

Foam Roll for Success

By: Dixie Peters ACSM Exercise Physiologist

Does your workout routine include foam rolling? Do you foam roll every few days? Do you know what foam rolling is? If you answered 'NO' to any of these questions, it is to your benefit to start foam rolling or doing so more frequently.

What is foam rolling & why do it?

Foam rolling is a form of muscle fascia release, similar to getting a massage. When done consistently it allows the tendons and muscles to recover faster after exercise. If this isn't done, you may notice you don't recover well, and simple movements may become more difficult to do over time. Foam rolling can be done any time you feel pain and tightness in the musculature areas of your body, as it helps to decrease inflammation and promotes blood flow to the muscle body. When foam rolling, this triggers pressure points in and around sore muscles and overused tendons by using your own body weight as a form of self-massage. Being able to maneuver your body over the foam roller takes practice, but should be easy after a few times.

There are many other implements you can use besides a foam roller. Medicine balls, lacrosse balls, and "the stick" are other effective tools. By using any of these tools, your body will not only feel better but you will be able to move more efficiently. Leaving foam rolling out of your program may lead to injury and is counterintuitive to making progress!! I like to remind my training clients that you can't get stronger if your body is immobile and inflexible.

How frequently should you foam roll?

This would be beneficial every day. If you can't do that, then as much as possible!! Target your problem areas first, then if enough time, do more. I suggest foam rolling before a workout, as part of your warm up.

I stretch normally, isn't that good enough?

Stretching and foam rolling are similar, but they are not the same. I like the analogy of a knot in your shoelace. When you stretch, you are tightening "the knot". When you do muscle fascia release, you are releasing "the knot" altogether. Stretching is good to do, but should be done after the body is warm for best results. Stretching will only relieve tightness and muscle pain temporarily. By using a foam roller, you are warming up the muscles and loosening the knots for extended relief.

Throughout the month of March, the Rec Center will be offering free 30 minute foam rolling classes for members to attend. During this time a fitness staff will demonstrate important areas to foam roll and how to target them. No sign up is needed, just show up.

The classes will be held in March on the following days/times in the fitness classroom.

Wednesdays 7:30-8 AM & 10:30-11 AM

Fridays 4:30-5 PM