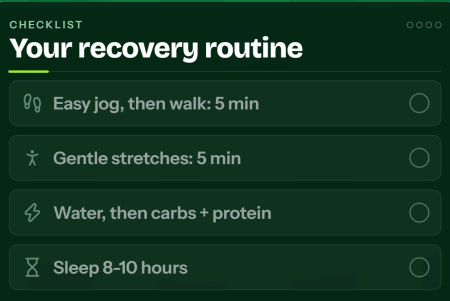




Set up

✓ A water bottle

⚡ A snack for after

Dose

🕒 Our target: 10 minutes

📅 After training and matches

About 10 minutes after every session and match (5 easing down, 5 stretching) and a meal within 2 hours: our target, not an FA rule.

What it trains

A 10-minute routine for the end of every session and match: ease down with an easy jog and a walk, stretch gently, drink water, eat carbohydrate and protein soon after, and sleep 8-10 hours. A habit for looking after your body, not extra training.

How it works

- 1 Straight after training or a match, before you leave the pitch: jog easily, slow enough to talk, then walk. About 5 minutes in all.
- 2 Gentle stretches for about 5 minutes (the NHS after-exercise routine): calf, front of thigh, back of thigh and buttocks. Hold each about 15-20 seconds, both sides: a mild pull, never pain.
- 3 Drink water straight away and keep drinking through the evening. The NHS says 6-8 glasses of fluid a day, and more when you have been sweating.
- 4 Eat a snack with carbohydrate and protein soon after: FIFA's nutrition consensus says start in the first hour. Then a proper meal within about 2 hours (our target). Ideas from FIFA's guide: cereal with milk, yoghurt and fruit, a cheese, egg or chicken sandwich, rice or pasta with meat or fish.
- 5 Sleep 8-10 hours that night (the NHS range for 13-18 year olds). Screens away before bed, and no caffeine drinks in the afternoon or evening.

Coaching points

- 1 **Easy enough to talk**
Jog slowly enough to chat, then walk: about 5 minutes in all. The NHS describes a cool-down as light activity you can talk through, so your heart rate and breathing settle gradually. On its own it does little for next-day soreness or injury (Van Hooren & Peake 2018 review): it starts the routine, the water, food and sleep finish it.
- 2 **Back leg straight, heel down**
The NHS calf stretch: step one foot forward with the knee bent and lean forward slightly, keep the back leg straight and lower the back heel to the ground. Hold about 15-20 seconds, then swap legs. Lean on a wall if you need to.

✗ **Not this:** Letting the back heel lift and the back knee bend: the calf is no longer stretched. Keep the back leg straight and the heel down, and ease off if it pinches or hurts.

➤ HARDER

Make it automatic: pack the bottle and snack the night before, and tick the routine off after every session for a month. Then, with your coach's agreement, lead the team's cool-down (episode 50 shows how to lead).

➤ EASIER

Short on time? Walk for 5 minutes instead of jogging and do the calf stretch only. Keep the water, the food and the sleep every time.

🛡️ Safety

- Cool down on the pitch or flat grass before you leave, never on a road or in a car park.
- Stretches should feel like a gentle pull, never pain. If anything hurts, stop and tell your coach or a parent. With an injury or a medical condition, ask a physio which stretches suit you (NHS). Under 16, knee and heel pain is common while you are growing, and a GP or physio can help.
- Real food and water are enough: FIFA's guide says young players eating a wide range of foods should not need supplements. Growing players need plenty of food, so never skip the recovery meal to change your weight.
- If you often feel tired or low, or cannot sleep, talk to a parent, a coach or someone you trust.
- Warm up first. Stop if anything hurts and tell an adult.

📅 Track 12 weeks (tick each session)

W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Watch Archie show it

footballreach.com/drills/cool-down-and-recover

Then take the free test at footballreach.com