



## Warming Up Properly

Warming up is an integral part of daily rehearsal. It is important that your warm-up be structured, correct and consistent, utilizing all parts of the body. Extra warm-up time may be needed for certain muscle groups if they are to be used in an upcoming routine (ex., kicks, head rolls).

The three main functions of a warm-up are: 1) to prepare the muscles to work, 2) to put the muscles through the range of flexibility needed in the actions to follow, and 3) to prepare the muscles for an increased output of strength. Some of your students may require extra warm-up time to increase their flexibility. You may need to write up a schedule for these pupils to do at home.

The following tips will assist you in applying good warm-up techniques and maximum results:

- \* The officers should "choreograph" a warm-up to popular music to use each day. Your team will find their exercises more fun. Change the music every 2 to 3 weeks.
- \* Make sure to exercise from head to toe (literally). Do not forget ankles, shoulders, head and neck, etc. These are areas sometimes overlooked but always very important.
- \* Remember that warming up is an injury prevention measure and cannot be omitted--ever!
- \* Be sure to stretch with good posture. Always pull up in the center of the body and stretch in straddle, pike and hurdle positions with a flat back, leading with the abdomen and not the chin or chest. Rounding the back will stretch and loosen back muscles instead of thigh or hips.
- \* Be sure that the legs do not roll in or out when in straddle or hurdle position. Knees and shoelaces to the sky!
- \* Stretch with toes flexed for 1/2 of the time and pointed 1/2 of the time. This will add extra stretch to muscles in the other parts of the leg in addition to the hamstring.

