

Foam Rolling

What is a foam roller?

A foam roller is a foam cylinder, approximately 6 inches in diameter. They vary in length and density.

Why do you want to foam roll?

Foam rolling is an inexpensive way to provide self massage. It's not as good as a "hands-on" massage from a licensed massage therapist, but proper utilization of a foam roller to break up adhesions in the muscle tissue and/or fascia can help you recover faster and keep your muscles ready to train. In layman's terms, breaking up the adhesions in the soft tissue aids in decreasing trigger points from forming and brings blood flow to the area. Increased blood flow will bring nutrients and assist in repairing damaged muscle that your last workout may have caused.

How do you foam roll?

There are several methods to foam rolling - you can find a trigger point (tight spot) and just apply pressure there, or you can roll along the muscle (like the sweeping strokes of a massage therapist). You can also do a combination of the above. One thing to note — **don't foam roll joints or injured tissue.**

How often should you foam roll?

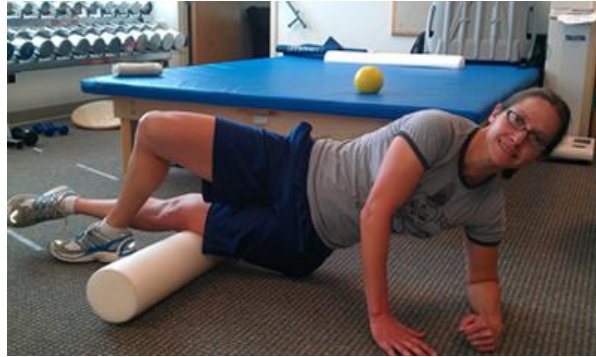
Athletes training 5-6 times a week can probably foam roll daily, and right after a workout if possible. If you can spend 15-20 minutes foam rolling and 10-15 minutes stretching before bed, you'll probably sleep better, feel better and recover faster, which means your next workout will be more effective. Note: foam rolling might be painful on chronic tight spots, but listen to your body as it shouldn't feel like injury pain. If it does, go see a physical therapist!

Here are some major muscle groups triathletes should consider foam rolling:

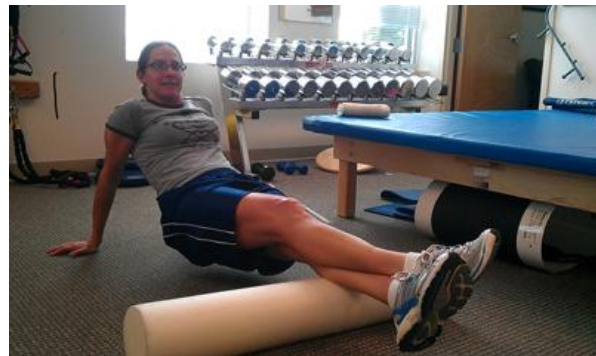


Glutes: One of the largest muscle groups and a primary driver in our sport, having a healthy gluteus maximus, minimums, medius is important.

This position helps isolate the piriformis.



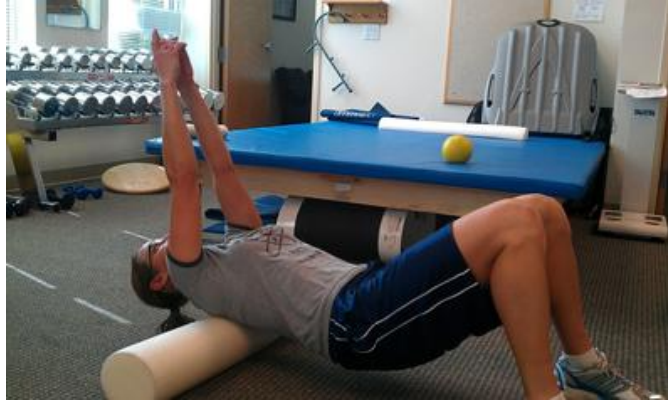
IT Band: While Illiotibial band (a thick section of fascia from the hip to knee) issues usually stem from a muscle imbalance somewhere, keeping the ITB and the muscles around it loose is quite helpful to running and cycling performance.



Calves:



Lats: Those latissimus dorsi are key in swimming power. Keep this muscle flexible! Just be careful not to put too much pressure on your ribs.



Rhomboids: Chances are you sit at a desk all day, and even if not, your bike position pulls your shoulders in. Roll out your back to keep it more mobile (you might even feel your back crack!) and get those muscles between your shoulder blades.



After this it's also not a bad idea to stretch out your pecs by laying with the foam roller along your back, head resting on the end of the roller, and open your arms out to each side like a T. If the foam roller is too intense, you can do this with a pool noodle or a rolled-up towel.



Adductors: Another neglected muscle group that is the inside of your thigh.



Quads: Last but not least, get the quads. We use them a lot in our sport so help them out by rolling them out!