How to Use a Foam Roller in 8 Different Ways

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Muscle tightness, knots, soreness… we've all experienced them before. Whether you're a runner, cross trainer, or yoga enthusiast, the muscle pains are all too familiar. But lucky for you, there are ways to massage the pain away using a certain exercise equipment: the foam roller.

If you've never used a foam roller before, you might be asking yourself questions like, "What is foam rolling?", "What does a foam roller do?", or "How do you use a foam roller?" To answer some of the questions you may have, we'll talk about the basics of foam rolling and explain how to use a foam roller properly while targeting certain muscle groups. Let's get into it!

What is Foam Rolling?

Foam rolling is a type of self-massage that helps relieve trigger points, which are focused areas of tight muscle and are also known as muscle knots. While foam rolling is commonly done by people who work out often, you don't need to be an avid exerciser in order to do it. In fact, foam rolling is also good for those who have a sedentary lifestyle, joint issues, poor posture, or bad form when exercising.

If you want to try foam rolling, you'll need a piece of exercise equipment that's called a foam roller. Any regular foam roller will do just fine, but if you want to maximize your foam roller exercises with a true massage feeling, then check out our Vibrating Foam Roller.

What Does Foam Rolling Do?

As we mentioned before, foam rolling is great for massaging muscles to relieve tightness, soreness, and knots, especially after an intense workout session. However, foam rollers can also be used as part of a warmup routine to help stretch out your muscles and increase your range of motion.

Even though you may not be an exercise person, foam rolling can still do wonders for you. For those who sit at a desk all day and suffer from poor posture and joint problems, grab a foam roller! There's no better way to stretch and realign your body than doing some foam roller exercises (which we'll get into shortly).

Benefits of Foam Rolling

Did you know that foam rolling comes with a range of benefits for your body? Below are some perks of using a foam roller in your workout or stretching routine:

- Alleviates muscle pain
- Increases range of motion
- Eases back pain
- Manages fibromyalgia symptoms
- Helps break up scar tissue
- Reduces lactic acid & aids muscle recovery

If you're someone who loves going on long runs, you may be wondering, "What does a foam roller do for runners?" Well, the benefits of foam rolling for runners are essentially the same as the ones listed above. Regardless of the type of exercise you do, these benefits can be enjoyed by anyone.

To find the best foam roller for runners, check out our [Vibrating Foam Roller](#)!

How Do You Use a Foam Roller For Beginners?

Now that you have an idea of what foam rolling is, it's time to learn how to use a foam roller. Below are 8 different ways you can use this exercise equipment and target certain muscle groups to enjoy the benefits.

Myofascial Release With Foam Roller

Glutes   Hamstrings   Inner Thigh   Hip   Outer Thigh

Calves   Thigh   Abs   Upper Arm   Peroneal

Shoulder and Lat   Neck   Upper Back   Lower Back   Back Pain

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1. How to Foam Roll Your Lats (Latissimus Dorsi)

Lie down on one side and extend one arm forward. Place the foam roller under your armpit; make sure the foam roller is perpendicular to your body. Put your other hand on the ground for support and start rolling back and forth from your armpit down to the middle of your torso. To apply pressure on your muscles, lean your body forward or backward. As you do this exercise, make sure your head and chest face outward. Repeat this exercise on the other side.

2. How to Foam Roll Pecs

Lie face-down and flat on the floor with the foam roller under the left side of your chest. Place both hands on the ground beside you and roll slowly back and forth under your left pec. Repeat this exercise on the right side of your chest.

3. How to Foam Roll Quads

Lie face-down on the ground and place the foam roller under your thighs. Prop your upper body up on your elbows and roll back and forth from above your knees to your hip. If you want to roll each quad one at a time, you can move one leg off to the side as you roll the other.

4. How to Foam Roll Your Calves

Sit on the floor with your legs extended out in front of you. Place the foam roller under your left calf and roll slowly back and forth from the area below your knee to your ankle. Use your hands to elevate your hips off the ground as you do this. To apply pressure, rest your right foot on the floor. Repeat this exercise on the right calf.

5. How to Foam Roll Hamstrings

Sit on the ground and place the foam roller under your thighs. Place your hands behind you to elevate your hips off the ground. Roll slowly back and forth from the area below your butt to above your knees. If you want to roll one hamstring at a time, move one leg off to the side for each hamstring.

6. How to Foam Roll Your IT Band

Lie down on your left side with the foam roller underneath you and near your hip. Cross your right leg over the other and rest your right foot on the ground; your right knee should be bent as well. Prop your upper body up using your left forearm and right hand. Begin rolling the area from your outer hip to above your knee. To apply pressure, stack your legs instead of crossing them. Repeat this exercise on your right IT band.

7. How to Foam Roll Adductors

Start by lying face-down and flat on the floor. Extend one leg off to the side and place the foam roller near your groin on the inner side of this leg. Use your elbows to prop yourself up and begin rolling between your groin and the area above your knee. Repeat this exercise on your other leg.

8. How to Foam Roll Your Thoracic Spine

Lie flat on your back with your feet shoulder-width apart. Position the foam roller underneath your shoulder blades or the middle of your back so that it's perpendicular to your body. Now bend your knees, keep your feet flat on the floor, and bring your hands to the back of your head for support; you should look like you're about to do a situp. Then, start rolling the area below your next down to the middle of your spine.

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Common Foam Rolling Questions

Now that you know how to foam roll, let's take a look at some important and common questions about foam rolling.

Can I Foam Roll Every Day?

Absolutely! It's usually recommended that you foam roll for about 5 to 20 minutes on a daily basis. But even if you don't have time to foam roll every day, a few times a week will be enough to make a physical difference.

Is Foam Rolling Better Than Stretching?

There's no doubt that foam rolling and stretching are both important and should be done together whenever possible. However, between the two, foam rolling comes out on top because it engages your muscles as you're stretching them out. In other words, you're doing a bit of exercise already when foam rolling.

While stretching is essential, doing static stretches on cold muscles before a workout can actually tire them out and prevent you from getting a full range of motion.

Should I Warm Up Before Foam Rolling?

Yes, it's a good idea to do a light warmup before using a foam roller; rolling cold muscles can lead to injuries.

Why Does a Foam Roller Hurt so Much?

Foam rolling can be quite painful, especially if you're new to it. This is usually a sign that certain muscles are tight and need to be rolled and stretched out a bit. However, continuous foam rolling will help increase your range of motion and ultimately decrease your sensitivity to muscle pain.

When Should You Not Foam Roll?

If you find that a certain area of your body is too painful to roll, then don't continue. In addition, avoid foam rolling if you have serious injuries such as muscle tears or breaks until you get the green light from your doctor or physical therapist.

Can You Do Damage with a Foam Roller?

Yes, if you aren't careful with how you use a foam roller, you can end up further injuring yourself and damaging your body. In fact, excessively rolling and placing continuous

pressure on one spot may damage muscle tissue, irritate nerves, and cause bruising and inflammation.

How to Use a Foam Roller: Final Thoughts

Congratulations, you now have some general knowledge about foam rolling and know how to use a foam roller correctly! But before you begin rolling, make sure you choose a quality roller that feels comfortable for you; after all, you need to take proper care of your muscles. Feel free to check out our Vibrating Foam Roller and selection of other rollers to get yourself started. Now, it's time to get things rolling!

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