

SELF MYOFASCIAL RELEASE WITH A FOAM ROLLER



Myofascial release (SMR) using a foam roller is one of those training methods that actually works. It is based upon the information given to us by golgi tendon organs (GTO) which tells us the amount of tension in any particular muscle group or tendon. As the tension in the muscle/tendon increases, so does the likelihood of becoming injured. As you roll the areas of higher tension you'll effectively loosen the muscle/tendon areas by causing the GTO to relax & dramatically increase the range of motion in the joint, thus decreasing the chances of injuries.

Static or PNF Stretching is great & should be done following a SMR session on the roller. Understand, that stretching a muscle will increase the length of it, whereas foam rolling will essentially improve the tone of the muscle. The combination of these two, make an awesome tag-team of healthy muscles, tendons & joints.

Rolling out - When you're on the foam roller it's really a matter of no pain no gain. It's just like getting a deep tissue massage & it's supposed to hurt in certain areas because those are the trigger points. In fact, if you're not feeling anything then you either need to find a denser foam roller or you're doing it wrong. Note: you won't turn into "Stretch Armstrong" overnight, it requires repetitive use & I recommend that players roll out everyday & before & after training & games. It takes about 5-10 minutes to complete a full body SMR session on the foam roller. Don't foam roll on recently injured areas when there's still inflammation in the area, because it will only make things worse. Wait until the inflammation goes down before you start rolling the muscle/tendon area & use one of the less dense rollers, that won't apply as much pressure as the denser/harder ones.

If you cannot afford a \$20-30 roller, make one out of 2 tennis balls & some athletic tape. Bind them together to form a “peanut” & you have yourself a good SMR tool, or you can use a soft, then medium, tennis ball, then progress to a racketball ball, for added tension. Another simple method to increase the pressure on the foam roller is to simply take a leg off the foam roller, stack one leg on top of the other, take your hands or foot off the ground to maximize the amount of pressure placing on the foam roller. Commercial tools such as the “**stick**” & the “**tiger tail**” are small enough to carry to games in your soccer team bag.

SUGGESTED PROGRAM

- ☆ **IT BAND** = Bottom leg straight + Top leg bent – Foot on ground → Foot off ground.
- ☆ **QUADS** (hip flexors) = Prone on Roller – ensure you hit the upper part of the Quad.
- ☆ **ADDUCTORS** (groin) = Legs apart.
- ☆ **THORACIC EXTENSION** = Lie on roller on Upper Back – Drop & Curl Up.
- ☆ **SCAPULA** = Roller 3-6” on Upper Back.
- ☆ **PECS** = Lie Prone – on Chest
- ☆ **LATS** = One arm extended Out
- ☆ **GLUTES/PIRIFORMIS** = One cheek only on roller.
- ☆ **PIRIFORMIS** = Ankle over other leg – Roll one Cheek.
- ☆ **CALF** = Starts at bottom & roll to top.
- ☆ **HAMSTRING** = Upper leg bent.
- ☆ **SHOULDER** = Use tennis ball under shoulder & rotate arm up & down.
- ☆ **PLANTAR FASCIA** – use Tennis ball on sole of foot.

Perform 10-12 slow controlled reps on the roller. If you find an area that it’s particularly tense/dense, spend a little more time on it until the trigger point subsides. You may need to spend the most time & efforts on the muscle/tendons that are giving you the most problems.

FOAM ROLLER EXERCISES

- ☆ **UPPER BACK ROLL** = Use feet to push/pull over roller. (arms crossed in front over chest).
- ☆ **LUMBAR SPINE ROLL** = Top of hips to upper back.
- ☆ **GLUTE/PIRIFORMIS ROLL** = Cross one leg over the other (ankle to knee) – roll with other foot & hand.
- ☆ **LAT/TERES MAJOR ROLL** – Hip off floor = on side – roll from under armpit (a couple on inches on roller).
- ☆ **GLUTE ROLL** = Roll with 2 feet + hands behind.
- ☆ **HAMSTRING ROLL** = Roll from top of hamstring to knee (weight on hands).
- ☆ **CALF ROLL** = Roll from ankle to under knee – shift feet inwards/outwards to vary muscle.
- ☆ **QUAD ROLL** = Push up position + legs extended – roll from top of hip to knee.
- ☆ **HIP FLEXORS** = Lie forwards – one leg off roller – bend one knee.
- ☆ **ADDUCTOR ROLL** = Roller under & between legs – saw up & down at an angle.
- ☆ **IT BAND ROLL** = Lie on side – roll from hip to knee.
- ☆ **ANTERIOR TIB + PERONEALS** = Push up position = roll ankle to knee – rotate toes in & out
- ☆ **2-POINT BALANCE CORE CRUNCH** – One knee on roller + hand on floor – left leg + right arm extends → alternate leg/arm.
- ☆ **2-FEET BALANCE LUNGE** = Arms across chest – lunge to get rear knee to roller.
- ☆ **SINGLE LEG SQUAT** = One leg goes behind – reach down to touch ground.
- ☆ **HIP EXTENSION** = Lie on roller – feet flat on ground – elevate hips/back from roller – arms out to side → arms across chest → one leg raised up (extended).
- ☆ **BALANCED MB WOODCHOPPER** = Stand on roller – squat down + bring MB to floor