

ENGLAND RUGBY **INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISE PROGRAMME**

ACTIVATE

U17 - U18

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.

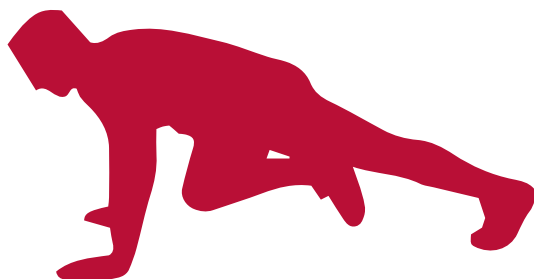
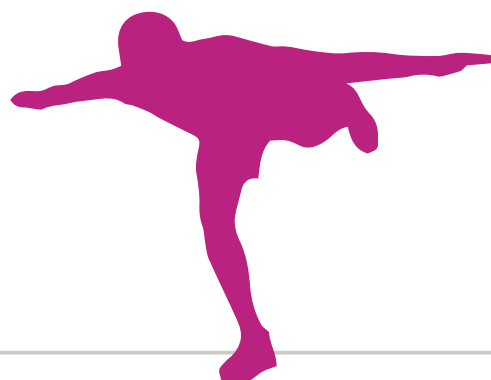
This document is viewable on multiple devices. It is best viewed in Adobe Acrobat Reader.

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.

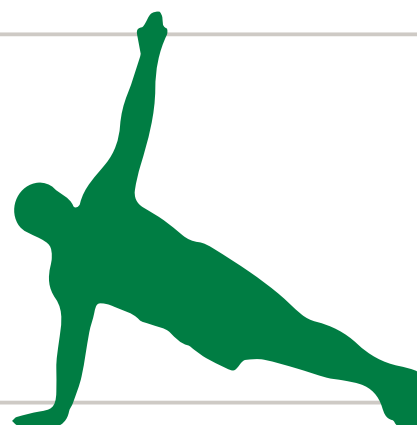


2: PRE-ACTIVATION

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.

SCHOOL BOY STUDY

72% ↓
IN OVERALL MATCH INJURIES*

59% ↓
IN CONCUSSION*

ADULT MALE COMMUNITY STUDY

40% ↓
IN LOWER LIMB INJURIES*

59% ↓
IN 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 MALE PLAYERS, IT CAN BENEFIT ALL PLAYERS.

YOUNGER PLAYERS

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.

FEMALE PLAYERS

Activate benefits will help reduce the risk of injury and develop performance for female players. 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>Running-based Preparation & Change of Direction</p> <p>Focus: Running technique, coordination and changing direction through enhancing movement control in the trunk and lower limbs.</p>	2 mins	3
B	<p>Lower body Balance Training</p> <p>Focus: Developing movement control during static and dynamic activities.</p>	4 mins	2
C	<p>Targeted Resistance Training</p> <p>Focus: Improving functional strength, stability, power and mobility in the upper and lower body.</p>	8 mins	5
D	<p>Landing, Change of Direction & Plyometrics</p> <p>Focus: 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.

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 With Shallow Squat
5. Hop & Stick Sideways

PHASE 1 | PART C

6. Prisoner Squat
7. Raised Double Leg Bridge
8. Plank with Alternate Arm & Leg Raise
9. Resisted Press-Up
10. Static Neck Contractions

PHASE 1 | PART D

11. Diagonal Skip to Sway Lunge
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 Arabesque
5. Hop & Stick Backwards

PHASE 2 | PART C

6. Reverse Lunge
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Plank Clock
9. Press-Up Lawnmower
10. Bear Crawl Resisted Static Neck Contractions

PHASE 2 | PART D

11. Partner Jump & Bump
12. Plyometric Press-Up

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 Push to Unbalance
5. Single Leg Box Hops

PHASE 3 | PART C

6. Toe-Toe Squat
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Plank to Side Bridge
9. Resisted Shoulder Tap
10. Standing Neck Lifts

PHASE 3 | PART D

11. Shuttle to Edge of Square
12. 3 Forward Bounds

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 With Reach
5. Single Leg Hop with 90° Turn

PHASE 4 | PART C

6. Multi-Directional Lunge
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Prone Opposite Shoulder Tap
9. Resisted Single Arm Row
10. Partner Resisted Neck Movements

PHASE 4 | PART D

11. Run, Stop & Stick
12. Catch and Fend

ACTIVATE U17-U18

PHASE 1

PHASE 1 | PART A

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

PHASE 1 | PART B

4. Single Leg Balance With Shallow Squat
5. Hop & Stick Sideways

PHASE 1 | PART C

6. Prisoner Squat
7. Raised Double Leg Bridge
8. Plank with Alternate Arm & Leg Raise
9. Resisted Press-Up
10. Static Neck Contractions

PHASE 1 | PART D

11. Diagonal Skip to Sway Lunge
12. Pogo Jumps



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ACTIVATE



ACTIVATE U17-U18

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.

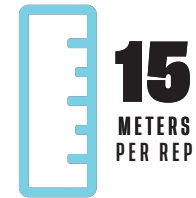
🕒 **2 MINS**

1. **SNAKE RUN**

2. **WALKING GRUNCH**

3. **PLANT & CUT**

1. SNAKE RUN



[WATCH VIDEO](#)

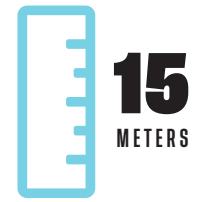


- > Alternate swerve from left to right
- > Drive outside leg across body to initiate swerve
- > Keep facing forwards.

ACTIVATE 8

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

2. WALKING CRUNCH



[WATCH VIDEO](#)

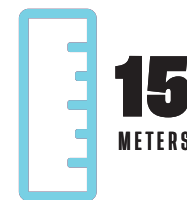


- › Shuffle two steps then raise one leg
- › Opposite elbow and knee touch
- › Keep raised leg straight.

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 U17-U18

PHASE 1

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 SIDEWAYS

4. SINGLE LEG BALANCE WITH SHALLOW SQUAT

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

12 REPS : **6** EACH SIDE



- > 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 AND ANKLE IN-LINE

8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

5. HOP & STICK SIDEWAYS

WATCH VIDEO

12 REPS
: **6** EACH SIDE



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

ACTIVATE 8

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

ACTIVATE U18-U18

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. PRISONER SQUAT

7. RAISED DOUBLE LEG BRIDGE

8. PLANK WITH ALTERNATE ARM & LEG RAISE

9. RESISTED PRESS-UP

10. STATIC NECK CONTRACTIONS

6. PRISONER SQUAT



WATCH VIDEO



- > Stand with feet a little wider than shoulder-width apart, hands placed behind the head
- > Bending at the knees and hips, squat down until thighs are parallel with the floor
- > Bend at knees and hips, squat down until thighs parallel with the floor
- > Return to the start position
- > Keep heels in contact with the ground throughout.

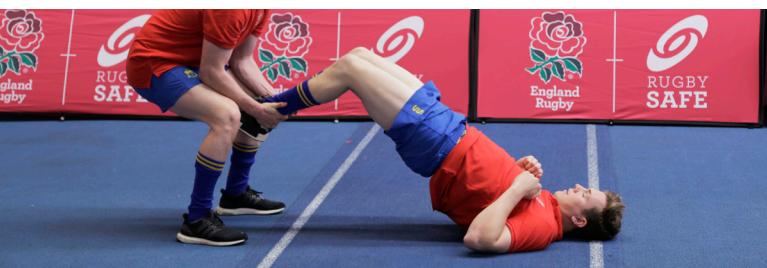
ACTIVATE 8

1. HEAD LIFT
2. CHEST-UP
3. SHOULDER PINCH

7. RAISED DOUBLE LEG BRIDGE

2
REPS

WATCH VIDEO



- In pairs, one player lies face-up on the ground with hips and knees bent at 90°
- Other partner holds heels of the player on the floor
- Player on the floor slowly raises hips and trunk from the ground to form a straight line from the shoulder to the knees.

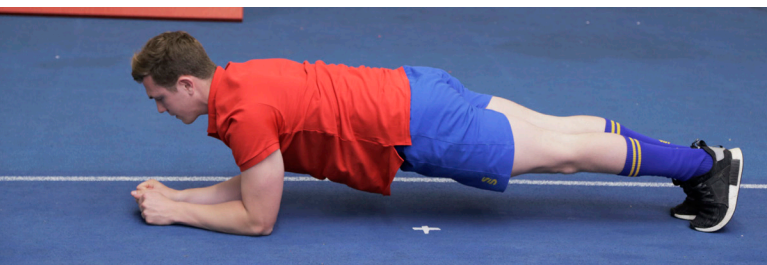
ACTIVATE 8

4. ENGAGE CORE

8. PLANK WITH ALTERNATE ARM & LEG RAISE

WATCH VIDEO

30
SECONDS



- Start in front bridge position resting on elbow and balls of feet
- Slowly raise an opposite arm and leg to shoulder / hip-height from the floor
- Return arm and leg to the floor and alternate with other arm and leg.

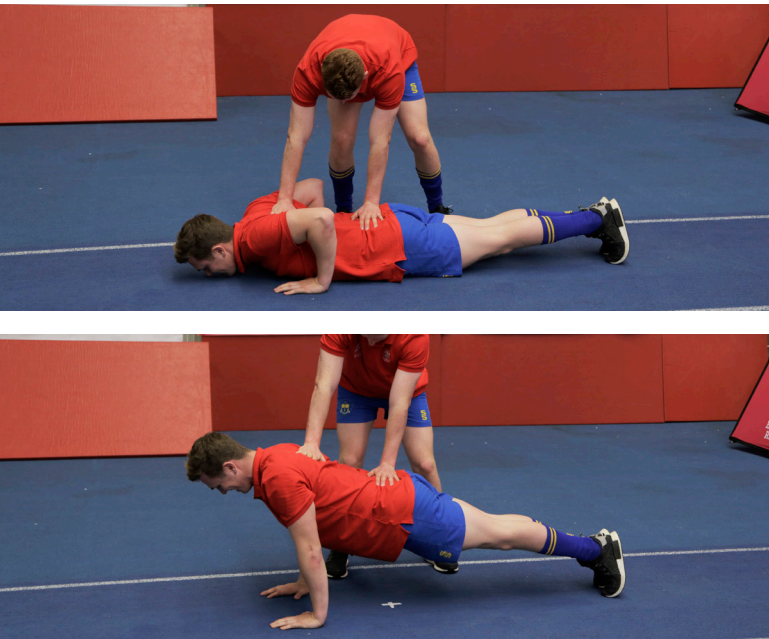
ACTIVATE 8

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

9. RESISTED PRESS-UP



WATCH VIDEO



- > In pairs, one player lies face-down on the ground
- > Other player places hands between the shoulder blades and lower back of prone player
- > Prone player attempts to perform a press-up with standing player providing 75% resistance.

ACTIVATE 8

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

10. STATIC NECK CONTRACTIONS



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 U17-U18

PHASE 1

PART D

> **ACTIVITY**

Landing, Change of Direction & Plyometrics.

> **FOCUS**

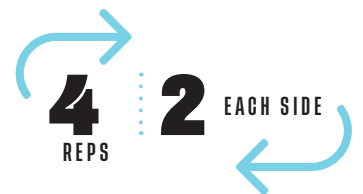
Improving control through the trunk and lower limbs during controlled landing and changing direction activities.

🕒 **6 MINS**

11. **DIAGONAL SKIP TO SWAY LUNGE**

12. **POGO JUMPS**

11. DIAGONAL SKIP TO SWAY LUNGE



WATCH VIDEO



- > Feet shoulder-width apart
- > Perform two side shuffles
- > Plant and cut with the outermost foot
- > Hand touches floor near planted foot
- > Two side shuffles in opposite direction back to start position
- > Shift hips sideways over foot.

ACTIVATE 8

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

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
2. CHEST-UP
6. HIP, KNEE AND ANKLE IN-LINE
7. SOFT KNEES

ACTIVATE U17-U18

PHASE 2

PHASE 2 | PART A

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

PHASE 2 | PART B

4. Single Leg Arabesque
5. Hop & Stick Backwards

PHASE 2 | PART C

6. Reverse Lunge
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Plank Clock
9. Press-Up Lawnmower
10. Bear Crawl Resisted Static Neck Contractions

PHASE 2 | PART D

11. Partner Jump & Bump
12. Plyometric Press-Up



ENGLAND RUGBY INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISE PROGRAMME

ACTIVATE



ACTIVATE U17-U18

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**

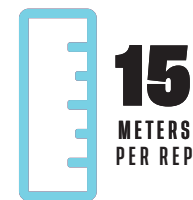
1. **DIAGONAL SIDE SHUFFLE**

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

2 REPS



15 METERS PER REP
1 EACH SIDE

[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

4 REPS
2 EACH SIDE

50-70%
EFFORT

[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 IN-LINE (PLANTING FOOT)
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES (PLANTING FOOT)

ACTIVATE U17-U18

PHASE 2

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 BACKWARDS

4. SINGLE LEG ARABESQUE

WATCH VIDEO

12 : **6** EACH SIDE
REPS

- > Balance on one leg with single knee bend
- > Lean forwards slowly so chest is parallel to ground and hold
- > Return to upright without placing passive foot on ground before next repetition.



ACTIVATE 8

1. HEAD NEUTRAL (AS START)

1. HEAD LIFT
(LOOK THROUGH EYEBROWS WHEN IN ARABESQUE)

4. ENGAGE CORE

5. SHOULDER AND HIPS LEVEL

8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

5. HOP & STICK BACKWARDS

WATCH VIDEO

12 REPS : **6** EACH SIDE



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

ACTIVATE 8

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

ACTIVATE U17-U18

PHASE 2

PART C

> ACTIVITY

Targeted Resistance Training.

> FOCUS

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

6 MINS

6. REVERSE LUNGE

7. NORDIC HAMSTRING CURL

8. PLANK CLOCK

9. PRESS-UP LAWNMOWER

10. BEAR CRAWL RESISTED STATIC NECK CONTRACTIONS

6. REVERSE LUNGE

8 REPS **4** EACH SIDE

WATCH VIDEO



- > Stride backward placing rear foot on the ground
- > Front foot in full contact with the ground, back foot on the toes
- > Flex at the hip and knee to perform the lunge
- > Keep rear leg knee off ground
- > Step forward to return to start position

ACTIVATE 8

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

7. NORDIC HAMSTRING CURL

3
REPS

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 CLOCK

1
REPS

WATCH VIDEO



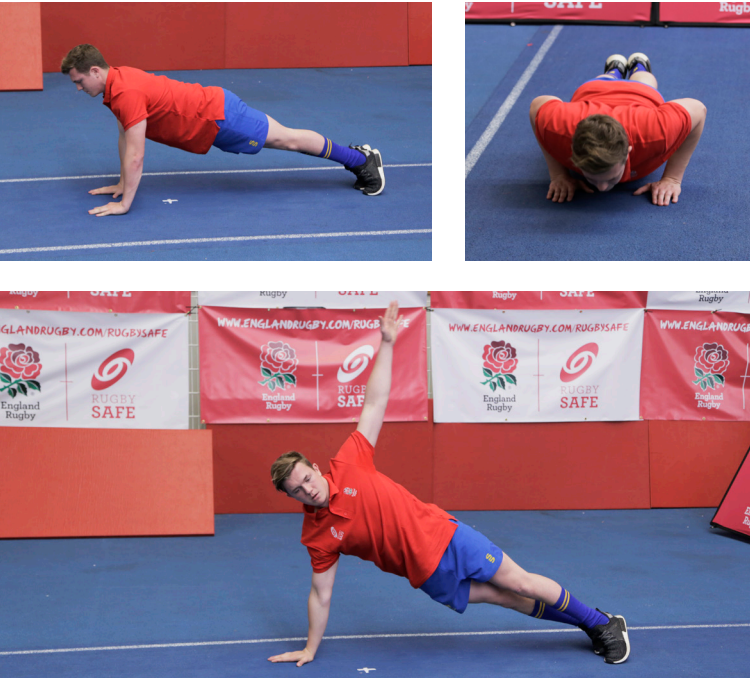
- > Start in plank position
- > Move around in a circular motion (clockface) on the forearms, keeping the feet in the same place
- > Maintain good plank position throughout
- > 1 repetition = 1 full circle.

ACTIVATE 8

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

9. PRESS-UP LAWNMOWER

WATCH VIDEO



8 REPS
4 EACH SIDE

- Start in press-up position
- Perform one press-up
- Lift one hand and rotate trunk to raise the arm upwards
- Hold position for 3 seconds
- Return hand to ground.

ACTIVATE 8

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

10. BEAR CRAWL RESISTED STATIC NECK CONTRACTIONS

10 SECONDS EACH DIRECTION

WATCH VIDEO



- 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 LIFT (LOOK THROUGH EYEBROWS)
4. ENGAGE CORE
5. SHOULDER & HIPS LEVEL

IMPORTANT:

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

ACTIVATE U17-U18

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.

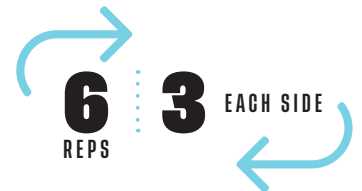
🕒 **3 MINS**

11. PARTNER JUMP & BUMP

12. PLYOMETRIC PRESS-UP

11. PARTNER JUMP & BUMP

WATCH VIDEO



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

ACTIVATE 8

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

12. PLYOMETRIC PRESS-UP

WATCH VIDEO



4
REPS

- > Start in press-up position
- > Perform a partial (quarter) press-up
- > Explosively push body away from the ground so that the hands should leave the ground
- > Aim to clap hands underneath body
- > Land with soft elbows.

ACTIVATE 8

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

ACTIVATE U17-U18

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 Push to Unbalance
5. Single Leg Box Hops

PHASE 3 | PART C

6. Toe-Toe Squat
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Plank to Side Bridge
9. Resisted Shoulder Tap
10. Standing Neck Lifts

PHASE 3 | PART D

11. Shuttle to Edge of Square
12. 3 Forward Bounds



ENGLAND RUGBY INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISE PROGRAMME

ACTIVATE



ACTIVATE U17-U18

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**

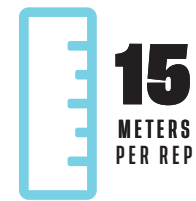
1. **EXAGGERATED SKIP**

2. **A SKIP**

3. **UNPLANNED PLANT & CUT**

1. EXAGGERATED SKIP

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



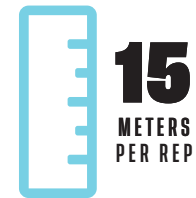
- > Shuffle forward two steps
- > Swing leading leg upwards
- > Clap hands under raised leg
- > Repeat alternating lifting leg.

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 U17-U18

PHASE 3

PART B

> **ACTIVITY**

Lower Body Balance Training.

> **FOCUS**

Developing movement control during static and dynamic activities.

3 MINS

4. **SINGLE LEG BALANCE WITH PUSH TO UNBALANCE**

5. **SINGLE LEG BOX HOPS**

4. SINGLE LEG BALANCE WITH PUSH TO UNBALANCE

15 EACH LEG
SECONDS

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



- > One partner raises one leg off floor and holds
- > Standing partner applies force to various body parts attempting to off-balance balancing partner
- > Balancing partner attempts to maintain rigid body position throughout.

ACTIVATE 8

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

5. SINGLE LEG BOX HOPS

WATCH VIDEO



12 REPS **6** EACH FOOT

- Balance on one leg
- Perform 4 x hops (staying on same leg in a box shape)
- Soft knee on landing
- Land squarely on foot.

ACTIVATE 8

- 4. ENGAGE CORE
- 6. HIPS, KNEES & ANKLES IN-LINE
- 7. SOFT KNEES
- 8. KNEE OVER TOES

ACTIVATE U17-U18

PHASE 3

PART C

> ACTIVITY

Targeted Resistance Training.

> FOCUS

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

6 MINS

6. TOE-TOE SQUAT

7. NORDIC HAMSTRING CURL

8. PLANK TO SIDE BRIDGE

9. RESISTED SHOULDER TAP

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. HIPS, KNEES & ANKLES 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 TO SIDE BRIDGE



WATCH VIDEO



- Begin in front bridge position
- Perform the following sequences: hold each bridge position for 5 seconds on front, side (left), front, side (right) and front
- The sequence equals one repetition.

ACTIVATE 8

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
3. SHOULDER PINCH
4. ENGAGE CORE

9. RESISTED SHOULDER TAP



15 SECONDS EACH LEG

WATCH VIDEO



- In pairs, grasp the wrist of each other's right arm.
- The aim is to try to tap partner's shoulder with right hand whilst stopping partner from doing the same
- Change to left hand.

ACTIVATE 8

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

10. STANDING NECK LIFTS



10 SECONDS

EACH DIRECTION

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 U17-U18

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. SHUTTLE TO EDGE OF SQUARE

12. 3 FORWARD BOUNDS

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 by 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. HIPS, KNEES & ANKLES IN-LINE

8. KNEE ABOVE TOES (ON PLANTED LEG)

12. 3 FORWARD BOUNDS

WATCH VIDEO



2
REPS

- Start with feet shoulder-width apart
- Jump on as far as possible over 3 bounds
- Try to minimise time on the ground between bounds.

ACTIVATE 8

1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
6. HIPS, KNEES & ANKLES IN-LINE
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

ACTIVATE U17-U18

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 With Reach
5. Single Leg Hop with 90° Turn

PHASE 4 | PART C

6. Multi-Directional Lunge
7. Nordic Hamstring Curl
8. Prone Opposite Shoulder Tap
9. Resisted Single Arm Row
10. Partner Resisted Neck Movements

PHASE 4 | PART D

11. Run, Stop & Stick
12. Catch and Fend



ENGLAND RUGBY INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISE PROGRAMME

ACTIVATE



ACTIVATE U17-U18

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](#)

2
REPS



15
METERS
PER CHANNEL

50-70%

EFFORT



- > 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

1
REP



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 U17-U18

PHASE 4

PART B

> ACTIVITY

Lower Body Balance Training.

> FOCUS

Developing movement control during static and dynamic activities.

4 MINS

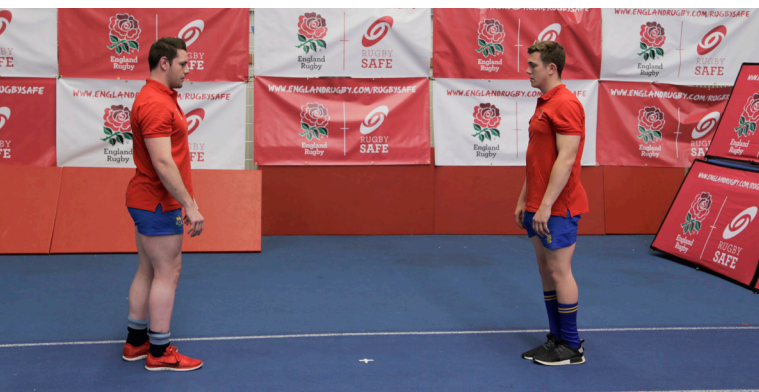
4. SINGLE LEG ARABESQUE WITH REACH

5. SINGLE LEG HOP WITH 90° TURN

4. SINGLE LEG ARABESQUE WITH REACH

WATCH VIDEO

12 REPS **6** EACH SIDE



- > Partners face each other (making sure there is enough distance between them)
- > Balance on one leg with slight knee bend
- > Lean forwards slowly so chest is parallel to ground
- > Reach forward (maintaining balance) to hold partner's hand and hold for 2 -3 seconds
- > Return to upright without placing foot back on ground and repeat.

ACTIVATE 8

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

5. SINGLE LEG HOP WITH 90° TURN

WATCH VIDEO

12 REPS **6** EACH SIDE



- > Raise one leg off floor
- > Hop and turn 90° while in air and landing on 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
- 8. KNEE ABOVE TOES

ACTIVATE U17-U18

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. **MULTI-DIRECTIONAL LUNGE**

7. **NORDIC HAMSTRING CURL**

8. **PRONE OPPOSITE SHOULDER TAP**

9. **RESISTED SINGLE ARM ROW**

10. **PARTNER RESISTED NECK MOVEMENTS**

6. MULTI-DIRECTIONAL LUNGE

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

2
REPS

- > Start facing 12 o'clock of a clock face
- > With right foot, stride out to "2 o'clock", "4 o'clock" and "6 o'clock" positions and perform a lunge, returning to the centre in / between each lunge
- > With left foot, stride out to "8 o'clock", "10 o'clock" and "12 o'clock" positions and perform lunge, returning to the centre in between each lunge.



ACTIVATE 8

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

7. NORDIC HAMSTRING CURL

7
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

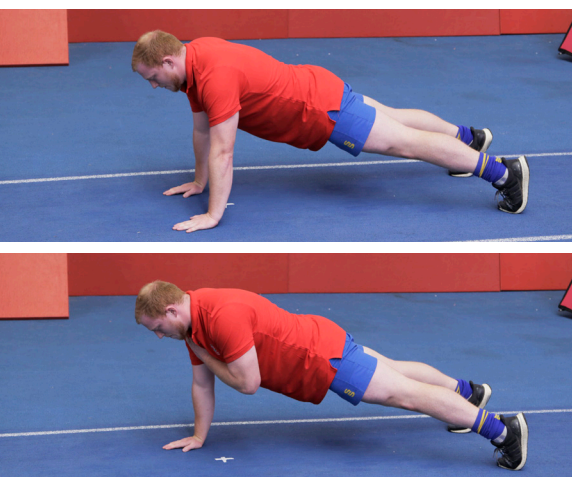
1. HEAD NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
4. ENGAGE CORE

IMPORTANT: Do not complete before matches.

8. PRONE OPPOSITE SHOULDER TAP

WATCH VIDEO

4 REPS **1** EACH SIDE



- Begin by adopting a press-up position
- Slowly raise one hand from the ground and touch against opposite shoulder
- Return hand to the ground and repeat with other hand
- Aim to minimise rotation at the shoulders and hips.

ACTIVATE 8

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

9. RESISTED SINGLE ARM ROW



WATCH VIDEO



- > In pairs, one player sits on the ground facing their partner who is in a partial squat position
- > Holding opposite hands i.e. one player left, other right, the standing player pulls the seated player up to a standing position, sitting down in the process
- > Try to isolate the shoulder and upper back when pulling the partner up.

ACTIVATE 8

- 1 HEAD NEUTRAL
- 3. SHOULDER PINCH
- 4. ENGAGE CORE

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 U17-U18

PHASE 4

PART D

> **ACTIVITY**

Targeted Resistance Training.

> **FOCUS**

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

6 MINS

11. **RUN, STOP & STICK**

12. **CATCH AND FEND**

11. RUN, STOP & STICK

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



- > Start by running forwards at 50% pace
- > Take-off from one foot and jump forwards, landing on the other foot
- > Continue to run forward.

ACTIVATE 8

1. CHEST NEUTRAL
2. CHEST-UP
6. HIP, KNEE & ANKLE IN-LINE (ON LANDING LEG)
8. KNEE ABOVE TOES (ON LANDING LEG)

12. CATCH AND FEND

WATCH VIDEO

6 REPS
3 EACH SIDE



- In pairs, stand facing one another so that right shoulders are lined up
- Rest right hand on partner's shoulder
- Lean against partner's hand
- Forcefully extend arm to fend away from partner
- Catch body against partner with opposite arm and slightly bent elbow.



ACTIVATE 8

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

ENGLAND RUGBY **INJURY PREVENTION EXERCISE PROGRAMME**

ACTIVATE

U17 - U18

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

