



As a very regular wall user, Technical Advisor to numerous facilities, provider of the Mountain Training Climbing Awards, and the Climbing Coaching scheme, I spend a lot of my work (and play) time in climbing walls. I also spend a fair chunk of time watching other folks coaching, and instructing. A couple of years ago, I started to become rather tired of candidates churning out the same old games and activities in their warm ups so much so that I instigated a Shark Attack ban...! Now don't get me wrong, this can be a great warm up, educational and even coaching tool but not without thought. How about adding some hold uses, movement techniques etc. and actually think about 'why' am I choosing this activity for this particular group? What are the desired outcomes of this session?

So I have recently set myself a challenge of introducing a new warm-up game or activity each month. Its going down a storm! I went to watch some football warm ups, rugby warm ups, and even some ballet dancers... now that was impressive! I shall share this month's pick, which I have been using with 12 keen candidates on this weekend's CWA Training course in Birmingham and the MTA West Midlands coaching workshop I ran a few weeks ago.

SHARK ATTACK!

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY JOBY DAVIS

Do you climb indoors? Do you work with groups in a climbing wall environment? Are you working towards a Mountain Training Climbing Award Assessment? If you have answered YES to any of these questions... read on!

WHAT SHOULD A WARM UP CONSIST OF?

The four stages are:

- 1 Pulse raiser: Increases heart rate, increases blood flow to muscles, raises the body temperature.
- 2 Dynamic movements (I use the term stretching with caution): Allows easier movement, increases joint flexibility, prepares muscles.
- 3 Practice actions for the activity: Warms up specific parts of the body that will be used in the activity, e.g. agility, balance, coordination, foot work, use of hand hold, clipping.
- 4 Mental alertness and preparation: Visualise a successful performance, engender some energy and enthusiasm, develop working together responsibility and some 'teamwork'.

SOME WARM UPS THAT TICK ALL FOUR BOXES

Escape and evasion

Acquire, buy or make a pair of 'evasion belts'. The belt attaches around the waist and is joined by a strap (with Velcro break), to the partners. Rather like tag rugby, a Velcro tag is on each hip. The challenge is to get both tabs from your partner (much more difficult and challenging than it sounds!). These evasion belts are a fantastic full body warm up for climbing activities. Two players at a time works well, with a circle of spotters. Play it as an extended warm up and develop a league table! Beware - this needs careful management and is probably not suitable for primary school groups. Guaranteed fun, cardiovascular system wake up, ABC engaged, mental agility starter.

Reaction ball netsquash

You need a friendly climbing wall to yourselves for this. Two teams, a selection of balls (different shapes, sizes hardness and bounciness work well).

A route-setting bucket at each end of your playing area. The ball must be netted into the team's goal (bucket) but can only be passed by bouncing off the wall - no moving with the ball! When a few rounds have been successful, introduce more balls. Multi-direction 'reaction' balls work really well.

This one also adds team work and mental agility. Make sure you get permission from the wall before you take over!

Enjoy! ■



PHOTOS ABOVE
Concentration.
PHOTO LEFT Game.



Joby Davis is an MIC holder and climbing wall specialist. He works throughout the UK as a Technical adviser, provider of the Mountain Training CWA, CWLA and SPA Awards, and the Climbing Coaching Award Scheme. He is also a Technical Expert of the NICAS schemes.

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