

# BLOG.SQD

## Self Myo-Fascial Release and the Benefits of Foam Rolling

How many times have you walked into a gym and seen people rolling around on those bumpy tubes and thought...that looks fun but what are they doing, what's the benefit?

If you haven't given foam rolling a try yet, then you could be missing out on one of the best tools for recovery, injury prevention and rehab.

Foam rollers are the most popular tool for self myo-fascial release. They are used by a wide audience ranging from new gym goers, cross-fitters, bodybuilders to elite athletes and injury rehab specialists. This is due to the immediate impact it can have on performance and health.



### So what does Myo-Fascial mean?

Many of the structures in your body are covered by fascia. Fascia is a band or sheet of connective tissue, primarily made up of collagen, beneath the skin. This sheet attaches, stabilises, encloses, and separates muscles and other internal organs. Included in this is blood vessels, organs, nerves and also muscles, which are covered in 'myo-fascia'.

Myo-fascia is relatively flexible and moves in sync with your body's movement patterns.

The myo-fascia can get damaged from excessive strain, exercise or new movements. If damaged, the myofascia can tear. Commonly when repairing itself the myo-fascia won't repair back to its original form, essentially the fibres will bundle up and will need manipulating to re-align. These 'bundles' are more commonly known as 'trigger points'. These trigger points can cause pain, reduce force production, and also reduce range of movement.

A common issue with the repair of the damaged fascia is the lack of blood supply to the area. This delays the healing process and in effect will keep you out of action for longer. Fear not though, there are ways to promote blood flow to these areas to help speed up the healing.

Myo-fascial release involves applying pressure to these trigger points, and it is believed that the direct pressure can help promote blood flow to the area.

If you go for a deep tissue or sports massage, this technique is commonly practiced, however for some people, it may be easier to practicing this technique by themselves, known as 'self-myofascial release'.

Foam rolling is the most common of these self-myofascial release techniques!

After applying these forces the body will slowly start to release the tissue due to the force applied and mobility will increase between the sliding surfaces of the tissue. An increase in red blood cells to the area will bring fresh oxygen and help to flush out the toxins.

### **Which body part to roll first?**

The best way i find to foam roll is to follow the same routine e.g. for legs start with the calves then move up to the quads (remember to target all of the quads and not just one area) then to get deeper into the hamstrings i find using a massage/hockey ball more effective. If you have a particular area of the body that feels extra tight then add extra focus to that muscle.

To foam roll the area correctly, apply moderate pressure using the roller and your bodyweight on the muscle and roll slowly. When you find areas that are painful, pause on the area. You should slowly start to feel the muscle release and after 10-20 seconds the discomfort should ease.

A common area for foam rolling and one i find of huge benefit (especially with my squats) is the iliotibial (IT) band. As your rolling you will feel moderate pain up towards the hip and also down towards the lower leg. This is normal and a similar sensation is felt whilst rolling other body parts. Remember, it should be uncomfortable, but not to the point you can't handle the pain. Adjust the pressure applied by manipulating the amount of your bodyweight you apply by using your free hands/legs.

A take home tip for foam rolling is to make sure you don't roll over joints. Firstly, this can be painful but mainly because it will have no benefit at all.

### **When should I foam roll?**

Ideally self myo-fascial release would be done pre workout along with a dynamic warm up and post workout as part of a cool down routine.

It works great as part of a warm up as foam rolling gets the blood flowing to the muscles that you're about to train and helps reduce any tension in the muscles.

When used as part of a cool down, foam rolling helps to flush out any blood pooled in the the trained muscles and allows fresh oxygen and nutrients to start with muscle recovery, and remember...the quicker you recover...the quicker you can get back to work.

Personally I find it easier to set aside a short amount of time each day regardless of before/after training and just follow a routine whilst watching youtube clips or reading an article...something to distract me from the discomfort.

Remember foam rolling is essential to increase mobility and reduce the risk of injury along with helping recovery between workouts.

It's a vital tool in anyone's health and fitness arsenal. Create a short routine to follow and over time add to that routine.

We have posted a few MOBWODs for you to follow. Check out our YouTube channel for more guidance on foam rolling and how to implement it correctly.

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