

# IMG Physical Therapy

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## Foam Roller Exercises

Foam rollers can be used as part of an exercise program to help decrease muscle tightness and improve muscle flexibility. Muscle and the soft tissue associated with it may become tight and cause pain due to overuse, injury, or inactivity. In foam rolling, you use your body weight to put pressure on specific muscle groups to help decrease this tightness. This technique is called myofascial release.

When you are using the foam roller on your own, there are some things to remember...

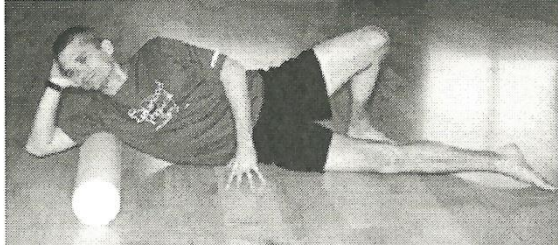
- ◇ Moderate discomfort with foam rolling is safe and appropriate. Adjust the amount of pressure based on your personal tolerance of discomfort. If it is too painful to roll over a certain area, decrease the amount of pressure by unweighting the area.
- ◇ Only roll soft tissue, never roll over bony prominences, areas where you have an open wound, or an area of injury (unless instructed by a medical professional).
- ◇ Always use a slow pace when rolling and roll in line with the muscle.
- ◇ Remember to keep the muscle you are rolling relaxed. Use your other limbs to support your body weight, and allow the limb being rolled to relax.
- ◇ Drink plenty of water after foam rolling to stay hydrated.
- ◇ Consult your Physician or Physical Therapist if any problems arise or if you have any questions regarding foam roller exercises. It is better to make sure that you are doing the exercises correctly than to cause further injury by doing an exercise incorrectly.

These exercises are to be done 1-2 times per day / 5-7 days per week.

For each exercise, relax the muscle being rolled then roll along the length of the muscle. When a trigger point (painful area) is found, hold 30-45 seconds, then continue rolling. Roll for 1-2 minutes total.

Moist heat for 15 minutes before / after exercising.

### Rotator Cuff



Begin with foam roller under armpit. Lean slightly backwards until the pressure of the foam roller is felt at the muscles around the back of your armpit. With small movements, roll up and down.

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.

### Latissimus Dorsi



Begin with foam roller just below armpit. Lean slightly backwards and keep thumb pointed toward ceiling. Slowly roll down the length of your side (toward pelvis) and back up (toward armpit).

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.

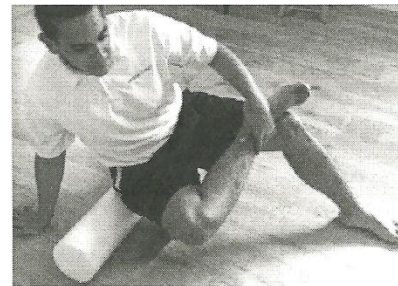
### Thoracic Spine



Begin with foam roller at the level of the shoulders. Bend knees, lift hips off ground, and maintain flat body position. Slowly roll down to end of rib cage (mid-back) and back up.

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.

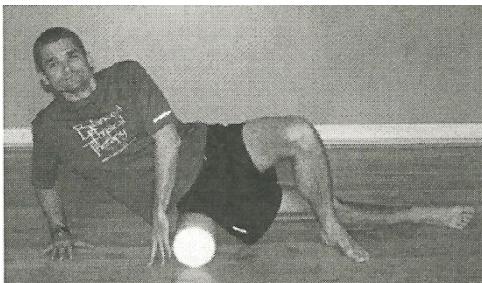
### Piriformis



Begin with one buttock resting on the foam roller. Slowly roll back and forth across the area of the buttock.

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.

### Gluteus Medius



Begin with foam roller just below pelvis. Lean slightly backwards. With small movements, roll down and up.

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.

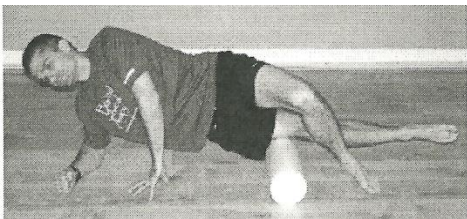
### TFL



Begin with foam roller just above hip joint. With small movements, roll up toward the pelvis and back down. (This is a small muscle, you will not have to roll much.)

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.

### IT Band



Begin with foam roller under side of leg, just below hip joint. Support body weight with arms and opposite leg. Slowly roll down to just above your knee and back up.

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.

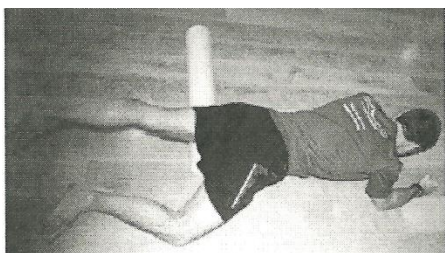
### Hip Adductors



Begin with foam roller under the inside of the leg. Slowly roll from the groin down to just above the knee and back up.

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.

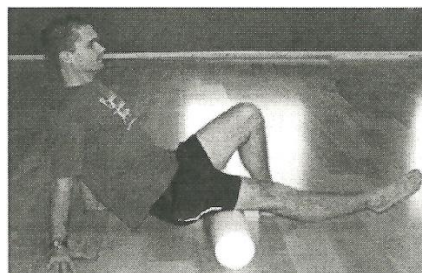
### Quadriceps



Begin with foam roller at top of thigh. Slowly roll down to just above your knee and back up.

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.

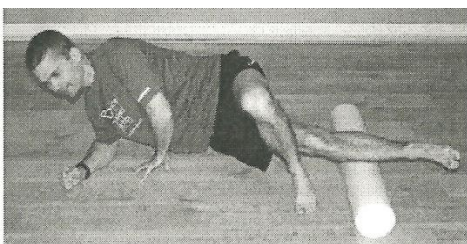
### Hamstrings



Begin with foam roller just above the back of the knee. Support body weight with arms and opposite leg. Do not sit on the floor. Slowly roll up toward the buttocks and back down.

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.

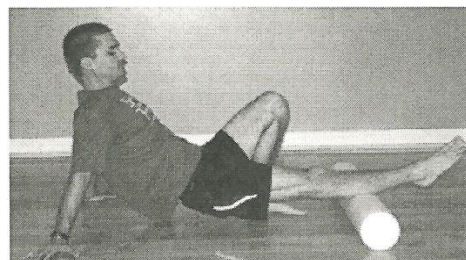
### Peroneals



Begin with foam roller just below the outside of the knee. Slowly roll down toward the ankle and back up.

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.

### Gastroc-Soleus



Begin with foam roller at the back of ankle, just above the heel. Support body weight with arms and opposite leg. Do not sit on the floor. Slowly roll up to the top of your calf and back down.

Perform for 1-2 min. When painful area found, hold 30-45 sec., then continue.