

Soft Tissue Work-The secret of Optimum Performance & Health.

For this workshop we will be using a tennis ball. But there are many implements you can use for soft tissue work (self myofascial release), lacrosse balls, foam roller, PVC pipe, etc.

It's best to use around 10-20 seconds per place, but spend more time where you find a 'knot'.

Most of the movements used have been gathered from the works of Eric Cressey, Mike Boyle & several other athletic coaches.

1 Calves



Roll the ball up & down the calf muscle. Twist the leg so you can work both the inside & the outside of the calf, also work the Achilles tendon. For more pressure you can put one foot on top of the other (as shown in the main picture). Focus on any painful or 'knotted' areas. Aim at releasing the knots & easing any tightness or pain before moving on.

2 Hamstrings



This movement is best done with a foam roller, but for demonstration purposes we'll attempt to do them with a tennis ball. Roll the ball up & down the hamstrings working on any knotted, tight or painful areas. By crossing the other leg over the leg being worked you can add more pressure.

3 Glutes



This one will be painful to a few of you! Cross the leg of the glute being worked over the other leg. Now roll the ball around the glute area. Most people will have at least one sensitive area, some people will have many! Roll the ball over as much of the glute area as you can reasonably do. Over time the sensitivity will lessen & the tissue quality will improve.

4 Hip Adductors (Not demonstrated)



This one can only really be done using a foam roller, but has been included for those of you who need it & can try it at home. Roll the roller all along the inside of your leg from the groin to the top of the knee. For some people with tight adductors this can be fairly unpleasant, but again regular work will quickly improve the problem areas.

5 Hip flexors



The hip flexors are at the very top of the leg & these can get very tight. Most people due to sitting a lot during the day have short, tight hip flexors. Rolling with a foam roller is better than a tennis ball if you really need to work those hip flexors. Roll the ball or roller up & around the front joint where the leg joins the body.

6 Quads



Moving down from the hip flexors. Directly below are the quads the big muscles at the front of the leg. You may have some issues in this area, but most peoples quads actually seem to be free from tender areas after a session or 2. Again this is best done with a foam roller, not a tennis ball, but for today we'll make-do. Roll from the bottom of the hip flexors to the top of the knee.

7 IT Band (Iliotibial band)



This is done much more easily with a foam roller. The main issue is this is a painful movement for many people as there can be some binding together of fibres in this area & it can be very, very sensitive. Start of easy & slow increase pressure. Work down from the hip to the top of the knee (just above the knee can be painful for many).

8 Lower back (spinal erectors)



Some people get tender areas & knots in the lower areas of their back. You can roll a tennis ball all the way up each side of the spine (NOT on the spine!). Find any tender areas or knots & really hammer them with this technique. For some people it has really helped their overall back condition. First do the left lower back & move to the upper back (below), then repeat on the right.

9 Upper back



This movement continues from the lower back movement (above). The pressure the ball exerts is modified by the angle of the body. Between the scapulae is often an area of pain. Do NOT roll on or across the spine. You can also move the arm across the body to separate the scapulae & really get in to some sensitive areas (see insert).

10 Infraspinatus



This one is hard to describe. The ball goes near the armpit, where it kind of feels the lats insert into your arm. You move around that area until you find a delicate area. Once you do then you can hold the ball in place & actually move the arm as shown (you can also move the ball by slightly moving your body if that feels like it works better). This can get quite sensitive in that area. Most people have one or two areas of real sensitivity & these should be worked on regularly.

11 Lats



The lats are another muscle that is hard to do without a foam roller, but we'll give it a go & see how we get on. Roll from the arm pit down to the bottom of the rib cage (& beyond if necessary).

12 Pecs



This is best done with a foam roller & may cause problems for some larger chested women. Start with your arm out at about 45 degrees & with the roller in the armpit move along the pec muscle, for some women just doing the top, near the armpit will be the maximum area they can cover, for men you can do the whole pec area (although this is tougher with a tennis ball, so I would recommend a foam roller if possible).

There are many other self myofascial release techniques you can do but these should be enough to give you a great start.

When is the best time to use them? Some people do them before training, others afterwards, you can also do them outside of training at any time. At the moment the best advice is to do them as & when you need to do them. The more knots you find, the more regularly you should try & do an area. Places with no issues you can just quickly pass over.

For more advice or any clarification feel free to email me at pete@veganbodybuilding.org you can also join are messageboard at <http://veganbodybuilding.userboard.net/> (it's not just for 'bodybuilders' but anyone wanting to get in shape for whatever reason is very welcome).

Hopefully this program will help you achieve your goals of performance improvement & health & I'd finally like to thank once again all the trainers & coaches that introduced me to this simple method for improving tissue quality.

IMPORTANT: Contraindications

You should not participate in this demonstration if you have any medical condition. If there is any doubt please consult a medical professional before attempting this. In some cases you should avoid an area - use common sense!

A few examples of contraindications are:

osteoporosis or any bone condition, broken bones, varicose veins, sprains, bruising, rashes, broken skin, torn muscles, swelling, some cancers, some arthritis or any condition where pressure on the skin or underlying tissue may cause an issue. If you have ANY condition, please check it out before your participate in this demonstration.

NOTICE

You participate in this demonstration at your own risk, please insure you are in good health before you proceed, any issues then stop & ask for assistance. Do not push yourself beyond what you are capable of. As with anything related to training & health, start easy & slowly increase intensity. Anyone with sight, hearing, physical or understanding issues can participate providing they have a competent assistance to aid them in & are physically able to move safely (again use common sense).