

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Periodization of Readiness: Applying Warm-Up Principles to Workplace Performance and Productivity

Dr. Lawrence W. Judge^{1,2}, Miles Bowley¹, Hailey Farrell¹

¹*School of Kinesiology, College of Health, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306 USA.*

²*Marieb College of Health and Human Services, Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers, FL 33965, USA.*

Received: 24 September 2025 Accepted: 08 October 2025 Published: 27 October 2025

Corresponding Author: Dr. Lawrence W. Judge, Marieb College of Health and Human Services, Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers, FL 33965, USA.

Abstract

Readiness is a critical yet underexplored determinant of workplace performance. In sport, warm-ups are carefully structured to optimize physiological and psychological preparedness, guided by periodization principles such as progression, variation, cycles, and recovery. This narrative review extends these principles beyond athletics, advancing the concept of “periodized readiness” for organizational settings. The warm-up is reframed as a ritual of activation that primes physical, cognitive, and emotional systems for immediate performance. When translated to the workplace, readiness rituals, ranging from brief cognitive drills to mindfulness or movement practices, emerge as strategies to enhance focus, creativity, and resilience. Periodization principles provide an additional framework, enabling readiness to be sustained through micro-cycles of daily activation, meso-cycles of workload variation, and macro-cycles of seasonal recovery. These structured approaches parallel sport science models and offer a pathway to mitigate fatigue, reduce burnout, and optimize long-term productivity. Drawing on evidence from exercise science, organizational psychology, and occupational health, this review proposes a conceptual model of “Workplace Readiness Periodization” that integrates activation and recovery into the daily and seasonal rhythms of professional life. Shifting the emphasis from constant output to strategic cycles of readiness positions organizations to foster sustainable performance, innovation, and employee well-being.

Keywords: Readiness, Warm-up, Periodization, Workplace Performance, Productivity, Organizational Health.

1. Introduction

Readiness has long been recognized as a cornerstone of performance in sport. Athletes are rarely judged solely by their technical proficiency; rather, their ability to prepare physically, psychologically, and tactically before performance often determines outcomes (Kellmann et al., 2018). The warm-up serves as the central vehicle for readiness in athletics, providing structured physiological and mental preparation that enhances performance and reduces injury risk (Fradkin et al., 2010). Importantly, readiness is not static—it fluctuates daily based on recovery, stress,

and environmental conditions and requires purposeful strategies to optimize.

In the workplace, however, readiness is often treated less deliberately. While organizations acknowledge the importance of preparation through onboarding programs, briefings, or professional development, these processes are rarely conceptualized through the same systematic, evidence-based lens as athletic preparation. Research in occupational health suggests that readiness, manifested as alertness, motivation, and cognitive preparedness, is a critical determinant of job performance, employee engagement, and

Citation: Lawrence W. Judge, Miles Bowley, Hailey Farrell. Periodization of Readiness: Applying Warm-Up Principles to Workplace Performance and Productivity. Journal of Sports and Games. 2025; 7(2): 25-34.

©The Author(s) 2025. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

organizational outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Yet, unlike in sport, workplace readiness is frequently assumed rather than cultivated. This oversight highlights an opportunity to translate principles from sport science into professional domains.

Periodization, a foundational training concept in sport, offers a promising framework for rethinking readiness in the workplace. Traditionally, periodization refers to the systematic manipulation of training variables—such as intensity, volume, and recovery—across defined cycles to optimize performance and adaptation (Issurin, 2010). When applied to warm-ups, periodization principles structure progressive activation strategies that build physical and psychological preparedness over time (Behm et al., 2011). Beyond physical performance, sport has long been recognized as a context that teaches transferable life lessons—discipline, resilience, and the value of structured preparation (Weinberg & Gould, 2019). These life skills have been shown to translate into educational and professional domains, supporting adaptability, teamwork, and problem-solving in complex environments. Extending these principles to workplace contexts positions readiness not as an incidental state, but as a skill that can be cultivated. Periodization thereby provides a structured approach to enhancing employee readiness for cognitively demanding tasks, high-stakes decision-making, and sustainable productivity.

The rationale for this translation is twofold. First, both athletes and employees operate under performance pressures that demand sustained readiness, whether on the field or in organizational environments. Second, both domains share risks associated with inadequate preparation, injury and burnout in sport, and errors, disengagement, or turnover in the workplace (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). By transferring warm-up and periodization principles into professional settings, organizations may enhance readiness while promoting resilience, adaptability, and well-being among their work force.

This narrative review explores the concept of readiness as a transferable construct across domains, specifically focusing on parallels between sport and workplace performance. It synthesizes evidence from sport science, organizational psychology, and occupational health to evaluate the applicability of warm-up and periodization frameworks in professional environments. The purpose of this article is to advance an evidence-based rationale for extending readiness principles beyond sport, offering a conceptual model

for workplace application. In doing so, the review positions readiness not merely as a precondition for performance, but as a dynamic process that can be intentionally cultivated to optimize outcomes across human domains.

2. Methods and Materials

This article adopts a narrative review approach to synthesize literature from sport science, organizational psychology, and occupational health. Sources were identified through structured searches of PubMed, SPORTDiscus, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar conducted between January and June 2025. Search terms included combinations of warm-up, periodization, readiness, cognitive readiness, emotional readiness, organizational readiness, workplace performance, occupational health, and employee well-being. Inclusion criteria emphasized peer-reviewed articles, consensus statements, and scholarly books that addressed:

- Warm-up and readiness frameworks in sport or exercise science.
- Periodization as a training or performance model.
- Applications of readiness or recovery concepts in workplace or organizational contexts.

Seminal works predating the 2000s were retained when foundational to theoretical framing (e.g., periodization theory, organizational readiness models). Exclusion criteria eliminated studies not published in English, opinion pieces without supporting evidence, and gray literature.

The purpose of this methodological approach was not exhaustive coverage, as in systematic reviews, but to integrate diverse strands of evidence into a conceptual synthesis. This synthesis supports the development of a novel framework, workplace readiness periodization, bridging sport and organizational performance domains. This evidence base informs the following discussion of readiness as a core construct across sport and workplace performance.

3. Results

3.1 Conceptualizing Readiness

Readiness is increasingly recognized as a multidimensional construct that underpins human performance across diverse domains. In sport, readiness encompasses physical activation, psychological preparedness, and tactical awareness, all of which interact dynamically to influence outcomes (McGowan et al., 2015; Vealey & Chase,

2016). Similarly, in the workplace, readiness involves cognitive alertness, emotional regulation, and organizational alignment, which collectively shape employee engagement, decision-making accuracy, and resilience under pressure (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Weiner, 2009). Despite contextual differences, both sport and workplace performance rely on the systematic cultivation of readiness rather than assuming it as a default state. Framing readiness as a transferable concept provides the foundation for extending evidence-based principles from sport science, particularly warm-up and periodization models, into organizational and occupational contexts. To build this foundation, it is essential to first examine how readiness has been conceptualized and operationalized within sport, where decades of research provide a rich evidence base.

3.2 Readiness in Sport

Physiological readiness has been the most extensively studied dimension of preparation in sport, as the body must be adequately primed for the demands of training and competition. Warm-up activities, including aerobic activation, dynamic stretching, and task-specific drills, increase muscle temperature, enhance joint mobility, and facilitate neuromuscular efficiency (Fradkin et al., 2010). These physiological adjustments not only improve short-term performance but also reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injuries by optimizing tissue compliance and motor control (Behm et al., 2011). Evidence further suggests that individualized warm-up strategies tailored to the athlete's profile and activity demands are superior to generalized protocols, underscoring the importance of personalized approaches to physiological readiness (McGowan, et al., 2015).

Beyond physical activation, psychological readiness plays a central role in sport performance. Athletes who approach competition with confidence, motivation, and attentional focus are more likely to achieve optimal outcomes, whereas those burdened by anxiety or lack of preparedness are at greater risk of underperformance (Hays et al., 2010). Psychological readiness has been conceptualized as a state of mental preparedness encompassing cognitive appraisal, emotional regulation, and motivational alignment (Vealey & Chase, 2016). Strategies such as imagery, self-talk, and mindfulness training have been shown to enhance psychological readiness by cultivating attentional control and reducing pre-competition anxiety (Tod, et al., 2011). These findings highlight the interdependence between mental and physical

preparation, as psychological readiness can amplify or undermine the benefits of physiological activation.

Tactical readiness represents the integration of physical and psychological preparedness into sport-specific decision-making and situational awareness. In dynamic environments such as team sports, readiness is demonstrated through anticipatory skills, strategic positioning, and rapid decision execution under pressure (Martindale & Collins, 2013). Tactical readiness is not merely reactive; it involves proactive recognition of cues, pattern detection, and scenario planning based on training cycles and scouting information. Research in perceptual-cognitive training shows that athletes who engage in structured tactical rehearsals, such as video-based simulations and scenario walkthroughs, develop superior anticipatory skills and faster response times, which translate into competitive advantage (Williams & Ford, 2013). Thus, tactical readiness bridges the physiological and psychological domains by linking bodily preparation and mental focus to the applied demands of sport contexts.

3.3 Readiness in the Workplace

While sport offers a well-established framework for readiness, workplace performance requires similar, though distinct, forms of preparation. Cognitive readiness, defined as the capacity to effectively deploy mental resources for complex tasks, is central to knowledge-based work (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008). It encompasses attentional control, working memory, and decision-making under stress, which are critical for occupations ranging from healthcare and education to business and technology. Studies in organizational psychology demonstrate that employees who engage in pre-task planning and cognitive warm-ups, such as reviewing checklists, conducting mental simulations, or setting micro-goals, exhibit higher accuracy and efficiency in task execution (Salas et al., 2009). These findings mirror sport-based strategies, where pre-performance routines optimize attentional readiness.

Emotional readiness reflects an individual's ability to regulate affective states, manage interpersonal demands, and sustain resilience in challenging conditions. Emotional exhaustion and poor stress regulation undermine readiness, leading to performance decrements and increased burnout risk (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Conversely, employees who cultivate emotional readiness through mindfulness, stress inoculation training, or social support report greater engagement and adaptability (Gross, 2015). Just as athletes rely on emotional regulation to

cope with performance anxiety, employees benefit from strategies that enable composure, empathy, and constructive communication in high-pressure workplace environments.

Finally, organizational readiness extends beyond the individual to encompass collective preparedness within teams and organizations. This dimension reflects the degree to which goals, roles, and communication structures are aligned to support performance. Weiner (2009) describes organizational readiness as a shared psychological state of commitment and collective efficacy that predicts successful implementation of change initiatives. In practice, readiness at the organizational level is evident in pre-meeting briefings, coordinated work cycles, and shared accountability systems that mirror tactical readiness in sport. Evidence from occupational health research suggests

that organizations that invest in cultivating readiness, through structured onboarding, regular feedback, and strategic alignment, experience lower error rates, higher productivity, and stronger employee morale (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that readiness is a multidimensional construct shaped by physiological, psychological, and tactical elements in sport and by cognitive, emotional, and organizational processes in the workplace. While the contexts differ, the underlying principles of preparation, alignment, and adaptability reveal striking parallels. These parallels are summarized in Table 1, which provides a conceptual comparison of readiness across sport and workplace domains and highlights opportunities for cross-disciplinary translation.

Table 1. Dimensions of Readiness in Sport and Workplace Performance

Domain of Readiness	Sport Performance	Workplace Performance
Physiological / Cognitive	Warm-up increases muscle temperature, joint mobility, and neuromuscular efficiency; prevents injury and enhances performance (Fradkin et al., 2010; McGowan et al., 2015).	Cognitive readiness ensures attentional control, working memory, and decision-making accuracy under stress; enhanced through pre-task planning and simulations (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008; Salas et al., 2009).
Psychological / Emotional	Mental preparedness involves confidence, focus, motivation, and emotional regulation; supported by imagery, self-talk, and mindfulness (Hays et al., 2010; Tod et al., 2011).	Emotional readiness involves resilience, stress regulation, and interpersonal preparation; cultivated through mindfulness, social support, and affect regulation strategies (Gross, 2015; Maslach & Leiter, 2016).
Tactical / Organizational	Tactical readiness integrates anticipation, situational awareness, and decision-making; enhanced through video simulations and strategic rehearsal (Williams & Ford, 2013; Martindale & Collins, 2013).	Organizational readiness involves alignment of goals, communication, and collective efficacy; predicts successful implementation and sustained performance (Weiner, 2009; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Note: This table provides a conceptual comparison of readiness domains in sport and workplace contexts. Categories are not mutually exclusive; rather, they highlight overlapping constructs across disciplines to illustrate the transferability of readiness principles.

3.4 Warm-Up and Periodization Principles in Sport

Warm-up practices in sport illustrate how tradition can persist even when it conflicts with evidence. For decades, athletes engaged in prolonged pre-activity static stretching, despite research showing that this approach can actually reduce explosive performance (Judge et al., 2013). The same pattern often occurs in the workplace, where individuals and organizations may prepare for demanding tasks with routines that feel familiar but fail to optimize readiness, such as diving directly into email overload or multitasking without structured activation. Just as static stretching before explosive effort reflects dogmatic traditions or “what we’ve always done,” ineffective workplace

habits similarly warn us of the danger in equating routine with readiness (Judge & Craig, 2014). Research shows that static stretching can significantly impair explosive performance, such as sprinting or jumping, for up to an hour post-static stretching, whereas dynamic warm-ups preserve or improve power (Avedesian et al., 2019). A periodized approach challenges this cycle; replacing outdated traditions with intentional, evidence-based strategies that foster genuine preparedness and sustainable performance.

3.5 Warm-Up as a Framework for Readiness

The warm-up has long been recognized as a critical preparatory practice in sport, designed to optimize physiological, psychological, and neuromuscular

readiness for subsequent performance (Judge et al., 2013). A traditional warm-up is often divided into stages, including general activities that elevate heart rate and muscle temperature, dynamic mobility exercises that enhance range of motion, and sport-specific drills that rehearse movement patterns and tactical scenarios (Behm et al., 2011). Collectively, these elements improve blood flow, increase muscle contractility, and prime the nervous system for rapid force production (McGowan, et al., 2015). Meta-analyses confirm that athletes who engage in structured warm-ups demonstrate superior short-term performance outcomes and reduced risk of injury compared to those who do not (Fradkin, et al., 2010).

Beyond the immediate physiological benefits, the warm-up also serves as a psychological ritual that enhances focus and confidence. Pre-performance routines embedded within warm-ups, such as breathing exercises, visualization, or self-talk, help athletes regulate anxiety and enter a state of optimal arousal (Cotterill, 2010). This integration of physical and psychological preparation demonstrates the dual role of the warm-up: it is not merely about physical activation but also about cultivating the readiness mindset that underpins consistent performance.

3.6 Principles of Periodization

While warm-ups provide acute readiness, periodization offers a long-term framework for structuring training and recovery. Periodization is defined as the systematic planning of training variables, such as intensity, volume, frequency, and recovery, across cycles of time to maximize adaptation and performance (Issurin, 2010). Classically, periodization is organized into macrocycles (long-term annual or quadrennial plans), mesocycles (weeks to months of targeted emphasis), and microcycles (weekly structures that balance stress and recovery) (Bompa & Buzzichelli, 2019). The central principle is progression through variation and overload while managing fatigue, thereby ensuring that athletes peak at key competitions.

Importantly, the principles of periodization can also be applied to readiness itself. Just as training loads are manipulated over time, warm-up content and intensity can be progressively adjusted to match the demands of training cycles. For example, early-season warm-ups may emphasize general mobility and aerobic activation, while competition-phase warm-ups prioritize explosive drills, tactical rehearsals, and psychological focus (Taylor et al., 2015). This progression aligns the preparatory process with broader

performance goals, embedding readiness within the cyclical rhythm of training and competition.

3.7 Integration of Warm-Up and Periodization

Integrating warm-up frameworks with periodization principles provides a comprehensive approach to readiness (Judge et al., 2011). Research on post-activation potentiation (PAP) illustrates how manipulating warm-up intensity and sequencing can acutely enhance performance, such as through short sprints, throws with heavy implements or plyometric exercises that potentiate neuromuscular output (Avedesian et al., 2019; Judge, 2009; Judge et al., 2010; Seitz & Haff, 2016). When systematically embedded across micro-cycles, these potentiation strategies can contribute not only to immediate readiness but also to long-term neuromuscular adaptation. Similarly, tactical elements introduced in warm-ups, such as set plays, defensive rotations, or scenario-based drills, can be periodized across mesocycles to progressively increase complexity and decision-making speed (Williams & Ford, 2013).

Athletes and coaches increasingly recognize that readiness fluctuates daily, influenced by recovery status, stress, sleep, and other contextual variables (Kellmann, et al., 2018). As such, readiness monitoring tools, including subjective wellness questionnaires, heart rate variability, and wearable devices, are often integrated into periodized training plans to guide adjustments to warm-up intensity and content. These approaches demonstrate how readiness can be operationalized not as a static prerequisite but as a dynamic variable that interacts with broader training cycles.

4. Discussion

4.1 Implications for Transferability

Understanding warm-up and periodization as interlinked frameworks underscores their potential relevance beyond sport. Both emphasize preparation, progression, and adaptability, principles equally applicable to contexts such as the workplace. Just as athletes require systematic cycles of activation and recovery to maintain peak performance, employees may benefit from structured approaches that prime cognitive, emotional, and organizational readiness. Before turning to these applications, however, it is essential to synthesize how sport science has demonstrated the efficacy of warm-up and periodization in cultivating readiness. This synthesis provides the evidence base from which broader translational models can be constructed.

4.2 Translating Warm-Up and Periodization to the Workplace

Athletes rarely enter competition without deliberate activation routines, yet in organizational contexts preparation is often overlooked or treated as optional. Employees frequently approach cognitively demanding tasks, such as high-stakes meetings or project launches, without structured strategies to prime focus, energy, and engagement. By adapting warm-up and periodization principles, workplace preparation can shift from habit-driven routines (e.g., checking email reflexively) to intentional readiness practices that enhance performance and resilience. Examples include reviewing meeting agendas and background materials to strengthen cognitive readiness, engaging in short bouts of physical activity to improve circulation and alertness (Trogakos & Hideg, 2009), and using mindfulness or breathing exercises to regulate arousal and sharpen attention (Good et al., 2016). Evidence from cognitive neuroscience further suggests that readiness rituals may counteract the declines in sustained attention that accompany fatigue and time-on-task (Boksem, et al., 2005). Periodizing these strategies across micro-cycles (daily tasks), meso-cycles (weekly project rhythms), and macro-cycles (quarterly goals) ensures that readiness is sustained over time, paralleling the cyclical models long used in sport science (Issurin, 2010).

4.3 Parallels Between Sport and Work

Despite the obvious contextual differences, sport and workplace environments share striking parallels in their performance demands. Athletes must regulate energy, focus, and strategy across training and competition cycles, while employees navigate fluctuating workloads, deadlines, and organizational expectations. Both groups contend with stress, fatigue, and the need for structured recovery to sustain long-term effectiveness (Kellmann et al., 2018). In sport, readiness is deliberately cultivated through warm-ups and carefully periodized training cycles; in organizations, readiness is often assumed, overlooked, or addressed only reactively. Viewing work performance through a readiness lens underscores the potential value of borrowing evidence-based practices from sport science to enhance employee outcomes.

Just as athletes experience peaks and troughs in physical performance, employees experience cognitive highs and lows across the workday and workweek. Research demonstrates that sustained attention and accuracy decline with fatigue and time-on-task, mirroring decrements in athletic performance under

cumulative training stress (Boksem, et al., 2005). Similarly, recovery is as essential for employees as it is for athletes: systematic rest and recovery interventions, such as micro-breaks, detachment, and brief mental resets, are linked with improved workplace engagement and reduced burnout (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015).

Practical parallels emerge most clearly in the domain of pre-meeting or pre-task preparation. Just as athletes never enter competition without structured warm-ups combining physical activation, technical rehearsal, psychological focus, and often vocalization when verbal performance is expected, so too should knowledge workers cultivate multi-dimensional readiness before high-stakes work. In the workplace, individuals can intentionally magnify readiness through strategies that mirror sport and performance arts: reviewing meeting notes or agendas to sharpen cognitive clarity; brainstorming creative ideas beforehand to prime innovation; weaving in brief bouts of physical activity to enhance circulation and alertness; adopting mindfulness or breathing exercises to regulate arousal and attention; and even doing vocal warm-ups (e.g. speaking key points out loud, rehearsing difficult phrasing, projecting voice) to prepare verbal presence and confidence. When these strategies are anchored in a deliberately periodized framework, with variation in intensity and focal dimensions across daily, weekly, and quarterly cycles, they transform preparation from a neglected prelude into a robust, systematic readiness ritual. As sport psychology research shows, preparatory routines that include behavioral, mental, and physiological elements significantly improve emotional regulation, attention control, and performance consistency (Orbach & Blumenstein, 2022). In this way, organizations can emulate the decisive preparation strategies of sport to optimize both immediate performance and long-term sustainability.

To further illustrate the translation of sport science principles into workplace contexts, Table 2 presents a side-by-side comparison of warm-up practices in sport and readiness strategies in organizations. This comparison highlights how core elements of athletic preparation, cognitive activation, physical activation, psychological focus, tactical rehearsal, and recovery, have clear analogues in professional settings. By framing workplace preparation through the lens of periodized warm-up, organizations can move beyond reactive routines to deliberate readiness practices that foster sustainable performance and resilience.

Table 2. Comparison of Warm-Up Practices in Sport and Workplace Readiness Strategies

Domain	Sport Practices	Workplace Readiness Practices
Cognitive Activation	Reviewing playbooks, tactical walkthroughs, video analysis	Reviewing meeting notes, agenda previews, pre-task checklists, idea generation sessions
Physical Activation	Dynamic warm-ups, mobility drills, post-activation potentiation strategies (PAP)	Light movement breaks, short walks, stretching to increase blood flow before cognitively demanding tasks
Psychological Focus	Visualization, self-talk, pre-performance routines to regulate arousal	Mindfulness, breathing exercises, setting daily intentions to enhance focus and reduce anxiety
Tactical/Organizational Preparation	Team huddles, simulation of game scenarios, strategy rehearsal	Pre-meeting huddles, scenario planning, alignment of roles and goals before projects or meetings
Recovery Integration	Cool-down routines, hydration, recovery modalities (e.g., sleep hygiene)	Micro-breaks, detachment from email, reflection periods, structured recovery cycles

Note: This table highlights the parallels between athletic warm-up practices and workplace readiness strategies. Both emphasize deliberate preparation, activation, and recovery as foundations of sustained performance.

4.4 Daily “Cognitive Warm-Ups”

Warm-ups in sport serve to prime physiological and psychological systems for immediate performance. Analogously, employees may benefit from “cognitive warm-ups” that prepare them for mentally demanding tasks. Brief interventions such as mindfulness meditation, structured goal-setting, or pre-task mental simulations have been shown to enhance focus, working memory, and performance accuracy in organizational contexts (Hülshager, et al., 2013; Beal et al., 2005). For example, a healthcare team might engage in a short pre-shift briefing to align goals, anticipate challenges, and mentally rehearse critical procedures; paralleling how athletes review tactical plays during warm-up.

Evidence also suggests that structured routines reduce variability in performance by regulating attentional focus and emotional state (Weinberg & Gould, 2019). In high-stakes occupations such as aviation or surgery, checklists and simulation-based rehearsals function as workplace warm-ups, ensuring that cognitive and motor systems are primed for performance. Music has also emerged as a powerful preparatory tool, with research showing its ability to enhance mood, regulate arousal, and improve attentional control in both sport and occupational contexts (Terry et al., 2020). These practices mirror sport-based pre-performance routines and highlight how readiness can be intentionally cultivated before the onset of complex tasks.

4.5 Periodized Work Cycles

Periodization provides a framework for balancing stress and recovery across longer time horizons. Employees, like athletes, cannot operate at peak intensity continuously without risking errors, disengagement, or burnout. Research in occupational

health demonstrates that alternating cycles of high-intensity cognitive effort with structured recovery opportunities improves productivity and well-being (Trogakos & Hideg, 2009). Just as training programs are organized into microcycles, mesocycles, and macrocycles, work schedules can be periodized into daily, weekly, and quarterly rhythms that balance challenge with recuperation.

At the microcycle level, employees might alternate between deep-focus work sessions and lighter administrative tasks, paralleling the manipulation of intensity and volume in athletic training. At the mesocycle level, project teams could strategically plan intensive sprints followed by recovery periods for consolidation, reflection, and innovation. At the macrocycle level, organizations might design annual rhythms that include onboarding, quarterly goal reviews, and strategic retreats—similar to how athletes progress through preparation, competition, and recovery phases across a season (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). This structured alternation between stress and recovery allows individuals and teams to sustain readiness across extended periods.

4.6 Case Examples

Emerging evidence supports the application of sport-based readiness frameworks in workplace contexts. For instance, mindfulness programs adapted from sport psychology interventions have been shown to improve concentration, emotional regulation, and resilience in corporate employees (Good et al., 2016). Similarly, “pre-shift huddles” in healthcare settings function as tactical warm-ups, enhancing team coordination and reducing error rates in clinical practice (Leonard et al., 2004). In law enforcement and military contexts, scenario-based simulations serve as both training

and cognitive warm-ups, priming officers for high-pressure decision-making and improving response times under stress (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008).

Corporate wellness initiatives increasingly incorporate recovery strategies akin to sport periodization, such as promoting active breaks, flexible scheduling, and resilience training (Kinnunen et al., 2011). For example, organizations that encourage structured rest breaks and psychological detachment from work report higher employee engagement and reduced turnover intentions (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). These interventions illustrate how readiness principles, when thoughtfully adapted, can enhance workplace outcomes ranging from safety and efficiency to creativity and employee well-being.

4.7 Toward a Readiness Framework for Work

Taken together, these examples suggest that readiness can serve as a unifying framework for optimizing human performance across sport and work. Warm-up principles highlight the value of short-term preparatory routines that prime systems for immediate performance, while periodization principles emphasize the importance of balancing stress and recovery over time. Both are grounded in evidence demonstrating their impact on performance, resilience, and well-being. By integrating these principles into workplace practice, organizations can cultivate a culture of readiness that enhances individual performance while promoting sustainable productivity and health.

4.8 Practical Implications and Future Directions

The application of warm-up and periodization principles to the workplace remains largely conceptual, presenting an important opportunity for empirical research. For instance, structured micro-breaks and cognitive activation rituals have been shown to improve attention and reduce fatigue (Troughakos & Hideg, 2009), suggesting that readiness interventions may offer measurable gains in productivity and well-being. Similarly, evidence from occupational health indicates that recovery-oriented strategies such as detachment and relaxation support long-term performance sustainability (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Future studies should investigate how readiness rituals, when periodized across micro-, meso-, and macro-cycles, influence outcomes such as creativity, stress regulation, and job satisfaction. Longitudinal designs could further clarify how daily and seasonal readiness cycles contribute to resilience and prevent burnout in high-demand professions (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

From a practical perspective, leaders and managers can integrate readiness principles into organizational routines by embedding activation rituals into daily workflows. For example, pre-meeting “huddles” or brief mindfulness practices can prime teams for collaboration (Good et al., 2016), while project planning that alternates between high-intensity sprints and recovery phases mirrors the logic of training periodization. At the macro level, organizational strategies such as flexible work arrangements and seasonal downtime are consistent with research on recovery and performance sustainability (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). By institutionalizing readiness as a strategic priority, organizations can foster resilience, protect employee health, and enhance adaptive capacity.

5. Conclusion

This narrative review has reframed readiness as a transferable, interdisciplinary concept that extends beyond the sporting arena into the workplace. Warm-up and periodization principles—long applied to optimize athletic performance—can serve as frameworks for structuring daily activation, workload variation, and recovery in organizational contexts. Evidence from organizational psychology underscores the importance of preparation and recovery in sustaining performance: employees who engage in proactive rituals and strategic rest consistently report higher engagement and lower burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015).

The warm-up, traditionally understood as a primer for athletic performance, thus offers a powerful metaphor and method for modern work. By applying periodization to readiness, organizations can shift the emphasis from constant output to strategic cycles of preparation and recovery, a model that parallels effective athletic training and aligns with contemporary organizational health frameworks. Such an approach supports sustainable high performance, enabling workplaces to foster innovation, adaptability, and resilience while safeguarding employee well-being.

6. References

1. Avedesian, J. M., Judge, L. W., Wang, H., & Dickin, D. C. (2019). Kinetic analysis of unilateral landings in female volleyball athletes. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, 33(6), 1524–1533. <https://doi.org/10.1519/JSC.0000000000002122>
2. Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(3), 273–285. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000056>

3. Beal, D. J., Weiss, H. M., Barros, E., & MacDermid, S. M. (2005). An episodic process model of affective influences on performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(6), 1054–1068. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.6.1054>
4. Bell, B. S., & Kozlowski, S. W. J. (2008). Active learning: Effects of core training design elements on self-regulatory processes, learning, and adaptability. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(2), 296–316. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.2.296>
5. Behm, D. G., Chaouachi, A., Lau, P. W., & Wong, D. P. (2011). Short durations of static stretching when combined with dynamic stretching do not impair repeated sprints and agility. *Journal of Sports Science & Medicine*, 10(2), 408–416. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24149890> (no DOI assigned)
6. Boksem, M. A. S., Meijman, T. F., & Lorist, M. M. (2005). Effects of mental fatigue on attention: An ERP study. *Cognitive Brain Research*, 25(1), 107–116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogbrainres.2005.04.011>
7. Bompa, T. O., & Buzzichelli, C. (2019). *Periodization: Theory and methodology of training* (6th ed.). Human Kinetics. (no DOI)
8. Cotterill, S. T. (2010). Pre-performance routines in sport: Current understanding and future directions. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 3(2), 132–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1750984X.2010.488269>
9. Fradkin, A. J., Zazryn, T. R., & Smoliga, J. M. (2010). Effects of warming-up on physical performance: A systematic review with meta-analysis. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, 24(1), 140–148. <https://doi.org/10.1519/JSC.0b013e3181c643a0>
10. Good, D. J., Lyddy, C. J., Glomb, T. M., Bono, J. E., Brown, K. W., Duffy, M. K., Baer, R. A., Brewer, J. A., & Lazar, S. W. (2016). Contemplating mindfulness at work: An integrative review. *Journal of Management*, 42(1), 114–142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315617003>
11. Gross, J. J. (2015). Emotion regulation: Current status and future prospects. *Psychological Inquiry*, 26(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2014.940781>
12. Hays, K., Thomas, O., Maynard, I., & Bawden, M. (2009). The role of confidence in world-class sport performance. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 27(11), 1185–1199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640410903089798>
13. Hülshager, U. R., Alberts, H. J. E. M., Feinholdt, A., & Lang, J. W. B. (2013). Benefits of mindfulness at work: The role of mindfulness in emotion regulation, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 98(2), 310–325. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031313>
14. Issurin, V. B. (2010). New horizons for the methodology and physiology of training periodization. *Sports Medicine*, 40(3), 189–206. <https://doi.org/10.2165/11319770-000000000-00000>
15. Judge, L. W. (2009). The application of postactivation potentiation to the track and field thrower. *Strength & Conditioning Journal*, 31(3), 34–36. <https://doi.org/10.1519/SSC.0b013e3181a62960>
16. Judge, L. W., Bellar, D. M., Gilreath, E. L., Petersen, J. C., Craig, B. W., Popp, J. K., Hindawi, O. S., & Simon, L. S. (2013). An examination of preactivity and postactivity stretching practices of NCAA Division I, Division II, and Division III track and field throws programs. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, 27(10), 2691–2699. <https://doi.org/10.1519/JSC.0b013e318280c9ac>
17. Judge, L. W., Bellar, D., & Judge, M. (2010). Efficacy of potentiation of performance through overweight implement throws on male and female high-school weight throwers. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, 24(7), 1804–1809. <https://doi.org/10.1519/JSC.0b013e3181e06e27>
18. Judge, L. W., & Craig, B. (2014). The Disconnect Between Research and Current Coaching Practices. *Strength & Conditioning Journal*, 36(1), 46–51. <https://doi.org/10.1519/SSC.00000000000000027>
19. Judge, L. W., Wildeman, J. N., & Bellar, D. M. (2011). Designing an effective preactivity warm-up routine for the 1-repetition maximum back squat. *Strength & Conditioning Journal*, 33(1), 88–90. <https://doi.org/10.1519/SSC.0b013e3181fda535>
20. Kellmann, M., Bertollo, M., Bosquet, L., & Brink, M. S. (2018). Recovery and performance in sport: Consensus statement. *International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance*, 13(2), 240–245. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsp.2017-0759>
21. Kinnunen, U., Feldt, T., Siltaloppi, M., & Sonnentag, S. (2011). Job demands–resources model in the context of recovery: Testing recovery experiences as mediators. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 20(6), 805–832. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2010.524411>
22. Leonard, M., Graham, S., & Bonacum, D. (2004). The human factor: The critical importance of effective teamwork and communication in providing safe care. *Quality and Safety in Health Care*, 13(Suppl 1), i85–i90. https://doi.org/10.1136/qhc.13.suppl_1.i85
23. Martindale, A., & Collins, D. (2013). The development of professional judgment and decision making expertise in applied sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 27(4), 390–398. <https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.27.4.390>

24. Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: Recent research and its implications for psychiatry. *World Psychiatry, 15*(2), 103–111. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311>
25. McGowan, C. J., Pyne, D. B., Thompson, K. G., & Rattray, B. (2015). Warm-up strategies for sport and exercise: Mechanisms and applications. *Sports Medicine, 45*(11), 1523–1546. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-015-0376-x>
26. Orbach, I., & Blumenstein, B. (2022). Preparatory routines for emotional regulation in sport: A conceptual framework and empirical evidence. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 948512. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.948512>
27. Salas, E., Rosen, M. A., Burke, C. S., & Goodwin, G. F. (2008). The wisdom of collectives in organizations: An update of the teamwork competencies. In E. Salas, G. F. Goodwin, & C. S. Burke (Eds.), *Team effectiveness in complex organizations: Cross-disciplinary perspectives and approaches* (pp. 39–79). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203889312-11>
28. Seitz, L. B., & Haff, G. G. (2016). Factors modulating post-activation potentiation of jump, sprint, throw, and upper-body ballistic performances: A systematic review with meta-analysis. *Sports Medicine, 46*(2), 231–240. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-015-0415-7>
29. Sonnentag, S., & Fritz, C. (2015). Recovery from job stress: The stressor–detachment model as an integrative framework. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 36*(S1), S72–S103. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1924>
30. Taylor, K. L., Macpherson, T. W., Spears, I. R., & Weston, M. (2015). The effects of repeated-sprint training on field-based fitness measures: A meta-analysis of controlled and non-controlled trials. *Sports Medicine, 45*(6), 881–891. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-015-0324-9>
31. Terry, P. C., Karageorghis, C. I., Curran, M. L., Martin, O. V., & Parsons-Smith, R. L. (2020). Effects of music in exercise and sport: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin, 146*(2), 91–117. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000216>
32. Tod, D., Hardy, J., & Oliver, E. (2011). Effects of self-talk: A systematic review. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology, 33*(5), 666–687. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsep.33.5.666>
33. Trougakos, J. P., & Hideg, I. (2009). Momentary work recovery: The role of within-day work breaks. In S. Sonnentag, P. L. Perrewé, & D. C. Ganster (Eds.), *Research in occupational stress and well-being: Current perspectives on job-stress recovery* (Vol. 7, pp. 37–84). Emerald Group Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3555\(2009\)0000007005](https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3555(2009)0000007005)
34. Vealey, R. S., & Chase, M. A. (2016). *Best practice for youth sport*. Human Kinetics. (no DOI)
35. Weiner, B. J. (2009). A theory of organizational readiness for change. *Implementation Science, 4*, 67. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-4-67>
36. Weinberg, R. S., & Gould, D. (2019). *Foundations of sport and exercise psychology* (7th ed.). Human Kinetics.
37. Williams, A. M., & Ford, P. R. (2013). Game intelligence: Anticipation and decision making. In T. McGarry, P. O'Donoghue, & J. Sampaio (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of sports performance analysis* (pp. 113–128). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203131862-13>