

Foam Roller: Flexibility for the Inflexible

Take the pain out of stretching and give yourself a massage at the same time! It's difficult to stretch when your body is tight and your muscles are hurting. even getting into the position for the stretch is a challenge. With tight muscles, movement is inefficient and often painful. Using the 12" long, 4" diameter Foam Roller, instructors will learn three dimensional creative Myofascial Release techniques, stretches, and range of motion mobilization exercises. Learn how to improve posture and alignment, relieve muscle pain and tightness, and increase range of motion. The foam roller assists even the most inflexible, taking stretching from a task to a pleasure.

Benefits

- Improves body positioning for stretches
- Myofascial release techniques enhance alignment and muscle balance.
- Auto massage effect
- Decreases muscle pain
- Good for warm up or sports preparation
- Strengthens key core stabilizers
- Improves balance
- Simple and enjoyable

General Recommendations

- Work on a padded mat or progress to a yoga mat rather than the floor, a little padding decreases the intensity of myofascial release.
- Experiment with different density of rollers, softer rollers makes the moves more tolerable, for certain muscle groups
- Progress to using harder rollers, or even a tennis ball for certain body parts
- Holding extremely sore spots can reduce the pain and relax the muscle
- Work within your comfort zone, myofascial release can be uncomfortable, especially on areas like the IT band, the quadriceps or the glutes.
- Stretch to the point of mild discomfort, maintaining good form, posture and alignment.
- Wear fitted, comfortable clothing, nothing baggy, it gets tangled
- Tie hair up to keep from rolling on it
- Bare feet or sox
- Relax and enjoy it! You're about to give yourself a full body massage.

Technique Specifics

- Roll in and out of your stretches smoothly for a deep massaging effect
- Use different angles for different muscle groups think of fiber orientation and whether you go along the muscle or across it.
 1. Horizontal
 2. Vertical
 3. Diagonal
- Length of rolling action
 1. Long sweeping rolling, best for warm ups and general auto massage
 2. Short concentrated, best for painful spots “knots” for specific muscle relaxation. Can be quick or slow.
- Move slowly, with connected precision for deep relaxation
- For some exercises doing short swift rolls will be effective at relaxing the muscle
- Varying the length of the levers can increase or decrease the amount of intensity of many rolling exercises
- Stabilize with your core muscles to maintain neutral spine throughout many of the exercises.
- Breath deeply and evenly

Foam Roller Workout Sequence

Seated on FR horizontal orientation using 4 small & 2 big rolls

1. Lumbar spine
2. Thoracic spine
3. Rhomboids with elbows together
4. Upper Traps with elbows together
5. Bridge & hold
6. Rear shoulder R/L
7. Bridge & walks
8. Thoracic spine mobilization
9. Mobilize upper Thoracic
10. Mobilize mid thoracic
11. Mobilized lower thoracic

12. Seated glute roll R
13. Hamstring attachment
14. Side to side rocking down length of hamstring
15. Rolling big strokes on hamstring
16. Glute medius R
17. IT band 4 small & 2 big rolls (single elbow bridge)
18. Hip Flexor
19. Vastus Lateralis 4 small & 2 big rolls
20. Quads in prone elbow plank Upper Middle Lower 4 small & 2 big rolls
21. Vastus Lateralis L 4 small & 2 big rolls
22. IT band 4 small & 2 big rolls
23. Glute medius
24. Hip Flexor
25. Repeat 13-25 L

Seated on mat, FR behind in horizontal orientation

26. Side lying
27. Side lying Lat roll R
28. Side lying rear deltoid
29. Side lying Adductor R/L
30. Upper, middle & lower
31. Repeat 26-30 L

Quadruped hands on FR horizontal orientation

32. Hold neutral & Brace
33. Raise R/L hand to side
34. Alternate x 4
35. Raise R/L hand overhead
36. Alternate x 4
37. Tuck toes under and lift knees & hold 30 seconds

Kneeling on Roller Quadruped hands on mat

38. Raise R arm & L leg
39. Raise L arm & R leg
40. Alternate x 4
41. Walk roller under shins
42. Shin rolls
43. Toe stretch with shins resting on roller

Turn FR to vertical orientation

44. Glute roll
45. Piriformis roll
46. Spine roll

Core Stabilization Integration exercises

1. FR horizontal orientation supine isometric stabilization

• Alternating leg lift
• Alternating shoulder flexion
• Unilateral fly
• Bilateral shoulder flexion (arms overhead)

2. FR vertical orientation isometric stabilization

• Alternating foot raise
• Alternating leg raise
• Alternating shoulder flexion
• Bilateral shoulder flexion
• Opposite arm and leg raise

3. FR on lower shins, horizontal orientation, prone rolling plank

• Bilateral knee tuck
• Unilateral knee tuck
• Rotational knee tuck and roll

4. FR vertical orientation prone opposite arm and leg raise

• Upper Body only
• Unilateral shoulder flexion with spinal extension
• Bilateral shoulder flexion with spinal extension

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Sources: The National Academy of Sports Medicine, Lower Body Muscular Anatomy. The National Academy of Sports Medicine, Upper Body Muscular Anatomy. Creager, Caroline Corning P.T., Therapeutic Exercises using Foam Rollers. Boyle, Mike, DVD "Foam Roll Techniques". Hillman, Susan K, Interactive Functional Anatomy DVD, Human Kinetics