. Land in athletic stance.

x5 EACH SIDE

**C**



**RUNNING PARTNER PUSH AND TWIST**  
Run, jump off 1 leg, and in the air turn the body 90 degrees. Partner bumps you in the air. Land in athletic stance.

x5 EACH SIDE

### CONTACT

**6**

**A**



**PARTNER BUMP/CHECK**  
Get low in athletic stance and bump your partner. (x5 each side) Or bump (check) your partner as they try to run to the end cone (1 turn each).

**B**



**TACKLING BREAKDOWN**  
Chest on chest, chin to back. Get feet close, get low and drive legs. Swap sides until coach blows whistle - try to push partner over the line.

2x30s

**C**



**FALLING/ROLLING**  
Tuck the right arm and head through, lower the body and roll onto the back on the right shoulder, diagonally across the back, landing on the left hip.

x3-5 EACH SIDE

### SPRINTING

**7**



**SPRINTS**  
Sprints of 30m. Build up to 80-90% of top speed.  
**Partner option:** Race from a lying position.

REPEAT x2-3

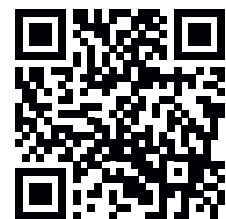
### BALANCE

**8**



**BALANCE**  
Balancing on one leg, handball with a partner.

1 MINUTE EACH SIDE



TO VIEW THE VIDEOS GO TO:  
[COACH.AFL/FEMALE-FOOTBALL](https://coach.afl/female-football)

# PREP TO PLAY

## HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE GOOD TECHNIQUE?

Your coach can give you feedback to help improve your technique. Just ask!



**GOOD  
TECHNIQUE**

VS



**POOR  
TECHNIQUE**

### JUMPING, LANDING, & SQUATTING – Jump higher to mark, strong in air, land with balance.



✓ Land in an athletic stance (bending at knees and hips). Keep knees in line with hips.



✗ Hip and knee collapse. Torso leaning to the side.

### CHANGE OF DIRECTION – More agile, dodge player, respond quickly to the play.



✓ Using short quick steps, get low and use outside leg to plant and push off.



✗ Over striding too upright, Foot too far outside base of support.

### DECELERATION – Improve approach to contests (e.g. corraling and not getting stepped).



✓ **Busy feet** with short quick steps on balls of feet. **Get low** by bending knees and hips.

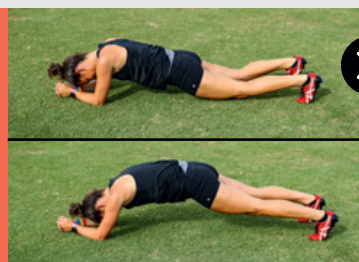


✗ Too upright, heavy steps. **Over striding** with large, long, heavy steps. **Upright posture.**

### PLANK



✓ Create a straight line from ears to toes. Elbows under shoulders, head tucked in looking at the ground.



✗ Hips sagging too low. Hips bending too high. Don't round the shoulders or strain through the neck.



## ARE YOU PRACTICING YOUR FOOTBALL FUNDAMENTALS?

Your coach should be giving you opportunity to practice these skills at every training session.

1 - TACKLING



2 - RECEIVING A TACKLE



3 - AERIAL



4 - GROUND BALLS

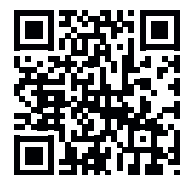


Learning good technique of these fundamental skills will help you be strong in contests in the air and on the ground.

### BUT HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM DOING THE SKILLS CORRECTLY?

See pages 10-17 for tips on technique and execution of football skills.

Scan the QR code to view the videos.



**DON'T FORGET: Gain feedback off your coaches on your technique.**

## REDUCE HEAD, NECK AND SHOULDER INJURIES



Winning contested ground balls will improve your team's performance.

**Learn good ground ball technique to prepare your body for contact and protect your head.**

**Tip →**

"Putting your head over the ball" is an expression coaches may use. This does not mean you should lead with your head. Attack the ball with intensity but protect yourself.



**ACTIVE FEET and AWARENESS**  
Prepare for ball/opposition movement.



**GET LOW BEHIND BALL**  
Get nails dirty.



**OVERSTRIDE/FLAT-FOOTED**  
Reaching/squatting for ball.



**Tip →**

Remember its okay to make mistakes or fumble, especially when you are learning a new skill.



**PROTECTION**  
Front foot, round shoulders.



**STAY LOW**  
Drive legs towards target.



**STANDING UPRIGHT TOO EARLY**  
Easily tackled or fumble.



**KEEP EYES ON THE BALL**  
Until it is secured.



**LEADING WITH THE HEAD**  
High risk position for serious head/neck injury.

**Tip →**

Turn your body to **PROTECT YOURSELF** from where the contact is coming from. **DRIVE** through the ball with your legs.



## REDUCE HEAD, NECK, AND SHOULDER INJURIES



➔ Increase effective tackles



Learn to protect yourself and your opponent when tackling. Ask for feedback from your coach!

### KEY POINTS: Inside tackle (Tackler close to ball-carrier)

Tip ➔

On approach, prepare your feet and body, protect your head, drive through the tackle with in one motion (don't sling), and control the impact for you and your opponent.



**GET LOW**  
Stay low. Active feet and drive legs.



**DRIVE LEGS**  
Use momentum.



**UPRIGHT**  
Flat footed.



**BODY ON BODY**  
Chin to back. Pin elbows.



**DUTY OF CARE**  
Protect opponent. Control their body.

**ROLL AND DROP**  
With control.



**REACHING**  
Tackling with hands.

### KEY POINTS: Outside tackle (Tackler has to run to close space)



**GET LOW**  
Quick steps and feet close. Inside shoulder.



**CORRAL TOWARDS SIDELINE**  
Aim for inside shoulder. Roll and drop. Protect opponent, don't sling.



**OVERSTRIDE**  
Lunge and reach = ineffective tackles. Higher risk position for serious knee injury.



# PREP TO PLAY RECEIVING, BREAKING, OR AVOIDING TACKLES

## REDUCE HEAD, NECK AND SHOULDER INJURIES



→ Increase a players ability to break free and reduce congestion



Learn how to receive a tackle correctly to reduce your risk of injury, and how to break or avoid tackles to keep the ball moving for your team.

**Tip** →

Once you are tackled, get low and stay low, keep your feet active, and drive your legs to try get out of the tackle.



**GET LOW**  
Active feet and drive legs.



**STAY LOW**



**ENGAGE CORE**



**TOO UPRIGHT**  
Floppy in the tackle, not driving legs.

**Tip** →

Learning these points with ground ball drills makes you a cleaner player below the knees and helps you to avoid tackles.



**SPATIAL AWARENESS**  
Knowing where contact is coming from.



**PROTECTION**  
Keep back shoulder away.

**DUTY OF CARE**

Reinforce to players to take responsibility for how they attack the ball safely to protect themselves.



**NO AWARENESS/LEADING WITH HEAD**  
High risk position for serious head/neck injury.



**ARMS FREE**  
Dispose of ball.



**CHOP ARMS or FEND OFF**  
To avoid approaching tackler.



**UPRIGHT**  
Flat footed not getting arms free.

# PREP TO PLAY AERIAL CONTESTS

## REDUCE LOWER LIMB, HEAD AND FINGER INJURIES



→ Improve athleticism and football performance in contests

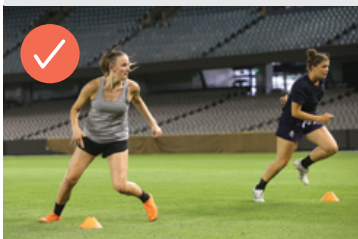


Learning how to approach aerial contests allows you to jump higher to mark the ball, be stronger in the air, and land with balance with be NEXT PLAY READY.

### KEY POINTS: Preparing feet and body, and launching

Tip →

Get feedback off your coach on how to prepare and position your body prior to, during and after an aerial contest. This will increase your contested marks and spoils, and player safety for you and your opponent.



**SPACIAL AWARENESS**

Turn head and read cues of kicker.



**FOOTWORK - ACTIVE FEET**

Run an arc to come forward at the ball.



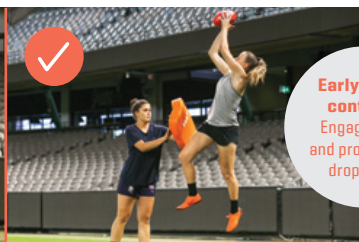
**DUTY OF CARE**

Educate players that they should not back pedal into a contest.



**LAUNCH OFF ONE LEG**

Take at highest point.



**INSIDE LEG PROTECTION**

Early to the contest?  
Engage body and protect the drop zone.



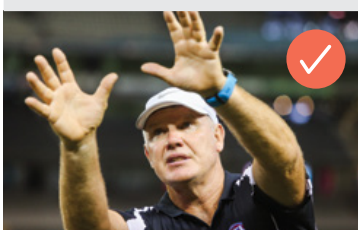
**SITTING DUCK**

Waiting under ball = vulnerable position and will get out-marked/spoiled.

### KEY POINTS: Marking and landing

Tip →

Taking your eyes off ball and moving your head to the side = dropped marks and finger injuries.



**EYES ON THE BALL**

"W" hands.



**HEAD TO SIDE**

Not looking at ball.



**LAND - ATHLETIC STANCE**

Next play ready.



**STIFF LANDING**

Unbalanced = High risk position for serious knee injury.



# PREP TO PLAY STRENGTH PROGRAM

coach 

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## YOUR COACH WILL GET YOU TO COMPLETE 3 ACTIVITIES

You can choose A, B or C  
for each activity

10 minutes total (before, during  
or after every training session)

**1 - LOWER LIMB**

**A**



**LUNGES**  
Keep body straight, keep hips, knees and feet in line. Don't let the knee collapse inwards. Try to keep your upper body steady.

**2x10 REPS EACH SIDE**


**B**



**CLOCKFACE**  
In a mini squat, lightly tap the opposite foot around an imaginary clock at 12, 3, 6 and 9 o'clock. Keep hip and knee in line.  
**Harder:** make a larger clock.

**x3 SETS EACH SIDE**

**C**




**REVERSE NORDICS**  
In upright kneeling, slowly lean your body backwards as far as you can control. Keep your hips straight. Hold for 1 second then slowly return your body upright.

**2x5 REPS**

**2 - HAMSTRING / GLUTE**


**A**



**GLUTE BRIDGE**  
With one foot on the ground and the other in the air, lift your bottom off the ground as high as you can, pushing through your heels. Keep pelvis and thighs stable and in line.  
**Easier:** hands on ground.

**2x10 REPS EACH SIDE**


**B**



**HAMSTRING BRIDGE**  
With one leg on a bench/ball and the other leg in the air, lift your bottom off the ground as high as you can.  
**Alternate Option:** Bridge off your partners shoulder.

**2x10 REPS EACH SIDE**

**C**




**NORDIC HAMSTRING LOWERS**  
With a partner holding your feet in kneeling, keep hips straight. Slowly lean forward as far as possible, then fall to ground landing in push up position.  
**Alternate option:** Control to point you can control. Pause for 1 second and return to start.

**2x5 REPS**

**3 - CORE / HIP**

**A**



**FRONT PLANK OR WHEELBARROW**  
Hold your body off the ground leaning on your elbows and feet. Keep your body straight and head tucked in.  
**Wheelbarrow:** Partner 1, set up in push-up position. Partner 2, stand behind your partner's feet. Lift Partner 1 legs. Partner 1 walks their hands forward to under their shoulders. Hold this position.

**2x30-60 SECONDS**

**B**



**SIDE PLANK**  
Lie on your side with legs on top of each other. Lean on your elbow and lift hips off the ground and hold. Create a straight line from ears to toes.  
**Easier option:** on knees.  
**Harder option:** lift leg and arm.

**2x30-60 SECONDS**

**C**



**COPENHAGEN GROIN**  
**Modified:** Partner 2 holds at the knee while the partner 1 is in a side plank position. Bring bottom foot up to touch the top foot, and then return the foot towards the ground in a controlled manner.  
**Full:** As above, but partner 2 holds partner 1 at the ankle.

**2x10 REPS EACH SIDE**

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO WATCH  
VIDEOS ON HOW TO DO THE  
STRENGTH EXERCISES.





## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM?

- Make you a better football player - don't get knocked off the ball
- Make you a better athlete - improve speed and agility, vertical jump
- Reduce your risk of injury - up to 50% reduction in other sports

## GENERAL TIPS - IMPROVING PERFORMANCE AND REDUCING INJURY

- Management of injuries and expectations
  - **If you are injured, still come to training and games.** There are always things you can do to improve and be part of the team.
  - **Manage your injuries well.** A link to a list of recommended sports medicine providers and endorsed Prep to Play physiotherapists is provided on Page 16.
  - **Some soreness is expected** with the strength exercises.
- Athlete **well-being and recovery**
  - Physical and mental health
  - Sleep, eat, hydrate
  - Active recovery
  - Rest and balance in your life
  - Refer to Page 16 for details



**Keep the player manuals at your club.  
You can download your own copy at  
[coach.afl/female-football](http://coach.afl/female-football)**

# PREP TO PLAY

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE AND REDUCE INJURY RISK



It is up to you to after your physical and mental health and wellbeing.

### TOP 8 TIPS FOR ENHANCING YOUR WELLBEING



Players should aim for 8 hours of sleep per night. Sleep is vital for preparing for and recovering from training and games.

**1**



Players should enjoy a balanced diet that limits added sugars and alcohol. This gives you optimum energy for training.

**2**



Players should ensure rehydration to restore fluid and electrolyte balance after training and games.

**3**



Players should report and manage injuries in conjunction with their coaches, physio's and/or doctor. Encourage players to seek advice if unwell or injured.

**4**



Encourage players to use active recovery techniques such as walking, swimming, or bike riding. Avoid long periods of sitting.

**5**



Choose recovery strategies that work best for you and make you feel good. This may include ice baths, hot/cold showers or pool mobility. Better muscle recovery = better performance.

**6**



Coaches and players should be aware the menstrual cycle and/or associated symptoms may affect wellbeing and performance. If players report symptoms such as severe cramping or irregular periods medical advice should be sought.

**7**









Players need to look after their mental wellbeing and have balance in their lives. This will be individual and might involve mindfulness training, meditation, yoga or any activities that promote relaxation and rest.

**8**

Contact is a hallmark of our game, and a reason many players love to play. However, the contact nature causes often causes players to lose their balance and tumble to the ground. It is crucial for you to be able to fall safely to avoid head, neck and upper limb injuries.



**DO NOT BRACE FOR FALL WITH OUTSTRETCHED ARMS. THIS PUTS THE WRIST, ELBOW AND SHOULDER IN A VULNERABLE POSITION.**

<b>1</b>		<p>In a squatted position tuck the head under. Look away from where from the direction you are going to roll.</p>
<b>2</b>		<p>Lower the body and use body weight momentum to roll. Lightly brush hands across the ground - they should not take the weight.</p>
<b>3</b>		<p>Roll onto the back on the right shoulder. Try to keep yourself in a tight ball.</p>
<b>4</b>		<p>Use the momentum to roll diagonally across the back.</p>
<b>5</b>		<p>Finish on the left hip. The momentum of the roll should take player to point 6.</p>
<b>6</b>		<p>Roll up to half kneeling. Reset. Repeat 3 rolls each side!</p>

## PRACTICE BOTH SIDES!

Progress to starting from a standing, walking, then jogging position as players are competent and feel confident in their technique.



# PREP TO PLAY WHICH EXERCISES SHOULD I START WITH?



The Prep-to-Play dynamic warm up and strength exercises have options A, B and C. Most options increase in difficulty (A=easier, C=harder), but some options are there for to target different muscles groups and movements or for variety.

All players should aim for Option C, and use Option A and B to provide variety, or if you cannot perform Option C due to excessive soreness or ability who cannot perform Option C due to excessive soreness or ability.

If Level A exercises are too hard, or if you have soreness, modified warm-up exercises are provided below, and on page 19 for the strength program.

## PREP TO PLAY MODIFIED WARM UP

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If you have knee soreness during jumping and landing exercises in the warm up you can perform these activities instead:

### CALF EXERCISES



#### CALF RAISES

With shoulder width apart and knees straight, raise and lower your heel.

OR



#### POGO BOUNCES

Keep knees straight. Bounce forward in continuous motion keeping heels up.

### LOWER IMPACT EXERCISES



#### DOUBLE LEG SQUAT

Keep knees in line with hips, bend hips and knees. Lower bottom to the ground like sitting on a low chair.

**Harder:** hands above head.

OR



#### ARABESQUE

Extend leg behind balancing on one leg. Aim to extend body and back leg parallel with ground.

**REMEMBER! SOME SORENESS IS EXPECTED AFTER COMPLETING THE STRENGTH EXERCISES - PARTICULARLY 24-48 HOURS AFTER.**

If you are consistently sore which is affecting your ability to participate, see a physiotherapist.

For a list of Prep to Play endorsed providers go to: [hersport.latrobe.edu.au/prep2play](https://hersport.latrobe.edu.au/prep2play)

# PREP TO PLAY MODIFIED STRENGTH PROGRAM

## COMPLETE 3 ACTIVITIES

You can choose A, B or C for each activity

5-10 minutes (before, during or after every training session)

If you report soreness with any of the strength exercises or the activities are too hard, it is important you still complete strength exercises. Some easier modifications to the normal program are outlined below.

**1 - LOWER LIMB**

**A**



**SINGLE LEG CALF RAISES**  
Using a partner for balance, stand on one leg keeping your knee straight. Raise and lower your heel.

**2x10 REPS EACH SIDE**


**B**



**DOUBLE LEG SQUAT**  
Keep knees in line with hips, bend hips and knees. Lower bottom to the ground like sitting on a low chair.

**2x10 REPS**

**C**




**HALF LUNGE OR LUNGE HOLD**  
Keeping feet shoulder width apart, stand in a split stance. Lower back knee half way to ground, keeping front knee behind toes.

**2x10 REPS**

**2 - HAMSTRING / GLUTE**


**A**



**MODIFIED GLUTE BRIDGE - DOUBLE LEG**  
Lift your bottom as high as you can, pushing through your heels.

**2x10 REPS**

**B**



**MODIFIED HAMSTRING BRIDGE - DOUBLE LEG**  
With both feet on a bench (or partners hands), knees slightly bent, lift your bottom off the ground.

**2x10 REPS**

**C**



**MODIFIED HAMSTRING - ARABESQUE**  
Extend leg behind balancing on one leg. Aim to extend body and back leg parallel with ground.

**2x10 REPS EACH SIDE**

**3 - CORE / HIP**

**A**



**MODIFIED KNEE PLANK**  
Hold your body by leaning on your elbows and knees. Keep your body straight and head tucked in.

**2x30-60 SECONDS**

**B**



**MODIFIED SIDE PLANK**  
Lie on your side with legs on top of each other. Lean on your elbow and knees. Lift hips off the ground and hold.

**2x30-60 SECONDS**

**C**



**MODIFIED GROIN - BALL SQUEEZE**  
Lie on your back and squeeze the ball as hard as you can.

**2x15 SECOND HOLDS**

**REMEMBER! SOME SORENESS IS EXPECTED AFTER COMPLETING THE STRENGTH EXERCISES - PARTICULARLY 24-48 HOURS AFTER.**

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For a list of Prep to Play endorsed providers go to: [hersport.latrobe.edu.au/prep2play](https://hersport.latrobe.edu.au/prep2play)



## HOW LONG DOES PREP TO PLAY TAKE?

The warm-up and strength components together take between 15 and 20 minutes. Time spent on the specific Prep to Play football skills (e.g. tackling, aerial contests and ground balls) will vary and is up to the coach.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE UNTIL PREP TO PLAY HAS AN EFFECT?

Improvement in movement quality and skill can occur in 3 to 4 weeks. For muscle strength, this may take up to 6 to 8 weeks. These timelines are an estimate, and are based on 2 to 3 sessions per week.

## WHEN CAN I STOP PREP TO PLAY?

You should continue using the Prep to Play or as long as you play football, as the effects of the program wear off when you stop performing the exercises.

## HOW OLD DO I HAVE TO BE FOR PREP TO PLAY?

The Prep to Play program is being evaluated (2021-2023) in players aged 14 and older. Therefore, the effects of Prep to Play are uncertain for all age groups. In other sports, programs (e.g. FIFA 11+) with similar exercises are effective at reducing injuries (with minimal negative side effects) in players 7 years and older.<sup>22</sup>

## DO PLAYERS HAVE TO WARM UP BEFORE PREP TO PLAY?

No, the "Prep to Play" is a complete warm-up program that replaces other such programs.

## WHAT TYPE OF FOOTWEAR IS RECOMMENDED FOR PREP TO PLAY? WHERE SHOULD IT BE PERFORMED?

Ideally, the exercises should be performed on grass with football boots. If access to the ground is limited, the exercises may be performed in the change room, or another available outdoor surface. Football boots should not be worn on surfaces other than grass.

## CAN THE ORDER IN WHICH THE EXERCISES ARE PERFORMED BE CHANGED?

- ➔ The dynamic warm up should be performed before football training
- ➔ The football skills should be performed after the warm-up during training
- ➔ The strength exercises can be performed before, during or after training<sup>27</sup>
- ➔ The education component should be delivered in the first three weeks of using the program. Players should be reminded regularly of the purpose and benefits of the program, technique cues, and general injury prevention principles.



## IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PREP TO PLAY PROGRAM CONTACT THE RESEARCH TEAM

**Email:** [prep2play@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:prep2play@latrobe.edu.au) **Phone:** 9479 1483

**Website:** <http://hersport.latrobe.edu.au/>

Latest research and community resources related to women's health, participation and performance in sport and exercise.

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# PREP TO PLAY ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The AFL acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge we play our great game on this land and respect the cultures of all First Peoples, their contribution to our nation and contribution to the game of Australian Rules Football.

The AFL and La Trobe University wish to thank the AFLW medical and high-performance staff, AFLW players, community coaches and players, AFLW coaches Jane Lange and Peta Searle, AFL coaches Brett Ratten and Aaron Hamill, for their contribution to the development of the Prep to Play program and associated resources.

The AFL wishes to acknowledge and pay tribute to the late Danny Frawley for his contribution to the football community and for providing his expertise to the Prep To Play program. Danny was passionate about coach education and female football and his work in the Prep to Play program and football at all levels will impact footballers for years to come. Danny's passion and energy will leave a lasting legacy for all involved in our great game.







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This information was developed during a collaborative project between the AFL and La Trobe University and is informed by the best available evidence and expert opinion from coaches, players and staff.