Foam Rolling

The foam roller is “an inexpensive personal massage tool” and has many applications. The first of which is as an aid to improve flexibility. The foam roller helps to loosen muscles that are otherwise difficult to reach. After loosening the muscle, the range of movement will be increased and stretching will be easier.
Also, they help to improve balance because you are rolling on different planes and must counterbalance your weight to get the desired pressure. Additionally, foam rollers help with myofascial release. By rolling in a consistent way, you are able to remove the knots that are between the muscle and fascia. By using a foam roller you are able to prevent injury and improve muscle awareness.
There are a few things to remember when using a foam roller: adjust your body position often, add or remove body weight to increase or decrease intensity, use the hands and feet to stabilize the body, and breathe consistently. Also, tendons, joints, and bony structures should not be rolled on. Keep the roller in the desired place until the muscle loosens; however, do not stay in one place for more than one minute.

How to Foam Roll

Lower Limb

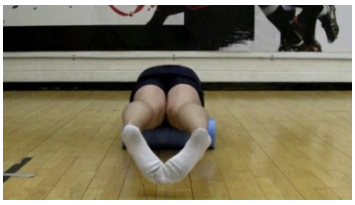
Gastrocnemius/Soleus

• Sitting on the floor, place roller under your calves, with legs fully extended
• Taking bodyweight in the arms, lift your buttocks off the floor
• Roll your calves up and down the roller
• Localise rolling on tender spots

• Use a hockey or tennis ball for one calf at a time
• Turn toes inwards to get the inside of the calf and vice versa for outside

Quadriceps

- Lying prone on the floor, place the foam roller above the knees with legs full extended
- Taking bodyweight on the elbows, lift the hips up off the floor
- Roll quads up and down the roller
- Localise rolling on tender spots



Hamstrings

- Sitting on the floor, place roller under your hamstrings, with legs fully extended
- Taking bodyweight in the arms, lift your buttocks off the floor
- Roll your hamstrings up and down the roller
- Localise rolling on tender spots
- Cross legs to roll one hamstring at a time

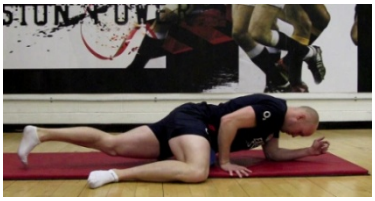
- Alternatively, sit on a bench that has adequate room for leg swing underneath it
- Place a hockey or tennis ball in to your hamstrings on one leg at the point just below your buttock
- Apply downward pressure on the ball with the leg
- Extend the knee repeatedly to move the hamstrings over the ball for a massage effect
- Perform 20 extensions before moving ball to another spot further down the hamstrings
- Localise rolling on tender spots

Glute/Piriformis

- Sit on the foam roller with knees bent and feet flat on the floor
- Cross one leg by placing the ankle of that leg on to the knee of the bent leg
- Lean over so that the Glute of the leg that is crossed has pressure on it from the roller
- Roll over the Glute and rotate inwards to change pressure location
- Localise rolling on tender spots

Hip Flexors (Ilio Psoas) and Tensor Fasciae Latea (TFL)

- Lie on the roller on your side, just below the waistband of your shorts
- Use your top leg as an anchor
- Roll up and over the hips
- Rotate the body inwards so to roll over the hip flexor
- Bend the free leg and use the inside of the knee to help you roll
- Localise rolling on tender spots



Ilio-Tibial Tract (ITB)

- Lie on the roller on your side, just below the waistband of your shorts
- Use your top leg as an anchor
- Roll up and down the outside of the leg, from the hips, down to above the knee
- Localise rolling on tender spots

Upper Limb and Back

Back – Thoracic

• Sit with roller in lower back, and cross arms across chest
• Lift hips up off the floor and bend and extend legs in order to roll from lower to upper back repeatedly
• Extend arms straight out overhead to create more extension in the back
• Localise rolling on tender spots

Lower Back – Quadratus Lumborum (QL)

• Sit with roller in lower back, and cross arms across chest
• Lift hips up off the floor and bend and extend legs in order to roll the lower back
• To focus on QL, rotate the body left and right to focus on the tissue to the left and right of the spine
• Localise rolling on tender spots

Latissimus Dorsi (Lats)

- Place the roller at 45degrees in the arm pit, with palm facing down
- Outstretch arm on the floor above head, and roll on the lats
- Slide the palm along the floor
- Turn palm up to ceiling the change the area that is being rolled
- Then place roller 90degrees to the body and repeat
- Localise rolling on tender spots