

ENGLAND RUGBY **INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISE PROGRAMME**

# ACTIVATE

**U13 - U14**

AN INTERACTIVE GUIDE FOR PLAYERS AND COACHES  
THAT IS DESIGNED ESPECIALLY FOR TRAINING  
SESSIONS AND PRE-MATCH WARM-UP ROUTINES.



## 1. THE BENEFITS OF USING ACTIVATE

Insights into the four major benefits of Activate and some of the research findings that endorse this.

## 2. HOW TO DELIVER ACTIVATE FOR OPTIMAL RESULTS

An overview of the 4 progressive phases of the programme, the key focus of each phase and the period over which it allows players to develop.

## 3. HOW TO COACH USING ACTIVATE

Guidance on how to introduce each new phase as well as proven tips on how to deliver Activate in order to experience the full benefits.

## 4. THE 'ACTIVATE 8'

The 8 key coaching points consistently referred to across all the exercises and which are essential for good form and correct technique.

## 5. ANSWERS TO FAQs

Answers to the most important questions that coaches and players often ask.

## 6. THE EXERCISES

### THIS IS AN INTERACTIVE PDF.

All exercises on **The Exercises** page are hyperlinked. Those on the Phase and Part summary pages are also hyperlinked.

Use the footer on each page to navigate between Parts A, B, C and D in each phase or to return to The Exercises.

All Activate 8 and exercise images are hyperlinks and will take you to the relevant video on YouTube.

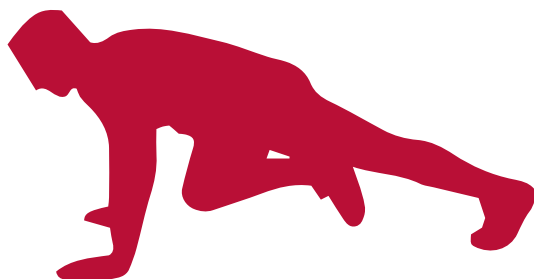
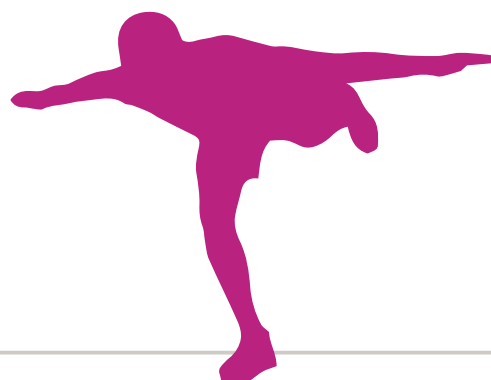
This document is viewable on multiple devices. It is best viewed in Adobe Acrobat Reader.

# 1. THE BENEFITS OF USING ACTIVATE

Activate helps players to develop and improve **four** key areas.

## 1: GENERAL MOVEMENT CONTROL

Develops adaptability allowing for better ‘physical’ decisions and reaction around the contact areas.

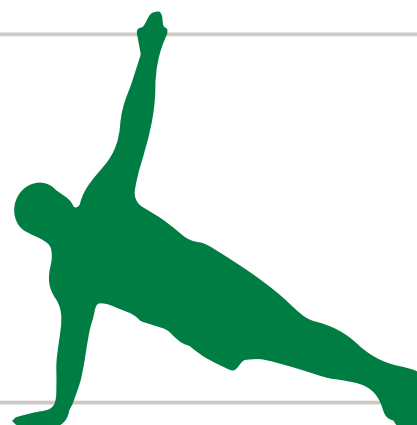


## 2: PRE-ACTIVATION

The progressive nature of the programme improves muscle activation and enables them to respond better to the demands of exercise.

## 3: FUNCTIONAL CONDITIONING

Over time functional power and strength develops which increases flexibility and range of movement.



## 4: PHYSICAL ROBUSTNESS

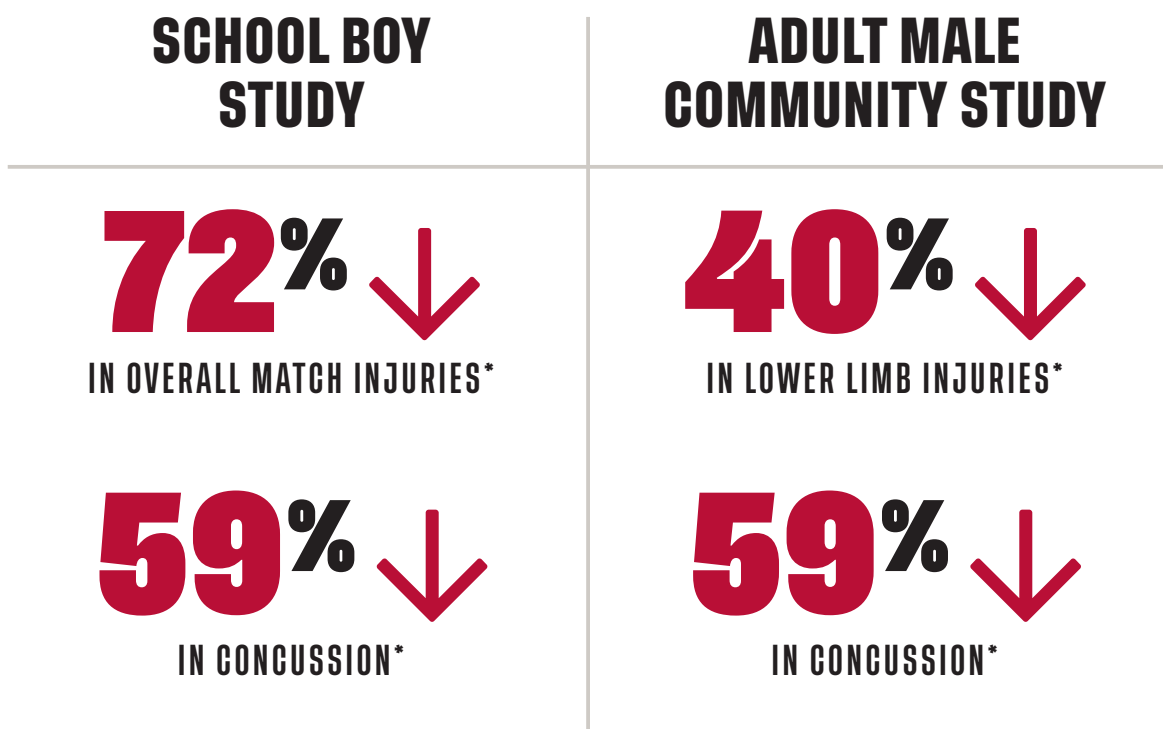
Develops the muscles, tendons and ligaments ability to endure physical demands and forces placed on them during exercise.

# DEVELOPING THESE FOUR KEY AREAS WILL ALL CONTRIBUTE TO:

- Improving playing performance
- Preparing players for the physical demands of the game
- Reducing the risk of injury including concussion
- Having more players available (due to less players being injured).

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research has shown that developing a player’s ability in these areas improves general fundamental movement skills and has the potential to reduce the risk of injury including concussion.



\* When players used the programme 3 times a week.



# 2. HOW TO DELIVER ACTIVATE FOR OPTIMAL RESULTS

WHILST ACTIVATE IS BASED ON STUDIES FROM SCHOOLBOYS (U15-U18) AND ADULT MEN PLAYERS, IT CAN BENEFIT ALL PLAYERS.

## U12 AND BELOW

The majority of the Activate exercises are beneficial for developing fundamental skills e.g. agility, balance, coordination. Not all exercises are appropriate. Where this is the case the exercise can be adapted, regressed or even missed.

## WOMEN AND GIRLS

Whilst the Activate research was undertaken by men and boys, women and girls will also benefit from reducing the risk of injury and developing performance. However, due to anatomical and physiological differences, a small number of exercises may need to be adapted, regressed or even missed to meet specific needs.

## MATCH OFFICIALS

The benefits of Activate e.g. movement control and functional conditioning, support the development and performance of match officials. Referees, Assistant Referees and Touch Judges may wish to consider how Activate fits into their training sessions and match day warm up.

The RFU continues to progress the research and insight into injury prevention as well as to develop further understanding into different playing groups.

## THE U13-U14 PROGRAMME IS MADE UP OF 4 PROGRESSIVE PHASES. EACH PHASE SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT FOR 4-8 WEEKS THROUGHOUT THE SEASON.

1. Aim to start the programme at the beginning of the season although it can be picked up at any time.
2. Begin at [Phase 1](#) and progress through the phases appropriately.
3. The phases are progressive so that over 6-8 weeks players continue to develop and stay motivated.
4. Best results are achieved using the progressive phases as part of the preparation/warm-up to all training sessions and matches.
5. The results from the study show that:
  - highly compliant teams (3 times a week) see the biggest reduction in injuries
  - less compliant teams (1-2 times a week) still experience a reduction in injuries.
6. Alter the programme structure so long as the quality of the exercises remains the focus and any modification is safe.
7. Be creative so that any Activate session remains purposeful and enjoyable.

Some of the exercises are ideal for the preparation of specific skill training and can be integrated into other parts of a training session e.g. use Broncos to prepare for scrummaging practice.

## REMEMBER THAT PARTICIPATING IN SOMETHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING AT ALL!

EACH PHASE CONSISTS OF 4 PARTS AND HAS 12 DIFFERENT EXERCISES IN TOTAL:

Part	Focus	Time	No. of Exercises
A	<p><b>Running-based Preparation &amp; Change of Direction</b></p> <p><b>Focus:</b> Running technique, coordination and changing direction through enhancing movement control in the trunk and lower limbs.</p>	2 mins	3
B	<p><b>Lower body Balance Training</b></p> <p><b>Focus:</b> Developing movement control during static and dynamic activities.</p>	4 mins	2
C	<p><b>Targeted Resistance Training</b></p> <p><b>Focus:</b> Improving functional strength, stability, power and mobility in the upper and lower body.</p>	8 mins	5
D	<p><b>Landing, Change of Direction &amp; Plyometrics</b></p> <p><b>Focus:</b> Improving control through the trunk and lower limbs during controlled landing and changing direction activities.</p>	6 mins	2

**MONITOR FOR SAFETY**

If a player(s) struggles with some of the exercises:

- regress to a previous phase or adapt appropriately e.g. knees on floor for press-ups (ensuring good technique remains)
- try to encourage the player(s) to continue with the exercises as over the 4-8 weeks they should improve.

As with all exercise programmes, players should monitor how their body reacts to the exercises. If they cause pain or discomfort, the player should stop and return to the previous level or move to an exercise that is pain free.

# 3. HOW TO COACH USING ACTIVATE

TO ACHIEVE THE FULL BENEFITS OF ACTIVATE, PLAYERS NEED TO EXECUTE THE CORRECT TECHNIQUE WITH APPROPRIATE CONTROL AND BALANCE.

This requires coaches to play a key role in monitoring their players, to encourage them to focus on technique quality and to communicate the key coaching points that will improve performance.

## HOW TO INTRODUCE EACH NEW PHASE:

1. Take time to **become familiar with the new exercises** prior to starting each phase.
2. **Watch the Activate video for each exercise on the [KYBO! YouTube channel](#).**
3. **Allocate extra time** for the first warm-up session of each new phase to highlight specific coaching points and to ensure players understand the requirements of each exercise.
4. **Use players to demonstrate** certain exercises and to talk through the key coaching points for the whole group to see.
5. Allow the players to have a go at the exercise **in pairs or small groups** to get a feel for how to complete the exercise.

# 8 TIPS ON HOW TO DELIVER ACTIVATE:

## 1: EXPLAIN THE OVERALL BENEFITS OF ACTIVATE

For example improving performance or reducing the risk of injury such as concussion.

## 3: THINK ABOUT SPECIFIC SKILLS

Consider how to use Activate exercises to prepare for **specific skills and/or unit training** e.g. tackle drills, line-out or scrumming practice.

## 5: INTRODUCE THE BALL

Consider the **introduction of a ball** or other suitable equipment as a way to challenge players.

## 7: ENCOURAGE

**Encourage players to coach each other** by helping teammates with fault correcting techniques and by highlighting good form.

**REMEMBER THAT PREPARATION ALWAYS LEADS TO BETTER RESULTS. DON'T EXPECT ALL PLAYERS TO APPRECIATE THE BENEFITS OF ACTIVATE ON THE VERY FIRST SESSION.**

## 2: GET CREATIVE!

Think about how you can **make it fun and engaging**, e.g. using a skill zone/game zone approach or introduce the exercises into warm up games.

## 4: FOCUS

Focus on **only two or three** "Activate 8" coaching points at a time.

## 6: WATCH CAREFULLY

Identify and correct any incorrect technique. If needed, provide feedback. Remember that quality over quantity is the priority.

## 8: PRACTICE

**Ask players to practice** and use the exercises before or as a part of other training and sports activity.

# 4. THE ACTIVATE 8

THE “ACTIVATE 8” ARE COACHING POINTS CONSISTENTLY REFERRED TO ACROSS ALL EXERCISES IN THE PROGRAMME, **THEY ARE ESSENTIAL FOR GOOD FORM AND CORRECT TECHNIQUE.**

## 1. HEAD NEUTRAL OR HEAD LIFT

WATCH VIDEO



## 2. CHEST-UP

WATCH VIDEO



## 3. SHOULDER PINCH

WATCH VIDEO



# 4. ENGAGE CORE

ENGAGE CORE



WATCH VIDEO

# 5. SHOULDER & HIPS LEVEL



WATCH VIDEO



# 6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE



WATCH VIDEO



# 7. SOFT KNEES



WATCH VIDEO



# 8. KNEE ABOVE TOES



WATCH VIDEO



# 5. ANSWERS TO FAQs

## 1. WHAT RESEARCH IS THE PROGRAMME BASED ON?

Developed by a research team at The University of Bath the study involved 40 schools and nearly 2,500 players aged 14 – 18. The researchers found that overall injuries fell by **72%** when players completed the exercises at least three times a week. Concussion injuries were reduced by **59%**. Comparable results were also found in a similar study carried out with 40 adult mens teams.

The articles for both the adult male and schoolboy injury prevention studies have been published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine. For details on how to access these articles and other relevant research please go to the [Research](#) page on [www.englandrugby.com](http://www.englandrugby.com).

## 3. IN A SCHOOL CAN IT BE USED AS A WARM UP FOR OTHER SPORTS?

Activate can be integrated across the P.E. curriculum as the programme improves general conditioning and movement control, both of which provide benefits in the development and performance of other sports. Schools therefore may want to consider how Activate best fits into the P.E. curriculum.

## 2. IF TIME TO WARM UP IS LIMITED PRIOR TO TRAINING SESSIONS OR MATCHES, WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

In such cases, certain parts of the programme can be prioritised to accommodate shorter times to prepare for matches and training sessions or lessons. The following order, listed from 1 (highest priority) to 4 (lowest priority) details which parts of the programme should be completed when time is short:

1. Part A—2 minutes
2. Part C—8 minutes
3. Part D—6 minutes
4. Part B—4 minutes

## 4. WHAT HAPPENS IF A PLAYER GETS INJURED AND/ OR MISSES PART OF THE PROGRAMME?

Activate may be used as a component of graduated return to participation in players returning to training from injury. If a player suffers an injury during a 6-8 week phase they should return to the same phase of exercises they were performing at the time of their injury (even if the rest of the team have moved on to the next phase). They should only progress to the next level if and when they are pain-free and can demonstrate the necessary level of competence.



## 6. THE EXERCISES:

### PHASE 1

#### PHASE 1 | PART A

1. Snake Run
2. Walking Crunch
3. Plant & Cut

#### PHASE 1 | PART B

4. Single Leg Balance
5. Single Leg Jump  
Into Double Leg Landing

#### PHASE 1 | PART C

6. Zombie Squat
7. Double Leg Bridge
8. Plank
9. Static Press-Up With Push To Unbalance
10. Static Neck Contractions

#### PHASE 1 | PART D

11. Ski Jump
12. Pogo Jumps

### PHASE 2

#### PHASE 2 | PART A

1. Diagonal Side Shuffle
2. Side Shuffle
3. Planned Plant & Cut

#### PHASE 2 | PART B

4. Single Leg Balance
5. Single Leg Jump  
Into Double Leg Landing

#### PHASE 2 | PART C

6. Forward Lunge
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Side Bridge
9. Side Plank With Push To Unbalance
10. Bear Crawl Resisted Static Neck Contractions

#### PHASE 2 | PART D

11. Lateral Sway Lunge
12. Bouncers

### PHASE 3

#### PHASE 3 | PART A

1. Exaggerated Skip
2. A Skip
3. Unplanned Plant & Cut

#### PHASE 3 | PART B

4. Single Leg Balance with Shallow Squat
5. Hop & Stick Forwards

#### PHASE 3 | PART C

6. Toe-Toe Squat
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Plank with Alternate Leg Raise
9. Press-up to Plank
10. Standing Neck Lifts

#### PHASE 3 | PART D

11. Run, Set, Cut
12. Tuck Jumps

### PHASE 4

#### PHASE 4 | PART A

1. Retreating Diagonal Side Shuffle
2. Lateral Skip
3. Partner Mirroring

#### PHASE 4 | PART B

4. Single Leg Arabesque
5. Hop & Stick Sideways

#### PHASE 4 | PART C

6. Reverse Lunge
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Side Bridge with Leg Raise
9. Prone Walk Out Press-Up
10. Partner Resisted Neck Movements

#### PHASE 4 | PART D

11. Shuttle to Edge of Square
12. Broncos

# ACTIVATE U13-U14

# PHASE 1

## PHASE 1 | PART A

1. Snake Run
2. Walking Crunch
3. Plant & Cut

## PHASE 1 | PART B

4. Single Leg Balance
5. Single Leg Jump Into Double Leg Landing

## PHASE 1 | PART C

6. Zombie Squat
7. Double Leg Bridge
8. Plank
9. Static Press-Up With Push To Unbalance
10. Static Neck Contractions

## PHASE 1 | PART D

11. Ski Jump
12. Pogo Jumps



ENGLAND RUGBY INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISE PROGRAMME

# ACTIVATE



ACTIVATE U13-U14

PHASE 1

PART A

> **ACTIVITY**

Running-based Preparation & Change of Direction.

> **FOCUS**

Running technique, coordination and changing direction by enhancing movement control in the trunk and lower limbs.

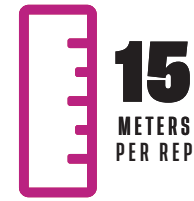
🕒 **2 MINS**

1. SNAKE RUN

2. WALKING GRUNCH

3. PLANT & CUT

# 1. SNAKE RUN



WATCH VIDEO

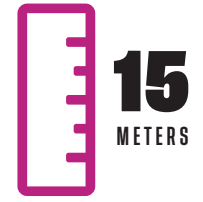


- > Alternate swerve from left to right
- > Drive outside leg across body to initiate swerve
- > Keep facing forwards.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
6. HIP, KNEE AND ANKLE IN-LINE
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# 2. WALKING CRUNCH



[WATCH VIDEO](#)

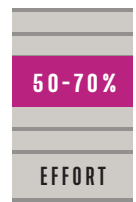
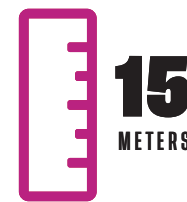


- › Shuffle two steps then raise one leg
- › Opposite elbow and knee touch
- › Keep raised leg straight.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
4. ENGAGE CORE
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# 3. PLANT & CUT



[WATCH VIDEO](#)



- › Run diagonal line
- › After 2-3m, plant outermost foot close to body midline, knee bent
- › Push-off planted foot
- › Emphasise plant and cut, repeat on other foot.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
6. HIP, KNEE AND ANKLE IN-LINE
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES (PLANTING FOOT)

ACTIVATE U13-U14

PHASE 1

PART B

> **ACTIVITY**

Lower Body Balance Training.

> **FOCUS**

Developing movement control during static and dynamic activities.

🕒 **4 MINS**

4. **SINGLE LEG BALANCE**

5. **SINGLE LEG JUMP INTO DOUBLE LEG LANDING**

# 4. SINGLE LEG BALANCE

**WATCH VIDEO**



**12** REPS  
6 EACH SIDE

- > Feet shoulder width apart
- > Raise one leg off floor and hold for 10 seconds
- > Return to start position
- > Alternate legs.

**ACTIVATE 8**

**2. CHEST-UP**

**6. HIP, KNEE AND ANKLE IN-LINE**

**8. KNEE ABOVE TOES**



# 5. SINGLE LEG JUMP INTO DOUBLE LEG LANDING

12 REPS : 6 EACH SIDE

WATCH VIDEO



- > Raise one leg off floor
- > Hop forwards and land on both feet shoulder-width apart
- > Land squarely on both feet
- > Balance & hold for 2-3 seconds
- > Lift other leg and repeat.

**ACTIVATE 8**

- 2. CHEST-UP
- 6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE
- 8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# ACTIVATE U13-U14

## PHASE 1

# PART C

### > ACTIVITY

Targeted Resistance Training.

### > FOCUS

Improving functional strength, stability, power and mobility in the upper and lower body.

**8 MINS**

6. ZOMBIE SQUAT

7. DOUBLE LEG BRIDGE

8. PLANK

9. STATIC PRESS-UP WITH PUSH TO UNBALANCE

10. STATIC NECK CONTRACTIONS

# 6. ZOMBIE SQUAT

WATCH VIDEO

- > Feet a little wider than shoulder width apart
- > Arms raised out in front
- > Bend at knees and hips, squat down until thighs parallel with the floor
- > Return to the start position
- > Heels in contact with the ground throughout.



**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD LIFT (LOOK THROUGH EYEBROWS)
2. CHEST-UP
4. ENGAGE CORE

# 7. DOUBLE LEG BRIDGE



WATCH VIDEO



- Lie face-up with hips and knees flexed
- Feet planted close to buttocks
- Raise hips and back off floor forming a straight line from the shoulders to the knees
- Lower down to start position.

ACTIVATE 8

4. ENGAGE CORE

# 8. PLANK



WATCH VIDEO



- Lie face-down
- Elbows underneath the shoulders, forearms in front
- Feet resting on the balls
- Raise thighs, hips, trunk from the floor
- Take weight through forearms and feet.

ACTIVATE 8

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
3. SHOULDER PINCH
4. ENGAGE CORE
5. SHOULDER & HIPS LEVEL



# 9. STATIC PRESS-UP WITH PUSH TO UNBALANCE

**30**  
SECONDS

WATCH VIDEO



- > One partner in press-up position with other partner standing beside
- > Standing partner applies force to various body parts attempting to off-balance prone partner
- > Prone partner attempts to maintain rigid body position throughout.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
3. SHOULDER PINCH
4. ENGAGE CORE
5. SHOULDER & HIPS LEVEL

# 10. STATIC NECK CONTRACTIONS

**30**  
SECONDS  
EACH DIRECTION

WATCH VIDEO



- > Use hand to apply force
- > Direction of forces applied:
  - > Flexion (look to down)
  - > Extension (look to up)
  - > Lateral Flexion Left and Right (ear towards shoulder)
  - > Rotation Left and Right (look over shoulder).

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
4. ENGAGE CORE

# ACTIVATE U13-U14

## PHASE 1

# PART D

### > ACTIVITY

Landing, Change of Direction & Plyometrics.

### > FOCUS

Improving control through the trunk and lower limbs during controlled landing and changing direction activities.

**6 MINS**

## 11. SKI JUMPS

## 12. POGO JUMPS

# 11. SKI JUMPS

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



**12** REPS **6** EACH SIDE

- > Feet together, cross arms and rest hands on opposite shoulders
- > Perform one sideways jump to the left or right, landing with feet together with minimal bend in knees
- > Keep arms in the original position
- > Jump sideways in opposite direction and return to the starting point.

### ACTIVATE 8

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE
7. SOFT KNEES

# 12. POGO JUMPS

16  
REPS

WATCH VIDEO



- › Feet shoulder-width apart
- › Jump on the spot continuously, landing squarely on the feet with minimal knee bend
- › Minimise time on ground between jumps
- › Focus on keeping legs slightly bent and jumping by extending through the ankles only.

**ACTIVATE 8**

- 1. HEAD NEUTRAL
- 6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE
- 7. SOFT KNEES

# ACTIVATE U13-U14

# PHASE 2

## PHASE 2 | PART A

1. Diagonal Side Shuffle
2. Side Shuffle
3. Planned Plant & Cut

## PHASE 2 | PART B

4. Single Leg Balance
5. Single Leg Jump Into Double Leg Landing

## PHASE 2 | PART C

6. Forward Lunge
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Side Bridge
9. Side Plank With To Unbalance
10. Bear Crawl Resisted Static Neck Contractions

## PHASE 2 | PART D

11. Lateral Sway Lunge
12. Bouncers



ENGLAND RUGBY INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISE PROGRAMME

# ACTIVATE



ACTIVATE U13-U14

PHASE 2

PART A

> **ACTIVITY**

Running-based Preparation & Change of Direction.

> **FOCUS**

Running technique, coordination and changing direction by enhancing movement control in the trunk and lower limbs.

🕒 **2 MINS**

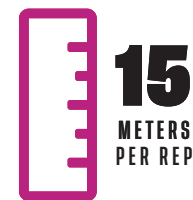
1. **DIAGONAL SIDE SHUFFLE**

2. **SIDE SHUFFLE**

3. **PLANNED PLANT & CUT**

# 1. DIAGONAL SIDE SHUFFLE

▶ **WATCH VIDEO**



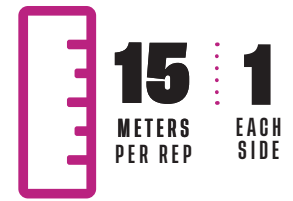
- > Facing diagonal, perform 2-3 side shuffles
- > Pivot 90° on lead leg & change direction
- > Hips and knees flexed
- > Maintain same height.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
7. SOFT KNEES
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES



# 2. SIDE SHUFFLE



[WATCH VIDEO](#)



- > Face side-on
- > Push off with rear leg and draw towards front leg
- > Hips and knees flexed
- > Maintain same height.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
7. SOFT KNEES
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# 3. PLANNED PLANT & CUT



[WATCH VIDEO](#)



- > In pairs first player (defender) runs out diagonally and turns to face partner
- > Second player (attacker) runs towards and evades partner
- > Emphasise plant and cut.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
7. HIP, KNEE AND ANKLE-INLINE (PLANTING FOOT)
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES (PLANTING FOOT)

ACTIVATE U13-U14

PHASE 2

PART B

> **ACTIVITY**

Lower Body Balance Training.

> **FOCUS**

Developing movement control during static and dynamic activities.

**4 MINS**

4. **SINGLE LEG BALANCE**

5. **SINGLE LEG JUMP  
SIDEWAYS INTO DOUBLE  
LEG LANDING**

# 4. SINGLE LEG BALANCE

**WATCH VIDEO**



**12** : **6** EACH SIDE  
REPS

- > Feet shoulder width apart
- > Raise one leg off floor
- > Hold for 10 seconds.

**ACTIVATE 8**

**2. CHEST-UP**

**6. HIP, KNEE AND ANKLE IN-LINE**

**8. KNEE ABOVE TOES**

# 5. SINGLE LEG JUMP SIDEWAYS INTO DOUBLE LEG LANDING

WATCH VIDEO

**12** REPS **6** EACH SIDE



- › Raise one leg off floor
- › Hop sideways and land with both feet shoulder-width apart
- › Land squarely on both feet
- › Balance & hold for 2-3 seconds
- › Lift other leg and alternate jumping direction.

**ACTIVATE 8**

- 4. ENGAGE CORE
- 7. SOFT KNEES
- 8. KNEE ABOVE TOES



# ACTIVATE U13-U14

## PHASE 2

# PART C

### > ACTIVITY

Targeted Resistance Training.

### > FOCUS

Improving functional strength, stability, power and mobility in the upper and lower body.

**8 MINS**

6. FORWARD LUNGE

7. NORDIC HAMSTRING CURL

8. SIDE BRIDGE

9. SIDE PLANK WITH PUSH TO UNBALANCE

10. BEAR CRAWL RESISTED STATIC NECK CONTRACTIONS

# 6. FORWARD LUNGE

**8** REPS  
**4** EACH SIDE

WATCH VIDEO



- > Stride forward placing front foot in full contact with the ground, back foot on the toes
- > Hips level
- > 90° bend in both knees
- > Extend at hip and knee to return to start position.

### ACTIVATE 8

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
4. ENGAGE CORE
6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# 7. NORDIC HAMSTRING CURL



WATCH VIDEO



- › Partner up, kneel one behind the other and facing the same direction
- › Rear partner places hands on partner's lower legs
- › Front partner slowly leans forwards from the knees
- › Keep shoulder, hip and knee in-line with hands by side
- › Control lower as far as possible then fall onto hands
- › Push up with arms to return to start.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
4. ENGAGE CORE

**IMPORTANT:** Do not complete before matches.

# 8. SIDE BRIDGE



WATCH VIDEO



- › Lay on side
- › Raise trunk and hips from the floor to connect a straight line between the shoulders and ankles
- › Position elbow directly underneath shoulder
- › Keep legs straight and together
- › Squeeze buttocks
- › Only the elbow/forearm and outside of the lowermost foot should be in contact with the ground.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
4. ENGAGE CORE
5. SHOULDER & HIPS (AND ANKLES) IN-LINE

# 9. SIDE PLANK WITH PUSH TO UNBALANCE

WATCH VIDEO

**30**  
SECONDS  
EACH SIDE



- Partner one adopts a side plank position with hand directly underneath the shoulders
- Standing partner applies force to various body locations and tries to off-balance partner in side plank position, who tries to maintain a rigid posture.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
3. SHOULDER PINCH
4. ENGAGE CORE
5. SHOULDER & HIPS LEVEL

# 10. BEAR CRAWL RESISTED STATIC NECK CONTRACTIONS

WATCH VIDEO

**10**  
SECONDS  
EACH DIRECTION



- Partner one adopts a bear crawl position
- Hands directly under shoulders with a 90° bend in hips and knees
- Standing partner applies: APPROPRIATE force in various directions to the head of partner, who resists by maintaining their head position.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
4. ENGAGE CORE
5. SHOULDER & HIPS LEVEL

**IMPORTANT:**

Partner to agree appropriate force to provide resistance but importantly maintain good form.

ACTIVATE U13-U14

PHASE 2

PART D

> **ACTIVITY**

Landing, Change of Direction & Plyometrics.

> **FOCUS**

Improving control through the trunk and lower limbs during controlled landing and changing direction activities.

🕒 **6 MINS**

11. **LATERAL SWAY LUNGE**

12. **BOUNCERS**

# 11. LATERAL SWAY LUNGE

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

**6** REPS    **3** EACH SIDE



- > Stand with feet shoulder-width apart
- > On coach's cue (clap, shout), step one foot out to the side as quickly as possible
- > Shift hips sideways over foot and outside hand down to touch ground
- > Return to start position.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES



# 12. BOUNCERS

WATCH VIDEO

**6**  
REPS



- > Start in press-up position
- > Jump feet towards hands bending at hips and knees
- > Spring forward moving back to press-up position
- > Land with both elbows slightly bent (but not full press-up)
- > Hips lower than shoulders.

**ACTIVATE 8**

- 1. HEAD NEUTRAL
- 4. ENGAGE CORE

# ACTIVATE U13-U14

# PHASE 3

## PHASE 3 | PART A

1. Exaggerated Skip
2. A Skip
3. Unplanned Plant & Cut

## PHASE 3 | PART B

4. Single Leg Balance with Shallow Squat
5. Hop & Stick Forwards

## PHASE 3 | PART C

6. Toe-Toe Squat
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Plank with Alternate Leg Raise
9. Press-up to Plank
10. Standing Neck Lifts

## PHASE 3 | PART D

11. Run, Set, Cut
12. Tuck Jumps



ENGLAND RUGBY INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISE PROGRAMME

# ACTIVATE



ACTIVATE U13-U14

PHASE 3

PART A

> **ACTIVITY**

Running-based Preparation & Change of Direction.

> **FOCUS**

Running technique, coordination and changing direction by enhancing movement control in the trunk and lower limbs.

🕒 **2 MINS**

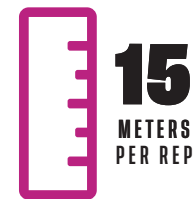
1. **EXAGGERATED SKIP**

2. **A SKIP**

3. **UNPLANNED PLANT & CUT**

# 1. EXAGGERATED SKIP

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



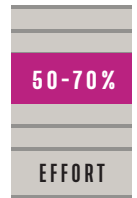
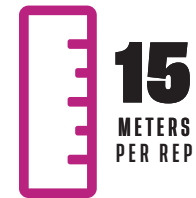
- > Shuffle forward two steps
- > Swing leading leg upwards
- > Clap hands under raised leg
- > Repeat alternating lifting leg.

**ACTIVATE 8**

- 1. HEAD NEUTRAL
- 2. CHEST-UP
- 4. ENGAGE CORE
- 7. SOFT KNEES

# 2. A SKIP

WATCH VIDEO



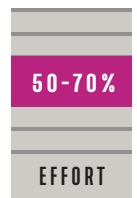
- High knee drive, leg bent in
- Foot returns to ground as quickly as possible
- Good arm drive
- Raised foot toes pointing up.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE

# 3. UNPLANNED PLANT & CUT

WATCH VIDEO



- In pairs first player (defender) runs out diagonally and turns to face partner
- Second player (attacker) runs forwards
- Defender points left or right
- Attacker plants and cuts in direction of point and evades defender
- Emphasise plant and cut.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
6. HIP, KNEE AND ANKLE IN-LINE (ON PLANTING FOOT)
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES (PLANTING FOOT)



# ACTIVATE U13-U14

## PHASE 3

# PART B

### > ACTIVITY

Lower Body Balance Training.

### > FOCUS

Developing movement control during static and dynamic activities..

**4 MINS**

## 4. SINGLE LEG BALANCE WITH SHALLOW SQUAT

## 5. HOP & STICK FORWARDS

# 4. SINGLE LEG BALANCE WITH SHALLOW SQUAT

**12** REPS **6** EACH SIDE

WATCH VIDEO



- > Feet shoulder width apart
- > Raise one leg off floor and hold
- > When balanced, perform a half squat (knee bend 45°) by bending at both the knee and hip of standing leg
- > Return to start position.

### ACTIVATE 8

2. CHEST-UP

6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE

8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# 5. HOP & STICK FORWARDS

WATCH VIDEO



**12** REPS  
**6** EACH SIDE

- > Raise one leg off floor
- > Hop forwards landing same foot
- > Land squarely on foot
- > Balance & hold for 2-3 seconds and repeat.

**ACTIVATE 8**

- 4. ENGAGE CORE
- 6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE
- 7. SOFT KNEES
- 8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# ACTIVATE U13-U14

## PHASE 3

### PART C

#### > ACTIVITY

Targeted Resistance Training.

#### > FOCUS

Improving functional strength, stability, power and mobility in the upper and lower body.

**8 MINS**

6. TOE-TOE SQUAT

7. NORDIC HAMSTRING CURL

8. PLANK WITH ALTERNATE LEG RAISE

9. PRESS-UP TO PLANK

10. STANDING NECK LIFTS

# 6. TOE-TOE SQUAT

**8 SECONDS**

WATCH VIDEO



- > Partner up (ideally similar height and weight)
- > Focus on left-hand player and alternate each time
- > Begin with both partners facing each other
- > Players interlink hands and walk feet forwards until the toes are touching
- > Both partners to lean their trunk back, extending their arms to take each other's weight
- > Flexing at the hips and knees, both players perform a squat.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
4. ENGAGE CORE
6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# 7. NORDIC HAMSTRING CURL



**5**  
SECONDS

WATCH VIDEO



- Partner up, kneel one behind the other and facing the same direction
- Rear partner places hands on partner's lower legs
- Front partner slowly leans forwards from the knees
- Keep shoulder, hip and knee in-line with hands by side
- Control lower as far as possible then fall onto hands
- Push up with arms to return to start.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
4. ENGAGE CORE

**IMPORTANT:** Do not complete before matches.

# 8. PLANK WITH ALTERNATE LEG RAISE



**30**  
SECONDS

WATCH VIDEO



- Start in front bridge position, rest on elbows and balls of feet
- Slowly raise one leg to hip-height from the floor
- Return leg to the floor and repeat with other leg.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD LIFT (LOOK THROUGH EYEBROWS)
3. SHOULDER PINCH
4. ENGAGE CORE
5. SHOULDER & HIPS LEVEL

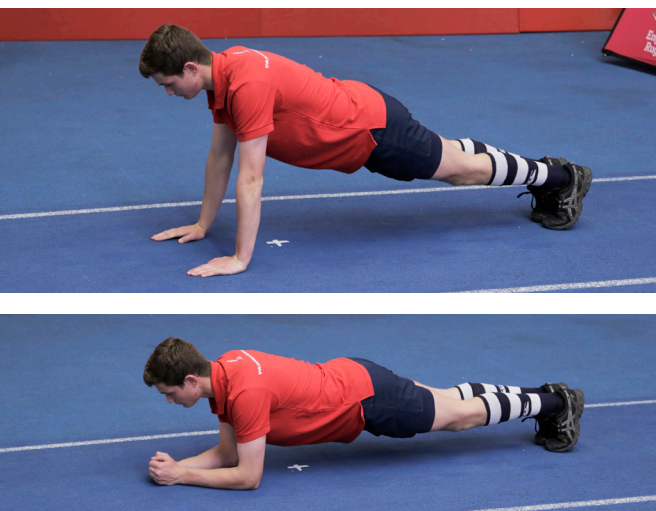


# 9. PRESS-UP TO PLANK



**4**  
SECONDS

WATCH VIDEO



- > Begin in a press-up position
- > Lower down to a front bridge position one arm at a time by moving from the hands to the elbows and forearms
- > Once in front bridge position, reverse move back to press-up position.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
4. ENGAGE CORE
5. SHOULDER & HIPS LEVEL

# 10. STANDING NECK LIFTS



**4**  
SECONDS

WATCH VIDEO



- > Start with the chin on the chest, hold for 10 seconds
- > Raise head upwards, move to the limit of the range of movement and hold for 10 seconds
- > Bring head to neutral position, move left to limit of range of movement and hold for 10 seconds
- > Repeat to the right.

**ACTIVATE 8**

2. CHEST-UP
4. ENGAGE CORE

# ACTIVATE U13-U14

## PHASE 3

# PART D

### > ACTIVITY

Landing, Change of Direction & Plyometrics.

### > FOCUS

Improving control through the trunk and lower limbs during controlled landing and changing direction activities.

**6 MINS**

## 11. RUN, SET, CUT

## 12. TUCK JUMPS

# 11. RUN, SET, CUT

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



- > From standing start, accelerate to 75% max pace
- > On coach's cue (e.g. clap/shout), decelerate by chopping stride length and bending at the hips and knees
- > Once at 25% pace, perform a plant and cut to the left/right and then accelerate forwards again.

### ACTIVATE 8

**2. CHEST-UP**

**6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE**

**8. KNEE ABOVE TOES (ON PLANTED LEG)**

# 12. TUCK JUMPS

WATCH VIDEO

**1**  
REPS



- > Begin standing with feet shoulder-width apart
- > Jump on the spot, drawing knees in towards the chest by flexing at the hips and knees.

**ACTIVATE 8**

2. CHEST-UP
6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE
7. SOFT KNEES (LAND WITH)
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# ACTIVATE U13-U14

# PHASE 4

## PHASE 4 | PART A

1. Retreating Diagonal Side Shuffle
2. Lateral Skip
3. Partner Mirroring

## PHASE 4 | PART B

4. Single Leg Arabesque
5. Hop & Stick Sideways

## PHASE 4 | PART C

6. Reverse Lunge
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Side Bridge with Leg Raise
9. Prone Walk Out Press-Up
10. Partner Resisted Neck Movements

## PHASE 4 | PART D

11. Shuttle to Edge of Square
12. Broncos



ENGLAND RUGBY INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISE PROGRAMME

# ACTIVATE





ACTIVATE U13-U14

PHASE 4

PART A

> **ACTIVITY**

Running-based Preparation & Change of Direction.

> **FOCUS**

Running technique, coordination and changing direction by enhancing movement control in the trunk and lower limbs.

🕒 **2 MINS**

1. **RETREATING DIAGONAL SIDE SHUFFLE**

2. **LATERAL SKIP**

3. **PARTNER MIRRORING**

# 1. RETREATING DIAGONAL SIDE SHUFFLE

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



**15**  
METERS  
PER CHANNEL



- > Shuffle backwards in diagonal direction, perform 2-3 side shuffles
- > Pivot 90° degrees on lead leg & change direction
- > Hips and knees flexed
- > Maintain same height throughout.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
7. SOFT KNEES
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# 2. LATERAL SKIP

WATCH VIDEO



**2**  
REPS



**15**  
METERS  
PER CHANNEL

50-70%

EFFORT

- Face side-on
- Push off rear leg and raise lead leg at same time
- High knee drive, feet shoulder width apart.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# 3. PARTNER MIRRORING

WATCH VIDEO



**2**  
REPS



**15**  
METERS  
PER CHANNEL

50-70%

EFFORT

- Player one runs forwards and executes plant and cuts to left and right, emphasising movements
- Partner faces and mirrors movements while retreating backwards and remaining in front of partner
- Maintain distance between players.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
6. HIP, KNEE AND ANKLE IN-LINE (ON PLANTING FOOT)
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES (ON PLANTING FOOT)

ACTIVATE U13-U14

PHASE 4

PART B

> **ACTIVITY**

Lower Body Balance Training.

> **FOCUS**

Developing movement control during static and dynamic activities.

🕒 **4 MINS**

4. SINGLE LEG ARABESQUE

5. HOP & STICK SIDWAYS

# 4. SINGLE LEG ARABESQUE

12 REPS : 6 EACH SIDE

▶ WATCH VIDEO



- > Balance on one leg with slight knee bend
- > Lean forwards slowly so chest is parallel to ground
- > Hold for 2 seconds
- > Return to upright without placing foot back on ground and repeat.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL (AT START)
2. HEAD LIFT (LOOK THROUGH EYEBROWS WHEN IN ARABESQUE)
4. ENGAGE CORE
5. SHOULDER & HIPS LEVEL
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# 5. HOP & STICK SIDEWAYS

WATCH VIDEO



**12** REPS  
**6** EACH SIDE

- > Raise one leg off floor
- > Hop backwards landing same foot
- > Land squarely on foot
- > Balance & hold for 2-3 seconds and repeat.
- > Hop backwards and hold again on same foot.

**ACTIVATE 8**

- 4. ENGAGE CORE
- 6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE
- 7. SOFT KNEES
- 8. KNEE ABOVE TOES



# ACTIVATE U13-U14

## PHASE 4

# PART C

### > ACTIVITY

Targeted Resistance Training.

### > FOCUS

Improving functional strength, stability, power and mobility in the upper and lower body.

**8 MINS**

6. REVERSE LUNGE

7. NORDIC HAMSTRING CURL

8. SIDE BRIDGE WITH LEG RAISE

9. PRONE WALKOUT PRESS-UP

10. PARTNER RESISTED NECK MOVEMENTS

# 6. REVERSE LUNGE

WATCH VIDEO



- > Start in standing position with feet shoulder-width apart
- > Step back with one leg, with rear foot on toes bend knees into lunge position
- > Front foot remains in full contact with the ground
- > Keep rear-leg knee off ground
- > Stand up and return to start position.

**12**  
REPS  
.....  
**6**  
EACH SIDE

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
4. ENGAGE CORE
6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

# 7. NORDIC HAMSTRING CURL



**5**  
SECONDS

WATCH VIDEO



- Partner up, kneel one behind the other and facing the same direction
- Rear partner places hands on partner's lower legs
- Front partner slowly leans forwards from the knees
- Keep shoulder, hip and knee in-line with hands by side
- Control lower as far as possible then fall onto hands
- Push up with arms to return to start.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
4. ENGAGE CORE

**IMPORTANT:** Do not complete before matches.

# 8. SIDE BRIDGE WITH LEG RAISE



**15** EACH SIDE  
SECONDS

WATCH VIDEO



- Lay on side, raise trunk and hips from the floor to connect a straight line between the shoulders and ankles
- Position elbow directly underneath shoulder
- Squeeze buttocks and keep legs straight
- Only the elbow/forearm and outside of the lowermost foot should be in contact with the ground
- Raise top leg up and return so legs are together, repeat.

**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
4. ENGAGE CORE
5. SHOULDER & HIPS (AND ANKLES) IN-LINE

# 9. PRONE WALK OUT PRESS-UP

**4**  
SECONDS

WATCH VIDEO



- > Start standing in a normal posture
- > Squat down and walk hands forwards until in a press-up position with the hands directly underneath the shoulders
- > Perform one press-up
- > Walk hands backwards towards feet, before returning to starting position
- > Hips should not be higher than shoulders throughout the movement.

ACTIVATE 8

1. HEAD LIFT (NEUTRAL / UP)
3. SHOULDER PINCH
4. ENGAGE CORE
5. SHOULDER & HIPS LEVEL

# 10. PARTNER RESISTED NECK MOVEMENTS

**10**  
SECONDS  
EACH DIRECTION

WATCH VIDEO



- > Partner up
- > One player performs exercise by resisting force to maintain their head position. Partner uses hand to apply APPROPRIATE force to head in different directions:
  - > Flexion (look down - hand to forehead)
  - > Extension (look up - hand to back of head)
  - > Lateral Flexion Left and Right (ear towards shoulder - hand to side of head)
- > Resist force to maintain head neutral position.

ACTIVATE 8

2. CHEST-UP
4. ENGAGE CORE

**IMPORTANT:** Partner to agree appropriate force to provide resistance but importantly maintain good form.



ACTIVATE U13-U14

PHASE 4

PART D

> **ACTIVITY**

Landing, Change of Direction & Plyometrics.

> **FOCUS**

Improving control through the trunk and lower limbs during controlled landing and changing direction activities.

🕒 **6 MINS**

11. SHUTTLE TO EDGE OF SQUARE

12. BRONCOS

# 11. SHUTTLE TO EDGE OF SQUARE

▶ WATCH VIDEO



- > Begin standing with feet shoulder-width apart
- > On coach's cue (e.g. clap/shout), players turn and run to edge of square (marked with cones)
- > When 2/3 strides from edge of square, players turn and execute a plant and cut, before accelerating back to their start position.

**ACTIVATE 8**

**2. CHEST-UP**

**6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE (ON PLANTED FOOT)**

**8. KNEE ABOVE TOES (ON PLANTED LEG)**

# 12. BRONCOS



WATCH VIDEO



- Begin in a squat position on the balls of the feet and hands on the ground
- Extend feet backwards to adopt a press-up position
- Explosively press-up and in same movement push backwards with the hands towards the feet (to finish in similar position to the start)
- Land with soft elbows.



**ACTIVATE 8**

1. HEAD LIFT (NEUTRAL / UP)
3. SHOULDER PINCH
4. ENGAGE CORE

ENGLAND RUGBY **INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISE PROGRAMME**

# ACTIVATE

U13 - U14

AN INTERACTIVE GUIDE FOR PLAYERS AND COACHES  
THAT IS DESIGNED ESPECIALLY FOR TRAINING  
SESSIONS AND PRE-MATCH WARM-UP ROUTINES.

