

A Guide to the Foam Roller

Presented by:



703 Market St. Suite 1214

San Francisco, CA 94103

For Appointment call: 415/546-1461

Fax. 415/546-3136

www.chirohealthsf.com

Why use the Roller?

We at Chiro-Health have found that the foam roller should be an integral part of every athlete's daily routine. Regular use of the roller can be beneficial for enhancing performance, preventing injuries and expediting injury recovery. It is a great way to warm up cold muscles for deep, specific stretching, as well as a way to warm up muscles before activity. The roller is also an effective way to loosen up muscles, such as the IT Band and shin muscles that may be difficult to access with conventional stretches, as well as focusing on tight knots or bands within a muscle. Furthermore, the roller helps to act as an early indicator of when muscles are beginning to tighten up even though you may not feel any tightness when performing an activity. In order to get the most effective results, use the roller prior to stretching. We have included a list of areas that may benefit from the use of the roller as well as effective positions for accessing these areas.

How to use the roller

Always stay on the muscle tissue and do not roll on tendons, joints, or bony structures. Do not roll over areas that are too painful or that do not roll smoothly. It is more effective to start by placing the roller on the sensitive or knotted spot and gradually increasing the amount of pressure. Remain on the right spot until the muscle releases but no longer than one minute. Always roll before stretching. (Use of the roller is only recommended under the supervision and/or guidance of an athletic trainer or health care professional.)



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Back and Neck

If you have a history of disc problems, consult your chiropractor before using the roller.



Back

Position the roller longitudinally along your spine. Bring your palms together in front of you, arms outstretched. Push your fingers toward the ceiling. Now alternate pushing first the right and then left fingers toward the ceiling, rolling on the same side of the spine.



Mid Back

Start with the roller positioned appropriately as shown in the picture. Slowly move your body over the roller by “walking” with your feet. Now, twist your body to one side to roll on the outer midback muscles. Repeat on the other side.



Low Back

Position the roller as shown, between your ribs and pelvis. Slowly roll backwards just enough to feel the stretch and pressure on the muscles of the low back.

Gluteal Muscles, IT Band and Lateral Quadriceps

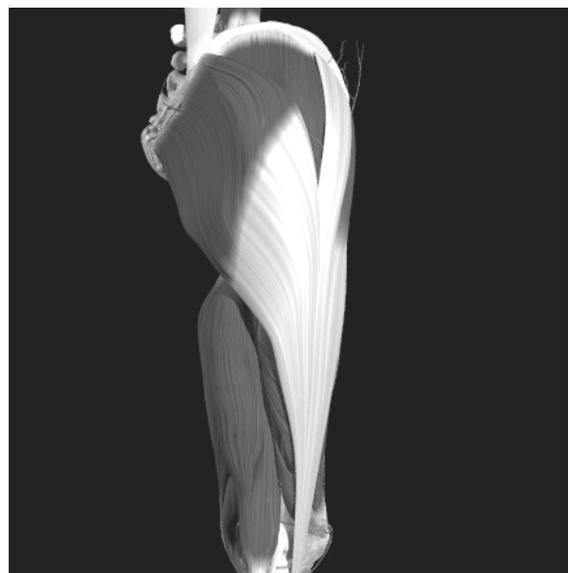
Gluteal Muscles, Piriformis

Place roller as shown. Use your left leg to move your body. Adjust the rotation of your body to find the tight areas.



Tensor Fascia Lata and Iliotibial Band

Position the roller as shown. Pressure is applied more to the side and front of the hip. Use the opposite leg to support your body. Roll down to the knee. DO NOT cross the knee. For increased pressure, keep both feet off the floor.



Calves and Shins

Gastrocnemius and Soleus

Support body weight with hands and calves only. Do not sit on the floor. Roll from the heel to the top of the muscle belly, using your upper body to move over the roller. To increase pressure, cross one leg over the other and press down with the top leg.

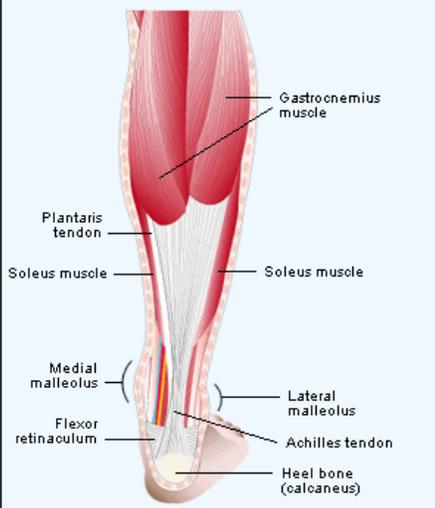


Medial and Lateral Calves

Twist your legs so the inside or outside of the calf is in contact with the roller. Use your hands to roll your body on the roller. Go from the ankle to the knee. **DO NOT** cross either joint.



LEG - POSTERIOR SUPERFICIAL VIEW



Shin Muscles

Position the roller as shown. Support body weight on shins and hands. Roll from below the knee to the ankle. **DO NOT** roll directly on the shin bone. Next, twist your body to concentrate pressure on the outside of the shin touching the roller. Repeat on opposite side.



Hamstrings and Quadriceps

Hamstrings

Start with the roller below the bony protrusion at the top of your legs. Turn slightly to the right or left to focus more on the inside or outside of the hamstrings. Roll down your leg until right above the back of your knee. **DO NOT** roll over the back of your knee. For increased pressure, cross the top leg over the bottom leg.



Hip Flexor

Position the roller as shown. Tilt your pelvis out and roll on the crease between the abdomen and thigh.



Quadriceps

Position roller as shown. Roll from the bottom of the pelvis to above the knee joint. **DO NOT** roll over the knee. Turn your body to the right or left to focus more on the inside or outside of the leg. Increase pressure by pulling heel toward buttock.

