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 huge 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.

### 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 tags 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 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!^

---

**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!

---

**SITTA**

There’s more to mobility than just being “wireless”.

---