



# GAME DAY PRIMING

As women's sport continues to grow, so does the focus on performance preparation and recovery. One area gaining increasing attention within sports science is game-day priming – a strategy designed to help athletes feel physically prepared, activated and competition-ready before game time.

**At Fernwood Fitness, we are passionate about empowering female athletes through education, strength training and performance support – helping women both on and off the field.**



# WHAT IS GAME-DAY PRIMING?

Game-day priming refers to a short, structured training session completed prior to competition with the goal of improving performance and readiness.

Interest is rapidly growing across a wider range of sports and athletic outcomes.

The goal is to “switch on” the nervous system and muscles without creating fatigue

Research has largely focused on:

- Jump performance
- Power output
- Repeated sprint ability

Priming sessions often include:

- ✓ Power-based movements
- ✓ Activation exercises
- ✓ Mobility and dynamic warm ups
- ✓ Sport-specific preparation

## WHY DOES PRIMING MATTER?

When performed correctly, priming may help athletes:

- Improve explosiveness and power
- Feel mentally and physically prepared
- Enhance movement quality and activation
- Increase confidence leading into competition
- Reduce feelings of sluggishness or stiffness

For female athletes competing in fast-paced sports like football, these small performance gains can make a significant difference on game day.



# IMPORTANT FACTORS TO CONSIDER



## COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

### Too Much Load = Too Much Fatigue

One of the biggest mistakes in priming is lifting excessively heavy weights.

The purpose of priming is to:

- Activate
- Prepare
- Enhance readiness

The goal is not create fatigue before competition.

Finding the right balance between muscle activation and energy conservation is key to maximising game-day performance.

## ATHLETE EXPERIENCE & CONDITIONING

Research suggests priming is most effective in:

- Well-conditioned athletes
- Highly trained individuals
- Athletes with established strength foundations

While younger or less experienced athletes may respond differently, priming can still be used as part of an overall preparation strategy.

## TIMING MATTERS

Sessions often focus on:

- Squats
- Jump squats
- Explosive lower-body exercises
- Mobility and activation work

Importantly, exercises should always be:

- ✓ Familiar
- ✓ Safe
- ✓ Appropriate to the athlete's training age

Priming sessions are generally completed between 6-32 hours prior to game-day or competition



# HOW FERNWOOD CAN SUPPORT FEMALE ATHLETES

As a leading women's fitness community, Fernwood is proud to support female athletes through:

- Strength & conditioning support
- Performance education
- Functional training
- Small group training options
- Recovery & mobility guidance
- Recovery-focused wellness support
- Female-focused coaching

Through our partnerships with local leagues and clubs including the Essendon District Football League (EDFL), we are committed to helping women build confidence, strength and long-term athletic performance.

**Whether it's preparing for game day, improving recovery, or building strength throughout the season, Fernwood provides a supportive environment designed specifically for women.**



**STRONGER  
TOGETHER**

*Supporting women in sport,  
performance and wellbeing –  
on and off the field.*



# EXAMPLE EXERCISE PROGRAM

## **Pogo Jumps**

2 sets of 5 repetitions

Focus on directional change and getting off the ground quickly

## **Falling Start Accelerations**

3 sets of 5-10m sprints

Explosive movement to target stop/start motion.

## **Medicine Ball Chest Throws**

3 sets of 4-5 reps

Highly explosive throw against a wall focusing on fast force production.

## **Box Jumps**

3 sets of 3-4 reps

Maximum height, focusing on a rapid stretch-shortening cycle rather than heavy volume.

## **Trap Bar Jumps**

3 sets of 2-3 reps

Light load (around 50-70% of 1 rep max) or banded, moved with maximum velocity.