Self Myofascial Release Technique with a Foam Roller

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Using the Foam Roller for Self Myofascial Release Technique (SMFR) is a great way to break up adhesions and scar tissue in the soft tissue throughout the body. This technique can be used in conjunction with flexibility training and chiropractic care to improve global ranges of motion, decrease pain, and improve function.

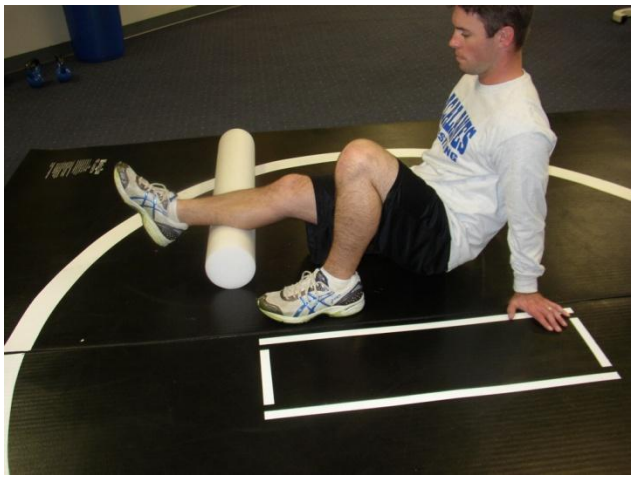
Ideally, this should be performed 3-4 times per week, with a day in between each session. You may find that you are sore following SMFR, which is why it is important to allow your body to rest and heal between sessions. A short warmup (5 minutes on treadmill, elliptical, bike, etc.) will increase the temperature of the soft tissue and allow the muscles, ligaments, tendons, etc. to stretch further than when they are cold.

As you go through this routine, you will find that certain areas and certain muscles may be more tender and sore than others. This is normal! It is these tender spots or trigger points that need the most work. If you are in a hurry, or can't fit 3-4 sessions in every week, make sure to concentrate on these problem areas when you do perform SMFR.

The goal of SMFR is to break up scar tissue and adhesions in the soft tissue. When we injure a body part, inflammation occurs. This basically means that there is increased blood flow to the area of injury to stabilize and heal the injury. The blood that flows to the injury is sticky...with chronic injuries, the blood can cause the muscles to stick together (adhesions). Over time, adhesions can lead to pain, loss of range of motion, and loss of function. This is what we are trying to fix with SMFR.

When you are foam rolling, locate the tender spot and focus on that. When you find a tender spot, sit on that spot until the pain begins to subside (it will eventually), then SLOWLY begin to roll back and forth, working the tender spot out. It's kind of like using a rolling pin on lumpy dough. You find the lumpy spots and work the roller back and forth until the spot is smoothed out.

Following up SMFR with stretches to compliment the work you have just completed is the fastest way to see results. After a few weeks of this type of therapy, corrective exercises should be added to retrain the injured area and restore it to full function.



Gastroc/Soleus Complex SMFR

Place calf on the roller, with your weight on your calf and hands. Lift your butt off the ground. Slowly roll from the back of the Achilles Tendon up to the back of the knee, using your other leg and hands to propel you back and forth.

As you roll back and forth, slightly point your toe in and out to change the area being worked. When you locate tender points, focus on those areas. Repeat on other calf.

This works on the two muscles in the lower leg, the Gastrocnemius and Soleus muscles. These muscles originate on the femur and tibia and fibula, respectively, and insert into the Achilles Tendon. These muscles are responsible for plantarflexion of the ankle (pointing the toes), and stabilization of the ankle.

This exercise is beneficial for people experiencing:

• Plantar Fascitis • Achilles Tendonitits • Calf Tightness/Pain • Knee Pain • Tight Hamstrings • Low Back Pain • Posterior Leg Pain • Sacroiliac Pain • ITB Pain

Hamstrings SMFR

Place hamstring on roller, with your weight on your hamstring and hands. Lift your butt off the ground, and slowly roll from the bottom of your glute down to the back of the knee. Use your other leg and hands to propel you back and forth.

Slightly point the toe in and out as you roll. Focus on the tender areas. Repeat on the other hamstring.

This works the hamstring muscle group, which consists of 3 muscles which originate on the pelvis and insert on the lower leg. The hamstrings are responsible for hip extension and knee flexion, and are commonly tight in individuals with low back pain.

This exercise is beneficial for people experiencing:

•Plantar Fascitis • Achilles Tendonitits • Calf Tightness/Pain • Knee Pain • Tight Hamstrings • Low Back Pain • Posterior Leg Pain • Sacroiliac Pain • Upper Back Pain • ITB Pain

Iliotibial Band (ITB) SMFR

Position the outer thigh area on the roller with your top leg stepped over. Roll along the outer thigh from the hip down to the knee.

Use your hands and foot of the upper leg to propel you back and forth. Turn the toe in and out to make sure you get all portions of this area.

Focus on the tender spots. Repeat on other leg.

The Iliotibial Band or Tract, is a very large tendon/ligament which extends from the top of your outer pelvis down the side of your leg and inserts on your tibia (shin bone), just below your knee. The ITB is responsible for stabilizing your legs during walking or running.

This exercise is beneficial for people who experience:

• Low Back Pain • Knee Pain • Sacroiliac Pain • ITB Pain • Shin Splints • Tight Hamstrings • Ankle Pain

Quadriceps SMFR

Position the front of your thigh on the roller. Roll back and forth from the top of the thigh down to just above the knee. Turn the toe in and out slightly as you roll to get all of the quadriceps area.

Use your hands and other leg to propel you back and forth. Focus on the tender spots. Repeat on other leg.

The Quadriceps muscles consist of 3 muscles which originate on the Femur (thigh bone) and insert into the patellar tendon, acting to extend the knee. The 4th muscle, the Rectus Femoris, originates on the pelvis and inserts into the Patellar tendon. This muscle is responsible for flexing the hip and extending the knee.

This exercise is beneficial for people who experience:

• Low Back Pain • Knee Pain • Sacroiliac Pain • ITB Pain • Hip Pain •

Adductor (Inner Thigh) SMFR

Position the roller so that it is parallel to your spine and place it on the inner thigh. Using your hands and other leg, roll laterally (side to side) from the groin area out to the knee.

Focus on the tender spots. Repeat on the other leg.

The Adductor muscle group originates on the pelvis and attaches on the inner portion of the femur (thigh bone). This group acts to bring the legs in towards the midline, and acts as a major stabilizer while we walk, jog, or run.

This exercise is beneficial for people who experience:

• Tight Hamstrings • Low Back Pain • Posterior Leg Pain • Sacroiliac Pain • Upper Back Pain • ITB Pain • Knee Pain

Piriformis/Glute SMFR

Begin by sitting on the roller. Cross on leg over the other so that your ankle is resting on the other thigh. Lean up onto the glute of the leg that is crossed.

Roll back and forth along the glute looking for tender spots.

Repeat on other leg.

This stretch works on a small muscle called your Piriformis which originates on your pelvis and inserts into the head of the femur. It is responsible for external rotation and extension of the hip. This muscle also sits right on top of your Sciatic Nerve, and if tight, may contribute to Sciatica.

This exercise is beneficial for people who experience:

• Tight Hamstrings • Low Back Pain • Posterior Leg Pain • Sacroiliac Pain • Upper Back Pain • ITB Pain • Knee Pain

Lumbar Spine SMFR

Start by sitting on the ground in front of the roller with the roller up against your lower back. Lean back over the roller and lift your butt off the ground.

Use your legs to propel yourself back and forth from your tailbone up to the lower ribs. Do not rotate off the spine, in the low back there is no skeletal support such as ribs to protect the underlying soft tissue.

There are several muscles that span the area of your lumbar spine, between your tailbone and lowest ribs. These muscles include your paraspinals, multifidi, and quadratus lumborum. These muscles can become chronically tight or spasmed in individuals with low back pain.

This exercise is beneficial for people who experience:

•Hamstring pain or tightness •Sacroiliac Pain • Low Back Pain • Mid Back Pain • Upper Back Pain• Glute Pain• Sciatica