

This guide was created by Elsbeth Vaino, CSCS, to provide guidance about foam rolling with these 9 exercises. There is no set rule about how to roll, but typically you should roll slowly, and when you find an area that feels like a deep massage, spend some extra time there. Conversely, if any of these movements don't do anything for you, skip it, and focus your time on the other areas.

You should not foam roll an injured area unless recommended by your health care provider.

Calves



Sit on the floor with legs straight in front of you and a foam roll under your ankles. Place your hands on the floor next to your hips and push into the floor so that only your hands are in contact with the floor (ankles on the foam roll and hips in the air). From this position, slowly use your hands to push your body forward so that your calves roll over the foam roll from ankles to knees. Adjust your position as needed. If this is not enough pressure, try it with one leg crossed over the other. Note that you may find this too awkward, in which case try using a Stick or Tiger Tail to roll your calves.

Hamstrings



Sit on a foam roll with your hands on the floor behind you for support, and your knees straight out in front of you. Cross your right leg over your left and slowly roll yourself on the foam roll by pushing and pulling the floor with your hands. Adjust your position as needed. Switch and do the other side as well. If this is too much pressure, try it without crossing your legs.

Glutes



Sit on a foam roll with your hands on the floor behind you for support, and your knees bent. Cross your left leg over your right knee in a figure 4 position, shift your weight slightly to the left, and slowly roll yourself on the foam roll by pushing and pulling the floor with your right foot. Adjust your position as needed. Switch and do the other side as well.

ITB



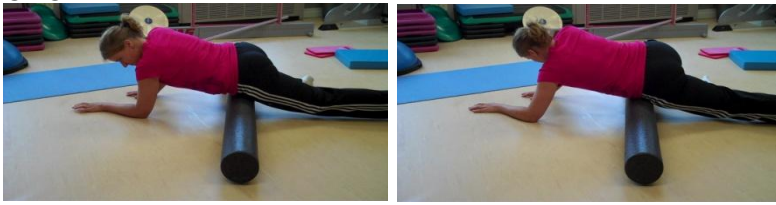
Lie on your side with the foam roll under your hip. From this position, slowly roll your body upward using your hands to pull you along the floor. Continue to the knee, and be sure to spend extra time at the knee and at the hip. Adjust as needed. Switch and do the other side as well.

Quads



Place the foam roll under your hips and lie on it, so that the foam roll is perpendicular to your body. Use your forearms to pull your body upwards so that your quads roll over the foam roll. Continue this movement for the desired duration, adjusting your position to target the inside and outside of your quads as well as the middle. If this feels too easy, cross one foot over the other and shift your weight onto one leg and do one leg at a time.

Hip flexor



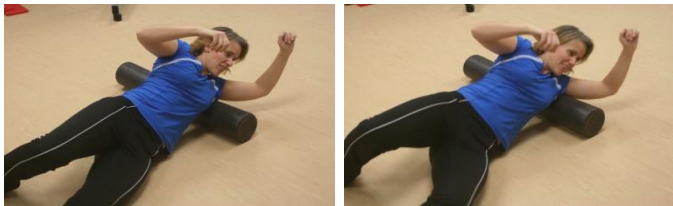
Place the foam roll under your hips and lie on it, so that the foam roll is perpendicular to your body. Shift your weight so that it is on one hip over the roll. Use your opposite leg and foot to help move you slightly - up and down and rotating slightly so that you are giving your hip flexors a self-massage. Continue this movement for the desired duration and shift your weight onto the other hip and repeat.

Adductor



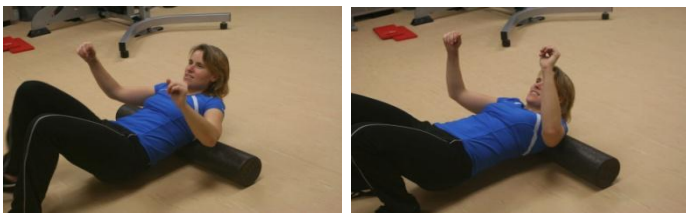
Lie on the floor face down, with your right leg bent to almost 90 degrees at the hip and knee, and with the foam roll under your right knee and parallel to your body. Use your arms and left leg to roll your body toward the foam roll so that it rolls along your adductor (inner thigh). Continue this movement for the desired duration. Switch and do the other side as well.

Lats



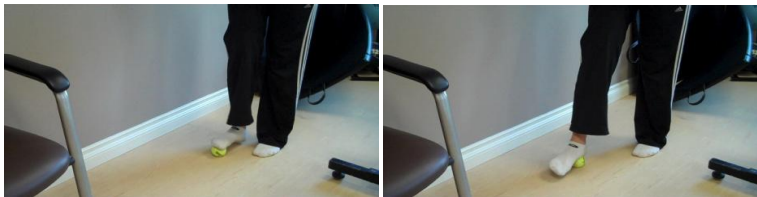
Lie on your side with the foam roll between your ribs and your arm. From this position, slowly roll your body forward and backward against the foam roll, and also roll up and down along the foam roll. Adjust as needed. Switch and do the other side as well.

Thoracic spine



Lying on your back with your knees bent and feet on the floor. Place a foam roll under your back just below your shoulder blade (bra line). Place your hands behind your head to support it and from this position, use your feet to roll your back along the foam roll. You should move from the bottom of the shoulder blades to the top of the shoulder, with a nice slow motion. As much as possible, allow your head to relax toward the floor.

Foot (Tennis ball)



Lying on your back with your knees bent and feet on the floor. Place a foam roll under your back just below your shoulder blade (bra line). Place your hands behind your head to support it and from this position, use your feet to roll your back along the foam roll. You should move from the bottom of the shoulder blades to the top of the shoulder, with a nice slow motion. As much as possible, allow your head to relax toward the floor.

Elsbeth Vaino, CSCS, NASM-CPT, FMS certified, the head strength trainer for CustomStrength.com, takes a science-based approach to training, by assessing the movement ability of the individual along with the movement needs of the sport and using this functional understanding to create the ultimate personalized training program. The result is reduced injury risk and increased performance for you. Check out www.customstrength.com to learn more.

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