

Correct warm-up reduces soccer injuries in children by half

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Children are more likely to contract bone fractures or injuries of the upper extremities during football than adults. Credit: Bil Kleb, CC BY-SA 2.0

A warm-up program developed specially for children reduces soccer injuries by around 50 percent. Sports scientists from the University of Basel have reported these findings in the academic journal *Sports Medicine*. A total of 243 teams comprising around 3,900 children from four European countries took part in the study.

The characteristics of [soccer](#) injuries in [children](#) differ from those seen in young people and adults. "For example, children are more likely to suffer broken bones or injuries to the upper extremities," says sports scientist Dr. Oliver Faude from the University of Basel. Until now, however, epidemiological data on soccer injuries in this age group has been scarce.

Based on studies into the characteristics of soccer injuries in children carried out by Dr. Roland Rössler from the University of Basel's Department of Sport, Exercise and Health, an international team of experts developed a 20-minute warm-up. The program "11 + Kids" comprises seven warm-up exercises to be performed at the start of the children's regular soccer training sessions.

Under the leadership of Oliver Faude and Roland Rössler, an international research group has now scientifically tested the warm-up program for children's soccer for the first time. A total of 3,895 players between the ages of seven and 13 from Switzerland, Germany, Czechia and the Netherlands took part in the large-scale study.

Many injuries can be prevented

While the [control group](#) went about their training as normal, the intervention group warmed up regularly with the special "11 + Kids" program. After one soccer season, the injury rate of the team that followed the program was 48 percent lower than the control group, while the rate of severe [injury](#) fell by as much as 74 percent.

The results of the FIFA-backed study show that an appropriate warm-up program can help prevent a large percentage of injuries provided it is performed at least once, and preferably twice, per week.

More information: Roland Rössler et al, A Multinational Cluster

Randomised Controlled Trial to Assess the Efficacy of '11+ Kids': A Warm-Up Programme to Prevent Injuries in Children's Football, *Sports Medicine* (2017). [DOI: 10.1007/s40279-017-0834-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-017-0834-8)

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