

ONE STEP AHEAD
●● Fitness. Nutrition. Massage.

Foam Rolling

YOUR COMPLETE BEGINNERS GUIDE



Everything you need to know to become a foam rolling pro.



WELCOME TO MORE FLEXIBLE, HAPPIER MUSCLES!

Thank you so much for downloading this Foam Roller Guide. If your muscles could talk, they'd thank you for it, too.

The foam roller is one of the best recovery tools available today!

Why? Well they're affordable, easy to travel with, and can make a HUGE difference in your body in a short amount of time.

Inside, you'll learn some of the best techniques to get the most out of your foam roller.

If you haven't tried foam rolling before, you're in for a "feels-so-good-when-it's-done" treat!

While you'll likely feel more flexible and "looser" after your very first session ...

You'll notice even BETTER results by foam rolling on a regular basis.

We hope you use the exercises in this guide to feel better not only now, but for years to come.

Let's get started!

FOAM ROLLING 101



WHAT IS FOAM ROLLING?

Also called self-myofascial release (SMR), foam rolling is a form of self-massage.

It helps reduce muscle tightness, soreness, and inflammation – while improving circulation & range of motion.

To foam roll, just roll your muscles (controlling the pressure) on a dense foam cylinder. You'll gently move back and forth over any tight areas or sore spots.

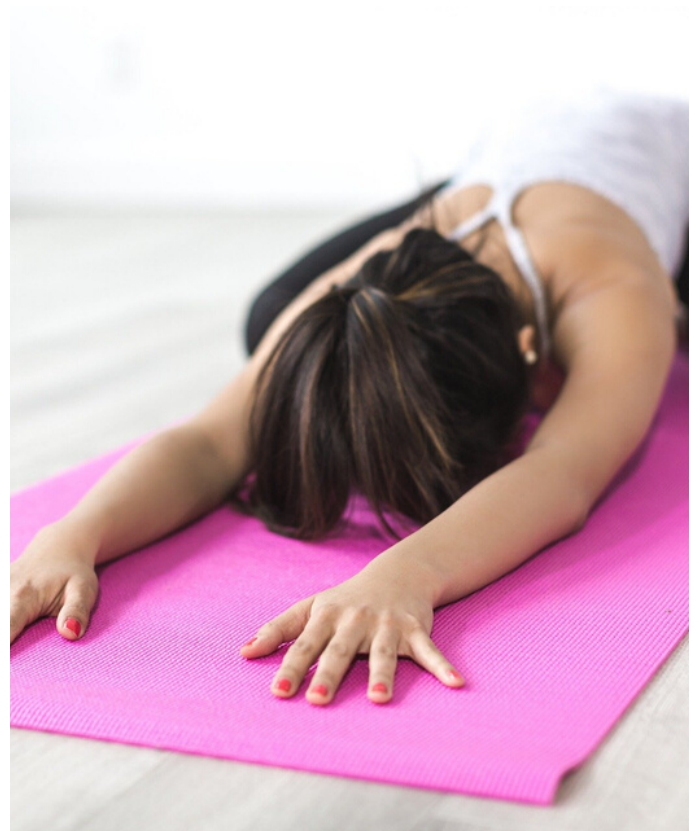
HOW DOES IT WORK?

A network of connective tissues (fascia) surrounds and supports your muscles.

When part of that network becomes blocked – by either too little or too much activity – your fascia can become dehydrated. This can create a painful adhesion or knot (aka “trigger point”).

Those knots can limit movement in the muscle as well as create painful chain reactions in other parts of the body.

Foam rolling can help break up these muscle adhesions, reduce pain, and improve movement!



WHEN TO USE YOUR FOAM ROLLER



1

BEFORE YOUR WORKOUT

Rolling before your workout can prep your muscles and improve performance. Rolling literally warms up your muscles by increasing blood flow.

It also can help by breaking up any knots restricting your movement - which goes a long way toward improving your performance.

AFTER YOUR WORKOUT

Rolling your warm muscles post-workout can ease any adhesions or knots that have formed during exercise.

This can help speed your recovery and reduce any post-workout soreness.

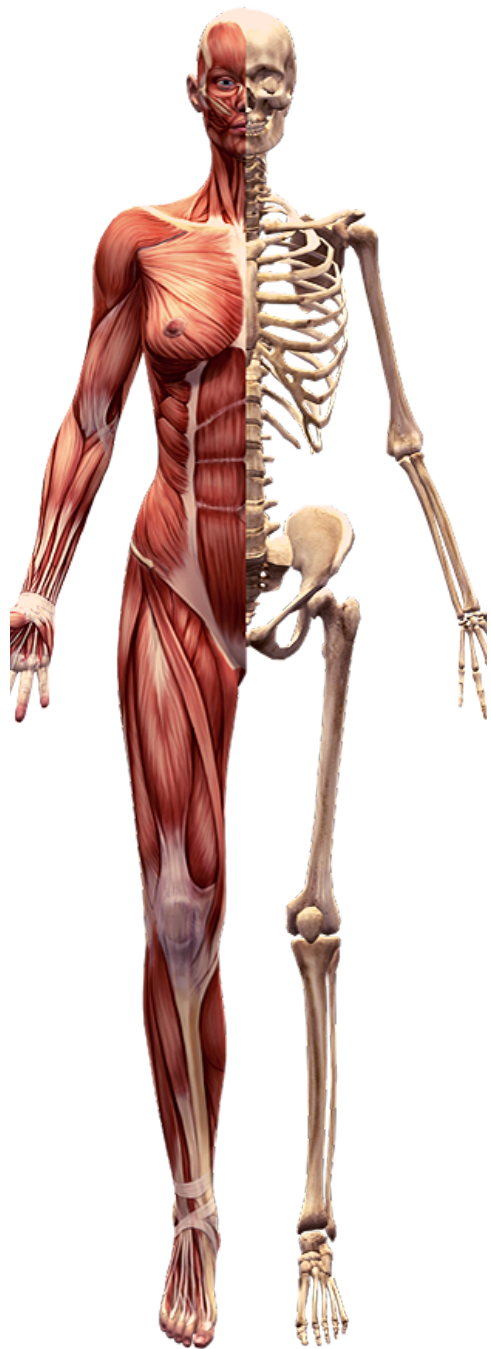
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AS ITS OWN WORKOUT

Setting aside a few minutes to use the foam roller outside of your exercise routine can help you focus on any stubborn spots.

For instance, if you stand or sit all day at work, spending a few minutes with the foam roll after work can help loosen your back and hips.



THE MANY BENEFITS OF FOAM ROLLING

It can help you reduce soreness and recover faster.

In a study published by the Journal of Athletic Training, men who foam rolled their legs after a workout reported a decrease in their post-workout tenderness.

They used a roller 20 mins. after their workout, and again 24 and 48 hours later.

It can help improve your flexibility and range of motion.

When you get rid of knots in your muscles, you improve their elasticity and help them return back to their optimal length. As your muscles begin to move more freely, there's less pressure on your joints, which is a huge win-win!

It can help with pain.

Studies show that SMR on a foam roll can ease back pain, muscle tension, and even help with symptoms related to fibromyalgia.

That being said, it's important to avoid straining your body by holding it in an awkward or uncomfortable position while using a foam roller.

Be sure your core muscles are activated and your muscles are aligned!

Foam rolling can be uncomfortable at times, but it shouldn't hurt. If it does, try using less pressure, and if that doesn't help, take a break from it.

FOAM ROLLING DOS AND DON'TS

Do not roll over your joints. Instead, focus on rolling your larger muscles (like your legs, glutes and upper back).

If you have an injury (like a muscle tear), don't use a foam roller unless a doctor or physical therapist says it's OK.

It can take some experimentation to find the best angle to target your muscles. Take your time and be sure to breathe!

FOAM ROLLING BASICS

HERE ARE SOME GENERAL TIPS TO HELP GET YOU STARTED ...

- Start by using only light pressure, because if your muscles are tight it might feel very uncomfortable at first. As you get used to it and your muscles become more pliable, the discomfort will decrease.
- To reduce pressure, all you have to do is lighten the amount of weight you are placing on the roller. You can do this by supporting more of your bodyweight on your arms or legs.
- Start by rolling for 10-15 seconds, then build up to 30-60 seconds at a time. When you find a tender spot, pause over it for a few moments to help it release. Try to relax and breathe. If necessary, back off the pressure a bit to reduce the discomfort. Listen to your body!
- When you're done, make sure you drink plenty of water. This will help your body "flush out" any waste that was released by your muscles.





CHOOSING YOUR ROLLER...

Smooth foam rollers

are best for people new to foam rolling (plus, they are less expensive).

They can come in different densities – the more firm they are, the more intensely they will massage your muscles. However, that also can lead to a little more discomfort.

If you're new to foam rolling, you might want to choose one that's on the softer/medium side. However, denser foam rolls will last longer since they are more durable.

Textured rollers which have bumps and ridges can get deeper into the muscle. These are great for less-tender muscle groups (like hamstrings or glutes), and also if you've been foam rolling for a while.

Vibrating rollers are just like the others ... except they vibrate! (Pretty great!) They can help the muscles to relax even more and be even more beneficial for stubborn spots.

Massage sticks are also a great option!

The Good: You can get deeper into smaller areas (since the surface is smaller).

The Bad: It's harder to reach certain spots and get to areas like your back and traps.

Massage balls will also target knots in hard-to-reach areas like your shoulders, upper back, and chest.

TIP: Make sure your foam roller is long enough to target your major muscle groups.

FOAM ROLLING EXERCISES

CALVES

Place the foam roller under your mid-calf, and cross the opposite leg over the top to increase pressure if necessary.

Slowly roll over your calf to find a tender spot, and hold there for 10 to 30 seconds.

Repeat on the other leg.



HAMSTRINGS

Place the foam roller horizontally under one hamstring.

Use your hands to lift your hips off the ground and beginning above your knee, slowly roll the foam roller up and down your hamstring, toward your buttocks.

Switch sides and repeat.

PIRIFORMIS

Sit on top of the foam roller, knees bent and feet on floor.

Cross one ankle over your opposite leg and lean back, supporting your weight on your hand. Lean slightly towards the side with the leg up, and roll to find any tender spots. Hold for 10 to 60 seconds, until you feel the tension ease. Repeat on the other side.



QUADRICEPS

Lie on the floor so that you are face-down and the roller is under your thighs. Keep your head neutral and engage your core.

Slowly roll up and down the top of your thigh for 10 to 60 seconds, pausing on any tender spots to help release muscle tension.



TFL (TENSOR FASCIA LATAE)

Lie on your side with the foam roll just in front of your hip. Cross the top leg over the left and place your foot on the floor for support.

Lean forward slightly and slowly roll from your hip down to about 1/4 of the way down your thigh, stopping on tender spots. Hold for 10 to 60 seconds and repeat on the other side.



ADDUCTORS (INNER THIGH)

Lie on the floor so that you are face-down and bend one knee to the side so that the roller is underneath. Slowly roll the upper area of your inner thigh to find any tender spots.

Hold for 10 to 60 seconds on any tight spots, and then repeat on the other side.

UPPER BACK

Lie on the floor with the foam roller beneath your upper back.

Engage your core and lift your hips from the floor. Keep your neck in a neutral position. Slowly roll along your back until you find tender spots.

Hold for 10 to 60 seconds.



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Lie on the floor with one arm stretched out overhead, thumb facing up. Place the foam roller under your arm, and lean back slightly. (Do not roll directly on your armpit.)

Slowly roll back and forth until you feel a tender spot. Hold for 10 to 60 seconds, and then repeat on the other side.



CHEST

Lay face-down with a foam roller along your side. Extend the arm on that side straight out to the side. Press your upper chest into the foam roller and roll back in forth in small movements, holding on any tender spots to help relieve tension. Keep your head in a neutral position. Repeat on the other side.

CHEST OPENER

Lie on your back with the foam roller along your spine, your hips extending off it. Your knees should be bent and feet flat on the floor for support.

With your chin in neutral position, extend your arms out to each side and gently lower your hips slowly toward the floor. Hold at the point of gentle tension. This is also a GREAT spinal stretch!



FOAM ROLLING EXERCISE CHEAT SHEET

START WITH 10
TO 30 SECONDS
PER EXERCISE
AND BUILD UP
TO 1 MINUTE OR
MORE.



TIP: KEEP YOUR
CORE ENGAGED
AND POSTURE
ALIGNED.