

## Warming Up...Cooling Down...

and why we need to *by Joy Karley, M.A.*

***Trouble getting to class today?***

***Tight schedule?***

***Traffic?***

These things happen to all of us. They are unavoidable, and understandable. If you're only a couple minutes late (that is, you're not walking in during a hard routine) come in to class and use gentle, low impact movements to warm up as you follow along with the routine. Since your body did not get the necessary warm up to prepare it for your workout, you may even want to do all or most of the class with the low impact modifications in order to prevent injury.

***Doctor appointment?***

***Have to pick your kids up after school today?***

***Got tickets to that once in a lifetime concert?***

Once in a while, things come up that just cannot be rescheduled. Sometimes you have to leave class early; but it's certainly better than not going to class at all. If you have to leave during the aerobic portion, be sure to slow down first and do low impact, lower intensity moves to help lower your heart rate. You may want to walk around a bit in the hallway or registration area for a minute or two. Make sure you are in the light to very light range of perceived exertion (under 60% of your maximum heart rate) before you stop. If you are leaving after the descending or a floor routine, take a minute to stretch the muscles you just worked before you go.

***What about those of us who no matter how early we get up in the morning, how much commuting time we allow, or what else we do, are always 5 (10 or 15!) minutes late?***

***Or what about those of us who leave early because we don't like floor-work and stretching or we just want to get that cardio and go?***

Jazzercise classes are designed to be a complete workout. Class structures are developed to meet the ACSM guidelines for safe and effective exercise. To get the most out of your workout – and you're paying for it, so why not – you need to participate in the entire class.

| Warming Up   | Cooling Down  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increases body temperature</li> <li>• warms specific muscles and joints</li> <li>• limbers the muscles and joints</li> <li>• decreases the stress on the heart by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– lowering blood pressure</li> <li>– increasing blood flow to the heart</li> <li>– increasing oxygen to the heart</li> </ul> </li> <li>• decreases the risk for heart attack</li> <li>• prepares the body for a specific activity</li> <li>• prepares the body for the unexpected</li> <li>• eases the body into more intense activity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• removes lactic acid and other by-products from muscles</li> <li>• reduces the stress on the heart by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– lowering levels of adrenaline</li> <li>– lowering the heart rate</li> </ul> </li> <li>• keeps blood from pooling to prevent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– sudden drop in blood pressure</li> <li>– lightheadedness</li> <li>– inadequate blood flow to the heart</li> </ul> </li> <li>• stretches muscles used in exercise to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– prevent stiffness and pain</li> <li>– increase flexibility</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

***We know that stretching is an important part of any workout, but when is the best time to stretch?***

In order to prevent injuring your muscles, it is best to stretch them when they are warm. Jazzercise workouts are designed to provide stretches for the muscles used in each workout. These stretches are done after completing the aerobic section, when the muscles are warm. Individual muscles worked in floor routines may be stretched immediately following the routine. The ending routine usually includes stretches to help your body recover from the workout.

Gentle stretches are often done after the body temperature has been raised during the warm up routine. These stretches target major muscles that will be used in the workout; they are designed to prepare the body for exercise by “limbering it up,” or working the range of motion that will be used in the workout. Stretches done during the warm up should never be forced.



***Remember:***

**Physical activity has been proven to be beneficial to your health; but if you’re sidelined due to an injury, you won’t be able to reap any of the healthful benefits. Take advantage of the first and last few minutes of class to ensure a safe, pain-free workout. If, on occasion, you find yourself arriving late or leaving early, an abbreviated workout is better than no workout – as long as you are responsible for taking the time to warm up and cool down.**