

## **The Work Ready Warm Up:**

**Link To Video: <https://youtu.be/us1RY9WOIAE>**

**Disclaimer: Always consult with your physician before engaging in exercise. The contents of this article are not meant to replace the advice of a physician or physiotherapist. Participation is at your own risk.**

When you prepare to do any task you typically check to make sure your tools are prepared for the task. For instance you wouldn't chop wood without sharpening the axe first. Our joints and muscles also have to be "sharpened" in a manner of speaking. Two main things should be put in place to warm up our bodies for exercise. This consists of basic mobility and stability of our joints.





A great place to start is to move our joints under low demand. Think about this like warming up your vehicle in the winter. This can be as simple as going for a 5-15 min walk. Beyond warming our tissue it also can help us get our mind ready for the day.

After we've moved a bit then we can become more specific. Mobilizing our body is about letting the nervous system know that we will soon do more complex movements and rehearsing the movements we will perform.

Although all our workdays might look different we can use a general movement series I've been calling the "work ready warm up." This short sequence centers on the bending, lifting and twisting involved in homesteading. Having these joints in check can often get the rest of our body moving well too.

A great way to start the day is the aptly named **Good Mornings** (Pictured above). This prepares us for the hinging motion (bending over) we will have to do throughout the day when we pick things up. The goal is for our body to coordinate movement between the joints on the back of our body. We basically practice using our large hip muscles to move things while our back/core brace to stabilize the load. They also feel great!

Using a long handled tool lay it across your shoulders and gently pull down to create some tension. With a slight bend in the knees push your butt backwards while keeping your gaze downward. Stop when you feel some tension in your hamstrings and then return to the standing position. 10 repetitions is usually enough.

The next warmup exercise is called **Torso Twists**. (See Picture Below). This mobilization prepares the spine for all the twisting and turning we will likely encounter in our work day. In the same start position as the Good Mornings, slowly turn your spine from left and right. You may feel yourself tense up as you hit the end of your range of motion. Letting out a gentle exhale





can help here. Try not to jerk too much or force things though. Again, 10 repetitions should be adequate.

Finally you can combine both movements with **Good Morning To Twist** (Pictured below). This can help simulate the demands on the back when we do tasks like shovelling or raking. Hinge back your hips like before but at the bottom add a subtle turn. This move can be slightly advanced so be careful not to force things. As many as 10 repetitions here should be sufficient.



In fitness training we say the root of strength is in stability which is the next component to warming up. There can be several ways to practice being more stable. A simple go to though is the **Side Step**. Standing on one foot with a slight bend in your knee. Take your other leg out slowly to the side to challenge your balance. Pause for a moment and then return the leg to first position. Repeat on each leg about 5-10 times. Feel free to hang on to something for balance as needed.

Repeat all exercises starting at the Good Mornings for 2-3 rounds or until you are feeling ready.

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