

Start strong: Warm-up for a safer workday

Warm-ups aren't just for sport or the gym – they're a smart way to prepare for physical tasks at work. Taking a few minutes to warm up can provide lasting benefits, allowing you to move comfortably, work efficiently, and reduce the risk of strains and sprains. This is particularly helpful before engaging in tasks that involve heavy lifting and carrying, pushing trolleys, gardening, using tools, or climbing in and out of vehicles. A simple warm up increases blood flow to your muscles and joints, reduces stiffness, and helps your body get ready for the demands of the day.



A simple warm-up can include:

Easy movement (1-2 minutes)

Start with gentle movement to increase your heart rate and warm your muscles.

- ▶ Walk at a steady pace
- ▶ Gentle jog (if suitable for your role)

Moving stretches (1–2 minutes)

Use controlled movement to loosen up key joints you will use during work.

- ▶ Roll shoulders, turn your upper body, and move your spine gently
- ▶ Move hips, knees, and ankles through comfortable ranges

Muscle wake-up and practice (1–2 minutes)

Activate the muscles you will rely on and rehearse safe movement patterns.

- ▶ Do a few unweighted squats to prepare legs and hips
- ▶ Practice a safe lift pattern (without a load) before starting the task





Examples of work-friendly warm-up exercises include:

- ▶ Arm circles or arm swings
- ▶ Leg swings (front-to-back and side-to-side)
- ▶ Heel raises
- ▶ Unweighted squats

A short warm-up can support a safer day at work by:

- ▶ Improving blood flow and reducing stiffness in muscles and joints
- ▶ Lowering the risk of strains and sprains by preparing muscles, tendons, and ligaments
- ▶ Increasing range of motion, which helps with bending, reaching, lifting, and squatting
- ▶ Helping you focus and “switch on” before starting higher-risk tasks
- ▶ Reducing early fatigue by preparing your body gradually

These benefits are especially relevant for outdoor and physically demanding roles such as parks and gardens, construction, rangers, and plant operation. Warm-ups can also help office-based roles, because long periods of sitting and repetitive tasks can lead to discomfort in areas like the back, neck, shoulders, and knees. A warm-up doesn't need to be long. Even 3–5 minutes can make a difference.

TIP – Try movement and stretching at regular intervals throughout the day to further reduce your risk of injury.



Choc Raspberry Mug Cake

Prep: 2 mins Cook: 2 mins Serves: 1

Ingredients list

- ▶ 2 tbsp (30 g) self-raising flour
- ▶ 2 tsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- ▶ 1/4 tsp baking powder
- ▶ A pinch of salt
- ▶ 1 tbsp maple syrup
- ▶ 2 tbsp (40 ml) milk
- ▶ 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- ▶ A drop of vanilla extract
- ▶ 1/4 cup frozen raspberries
- ▶ 1 tbsp chocolate chips
- ▶ 1 tbsp peanut butter (optional)

Method

- ▶ In a mug, mix flour, cocoa powder, baking powder and a pinch of salt.
- ▶ Add maple syrup, olive oil, milk and vanilla extract, then mix until well combined.
- ▶ Stir in raspberries and chocolate chips. Microwave for 1–2 minutes
- ▶ **Optional: Drizzle with warm peanut butter and serve.**



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