

A beginners guide to foam rolling

The purpose of foam rolling is to self-release myofascia, the network of tissue that connects muscles throughout our body. Myofascia could be likened to 'glad-wrap', as it wraps around all our muscles and organs to support them, as well as reduce friction in our daily activities.

Foam rolling is essentially a deep tissue massage to this myofascia. It helps to relax and stretch muscles, increase blood and oxygen supply to tissues and help improve lymphatic circulation and drainage to excrete waste products. This will enable muscles to operate more smoothly.

When working correctly fascia should be elastic and move freely, however due to a range of reasons such as intense trainings or other lifestyle factors fascia may tighten (trigger points) and cause pain.

By applying pressure with the foam roller to these pressure points and rolling the tissue around the trigger points, you will release the tension on the fascia, leading to improved function of the muscle.

How to use it

Common areas that may benefit from foam rolling are; the upper back, outer thigh and quadriceps.

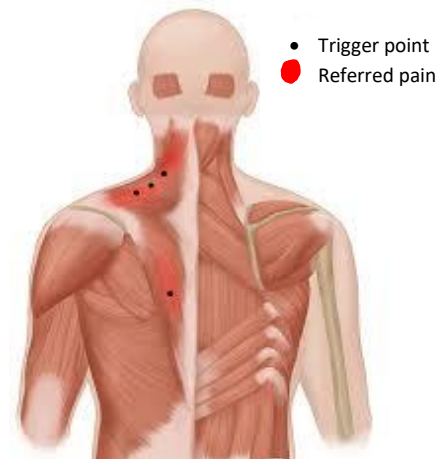


Position yourself on top of the roller; slowly roll across it using the weight of your body to massage the trigger points as you come across them. You can stop and hold pressure on the painful areas until the pressure and pain settle, for up to 60 seconds or slowly roll back and forth across them. Try to relax your bodyweight over the roller for better results.

Benefits of foam rolling

- Prevent injury and aid recovery
- Release scar tissue (trigger points/knots)
- Improve mobility and flexibility
- Saves you money

Foam rolling effectively will help you perform better workouts which will enable you to feel stronger and therefore have a better quality of life.



These benefits happen because;

- The muscle becomes well hydrated due to an increased blood and oxygen supply, therefore reducing friction
- Muscles get stretched and lubricated effectively, and when this occurs there is less risk of injury

Tips

- Avoid foam rolling lower ribs as there is a risk of causing fractures
- Avoid foam rolling your lower back, unless you have a good strong core so you don't arch your back over the roller which can lead to injury of spinal muscles
- When first starting out with foam rolling, choose a softer roller. The harder the roller the more painful it will be. IT WILL BE PAINFUL OVER THE AREAS THAT NEED RELEASING.
- If you find a sensitive area, back off a little and work the area around it before rolling over the painful spot
- Don't roll too fast, rolling slowly allows for the muscle to adapt to the compression and eliminate adhesions
- Don't spend too much time putting pressure on one spot, it could cause nerve damage or bruising. 60-90 seconds is plenty.