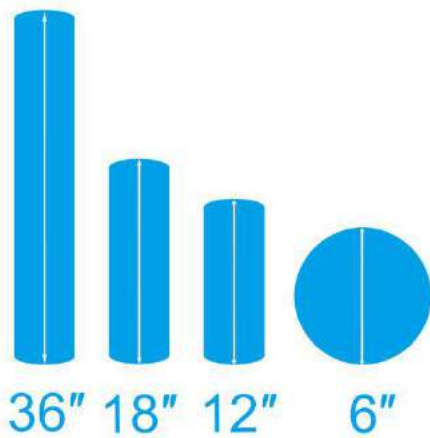


# **AN INTRODUCTORY GUIDE** **TO FOAM ROLLING**



**For The**  
**Reehut**  
**Foam Roller**

## **THE GUIDE TO FOAM ROLLING**

Are you upping the intensity of your workout? Or maybe it's been a long time since you've exercised (high school, anyone?), and you're trying to get back into the swing of things? Either way, one of the most common problems with this is muscle soreness in the days following this bout of exercise.

It's called DOMS: Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness. It's caused by your exercising leaving your muscle fibres and connective tissue with micro-damage. It causes pain and soreness in the affected area, and generally lasts a few days.

The good news? There's a way to ease the pain! For achy muscles, nothing is better than Foam Rolling.

Yes, it really can be that simple! Simply using a Foam Roller can stop the aches and pains from halting your workouts!

### **Definitions and Explanations**

To make it simple, this guide will explain how Foam Rolling's affects on your body, so that you can understand the science behind it.

**Myofascia.** This is a word which means “muscle band” ; “myo” meaning “muscle” and “fascia” meaning “band” . And that is, in essence, what it is. It is basically a web, but a three dimensional one. It is made of elastin and collagen connective tissue fibres, and is surrounded by a viscous fluid. This is so that it can make the fascia strong, but very flexible. The fluid acts as a medium for transportation, as well as lubrication.

**Trigger point.** This is the cause of a large percentage of chronic pain. To be simple, a “trigger point” means a point that is very irritable and sensitive. It is normally located in a taut band of skeletal muscle. One of the most common causes are microscopic tears in the fascia, which connect to your muscles. This can be caused by trauma or repeated stress...such as exercise. Other times, it can be caused by having an unhealthy posture, as well as by repetitive tasks (such as typing).

Because so many of these fascial tears occur because of repetitive activity, they are far more likely to happen again than other injuries. When it is repaired repeatedly

by your body, more and more tissue starts to build up, forming a lump in the muscle fibre. This is a trigger point. There, the fascia becomes locked in a contraction and cannot relax. This is because the muscle has become shorter with every time it was repaired, and a protective barrier forms to protect against any further damage. If the muscle fascia has reached its shortest possible point, a trigger point will form.

Most commonly, this trigger point will cause pain in the local area, or even spread to other places. This can cause a limited range of motion in the muscle. If you palpate the trigger point, it will cause pain over the general area, but can also cause a radiating pain or a muscle twitch. Common conditions related to trigger points include sciatica, sinusitis, lower back pain, and headaches.

### **What is Foam Rolling?**

To put it simply, Foam Rolling is a way to relieve these trigger points. It is a form of massage that you do yourself, that will ease away the pain. It isn't that different from a classic or sports massage.

Because it stimulates your circulatory system, more blood will reach your muscles, making it easier to use them with less pain. It will also relieve any joint pain or stress. Best of all, it will aid in your muscle's recovery.

Foam Rolling is a way to ease away your trigger points, and a way to boost your flexibility.

### **How Does Foam Rolling Help?**

Don't think that this muscle pain is a lifelong sentence, though! Both fascia and trigger points are capable of being released. You'll even find that the related issues tend to go away afterwards!

Myofascial therapy stretches and loosens the fascia, which results in more flexible body structures. This means less joint and muscle pain, a boost to your circulatory system, improved mobility, and greater flexibility.

To put it simply, using a Foam Roller to ease away these problems will make it less painful to exercise, less likely you'll be injured, and give you better exercise results.

That's why Foam Rolling is picking up in popularity. It can even help get rid of cellulite by breaking up the fat that causes that "cottage cheese" look.

## **So When Should A Foam Roller Be Used?**

To reap the most benefits of your Foam Roller, you should use it before and after your workout. Add it into your warm-up exercises, and your cool-downs, as well.

For your warm-ups, you should start rolling before you actually get started. This includes stretching. You'll find that it increases blood flow in the muscles, and reduces the tension that can cause injury. When doing it as a cool-down, it will help reduce the amount of blood to your muscles, so that they can return to pre-workout levels. It will also get rid of any lingering lactic acid, which causes that unpleasant "burn" workouts give you. It will also send in oxygen and nutrients for a speedier recovery.

If you find yourself unable to foam roll more than once, then you should aim to do it before your exercise. You can do it right before a workout, as well: Just five minutes before will give you results!

But what if it's leg day, or arm day? There's a plan for that, too! Just roll over the area you'll be exercising, both before and after.

## **Some Key Points when Foam Rolling:**

- It's best to add this into a routine. Daily usage is best. This is great for maintaining your muscle health, which will mean less chance of injury and less pain.
- Hydration is key, so make sure you've had enough water! This will keep your tissue hydrated, which will make them more flexible, thus more receptive to your Foam Rolling.
- Use twice: Once before you exercise, and once afterwards. This will aid in both prepping your muscles for a workout and for helping them recover. It is better than the standard stretches most people use.
- Keep it slow. If you roll too quickly, it won't be as effective. Instead, keep your movements slow, and concentrate on the area. A good ratio is one inch per second.
- You shouldn't go in just one direction. Instead, alterate! Go from side-to-side, then up-and-down, or whatever other directions you want.

- Don't bear down on the muscle. Instead, use a moderate pressure for a comfortable, effective session. If you ever experience pain instead of discomfort, then you've discovered a muscle trigger point.
- If you've found a trigger point, stop rolling. Focus on top of the point, and carefully rock the area. This will cause the point to release, most likely within thirty seconds. If that doesn't work, continue rolling on and around the area until it does.

The benefits of Foam Rolling will not take long to notice. In fact, you'll see results after the first use! You'll feel more relaxed, flexible, and healthy.

### **What Type Of Foam Roller Is Best For Me?**

As with any other regimen, don't begin Foam Rolling beyond your abilities. Use softer rollers, so that you don't further injure yourself, or cause yourself pain. Starting with the smooth inner roller is great, because it is gentle and can work as an introduction to the Foam Rolling regimen. It will let you build up your tolerance to rolling.

Are you already an old hat to Foam Rolling? Or has the inner roller stopped working for you? Then you should use the outer roller. It is firmer, and designed to really work your muscles. This will make your workouts more effective and will give you the massage therapy you need after a strenuous exercise.

### **Can I Use A Foam Roller To Treat An Injury?**

Have you received a soft tissue injury? Or maybe you just have muscles damaged from overuse? Either way, Foam Rolling is a great way to ease both of these problems. It works best for mild or moderate injuries, or those which are caused by restricted movement.

**A word of warning: If you have an injury that worries you, or that is causing more than moderate pain, you should speak to your physician.**

### **When Can You Perform Foam Rolling Exercises?**

Incorporating a Foam Roller to your life is simple. The recommended movements take about two minutes, and are done two to three times per week. Or, alternatively, you can add it into your individual exercise regime. Because it takes two minutes each for both sides of your body, as well as working out all sections of muscle, it will probably take a beginner approximately half an hour for each session.

## Our Suggested Foam Rolling Exercises

### 1. Lower Body Foam Rolling Exercises

#### 1.1 How to Foam Roll the Calves



Your calves can be affected by a lot of things in your life. This can include sitting positions and the shoes you wear. Holding them in a shortened position, which is all-too-common, will limit how much motion your ankle can take. This makes it harder on the rest of your body.

1. Start by resting your lower leg on top of your foam roller. Point your toes towards the ceiling throughout this process. For more pressure, cross the leg you're not rolling on top of your working leg.

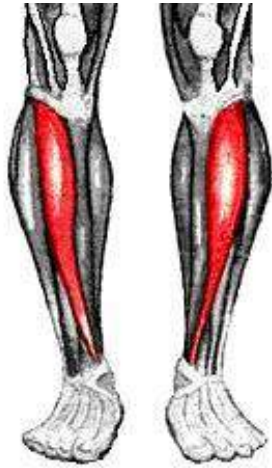
2. Now, lift your hips from the floor. Slowly and deliberately, roll from the bottom of the calf muscle to the top, which is just below your knee. If you feel a knot, you should halt and begin to put pressure on the area. Afterwards, continue on.

TIP: Make sure that you roll the outer and inner areas of the muscle group by turning your leg in the appropriate position. Normally, you will find that the inner area is the most tense.





## 1.2 How to Foam Roll the Tibialis Anterior (Shins)



This is an easy muscle group to overwork. This will result in tight, painful muscles. Foam Rolling will ease this shin pain...and tension.

1. Begin your rolling just below your knee, focusing on the muscles on your shin. For the most effective rolling, keep your abdominal muscles engaged. Your back should be flat, as well. Put as much weight on your roller as you can without it being intolerable.

2. Now, roll, starting with the front of your shins. This is the area from below your knee to your ankles. You can do this by slowly pulling your knees up in the direction of your arms. Your arms should be motionless.



### **1.3 How to Foam Roll the Hamstrings**



1. Begin at the top of your hamstring. This is just beneath your buttock.

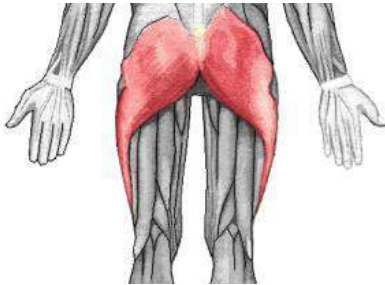
2. Now, roll down in the direction of your knee. If you feel any tightness, stop for a moment until it is gone.

TIPS: If you feel the need for more pressure, put one leg on top of the other. Angle your leg in different directions to ensure you've hit the entire muscle.





## **1.4 How to Foam Roll the Glutes**



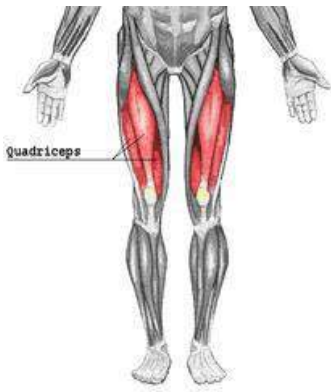
Believe it or not, your glutes can cause a lot of the pain in your body! Tight glutes are a real problem, causing a lot of lower back pain. If you are Foam Rolling, you're able to release these trigger points, stopping the pain and aiding in movement. For those with sciatica or other lower-back pain, this is a must-have.

1. Start in a sitting position, with one leg positioned over the other. You'll be sitting on top of the roller. Make sure they are at the top of the glutes, just below your lower back. For stability, you should lean on your working leg slightly.
2. Now start to roll, in a downward movement. It should only be a few inches. Try not to fall off of your roller!.

TIP: To work every part of your glutes, keep your body weight centred and lean your hips in accordance with the area you're working.



## 1.5 How to Foam Roll the Quadriceps



A common reason for knee pain? Quadriceps that are far too tight. This will also cause bad posture, as well!

1. Begin by lying face down, with the roller positioned around your hips. You can do one or two legs at a time; that's up to you.

2. Roll slowly down towards your knees.

TIP: Quadriceps are a huge muscle group. Because of that, you'll need to turn to hit all of the different angles. This is done by turning your feet. When working angles, focus on one leg instead of both, then switch.



## 1.6 How to Foam Roll the IT Band



You caught us: This isn't actually a muscle. Still, the IT band causes a lot of the common aches and pains people experience. This is especially true of runners. “Runner's Knee” is caused by a too-tight Iliotibial Band (IT Band). It is made up of a thick band of fascia that runs from the side of your leg, knee to pelvis. This can be painful at first, so start carefully and gently.

To foam roll this area:

1. Start by lying on your side. The roller should be placed right below your hip.
2. Move the roller to above the knee. For more stability, your forward foot should be kept planted on the ground, flat.





## 1.7 How to Foam Roll the Adductor Muscles

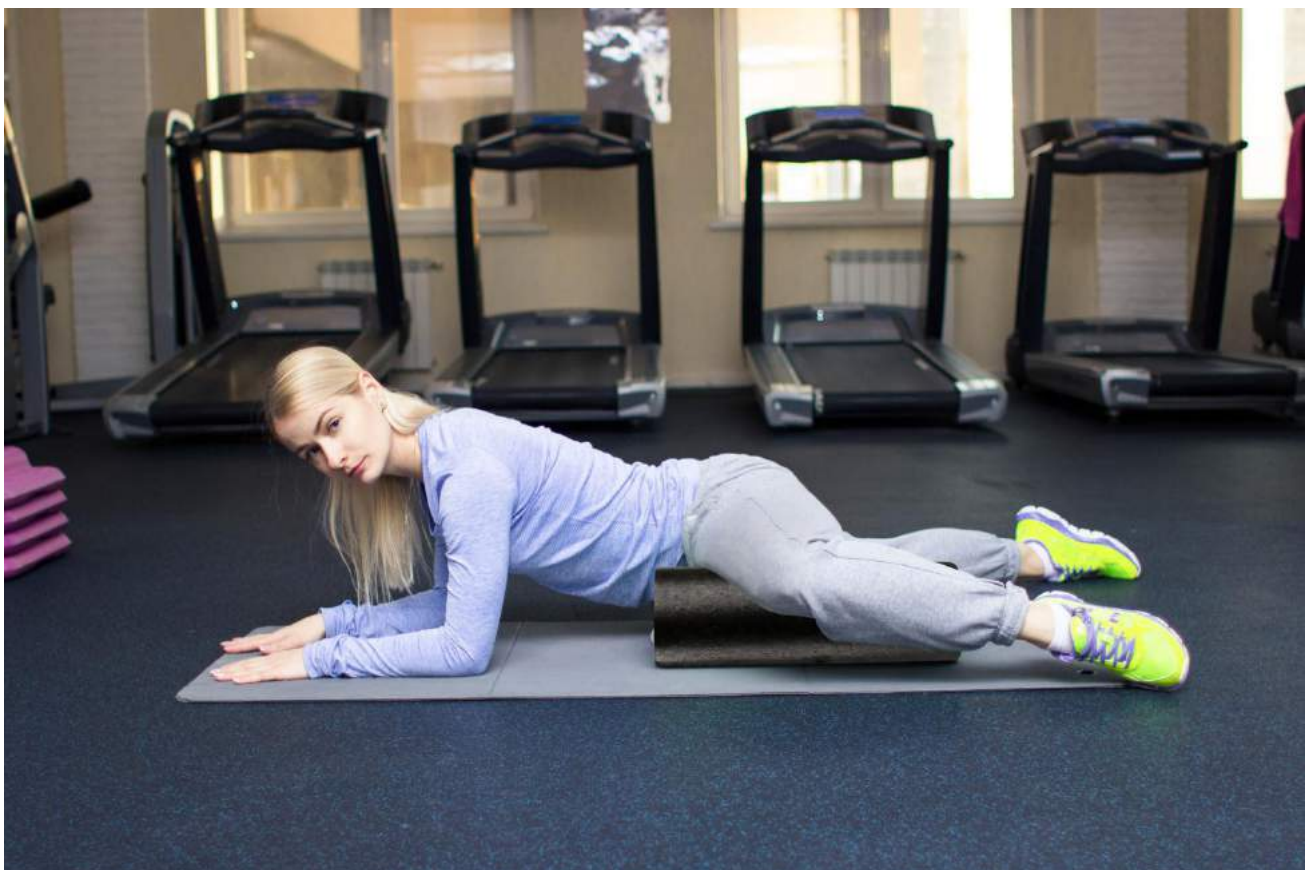


Adductor muscles, though not always known by name, are the muscles that run along your inner thigh. These are the muscles that cause the feeling of tight hips. And tight hips are an athlete's worst enemy! It limits lower body movement, making certain exercises (squats, lunges) more difficult. The position to start this isn't comfortable, and a bit awkward. But, don't worry: You'll become used to it before you know it!

1. Start with your roller positioned beneath your upper thigh, on the inside. The best way to do this is to start on your stomach, your knee bent up and positioned out towards the side. The roller will be close to your groin.

2. Now, roll towards the knee. Don't tense your inner thigh!

TIP: Your upper body shouldn't turn during this exercise. Keep your torso parallel to the floor or mat.



## 1.8 How to Foam Roll the Piriformis



This is the muscle group most affected by desk jobs. Sitting down all day will cause your Piriformis muscle to be very tight and uncomfortable. You can roll away this tightness!

To begin Foam Rolling the Piriformis:-

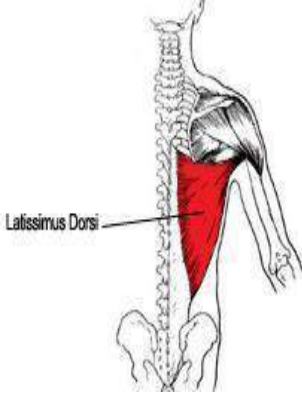
1. You'll be starting by sitting on the foam roller, then shift so that all of your weight is on one side of your buttock. Locate your piriformis: It should be near your hip joint. If you start hurting in that area, you've probably found it. Now, place the other foot over the opposite knee.

2. Now, begin to roll back and forth. Keep yourself alert for trigger points. Hold still when you find them. Then, move on to the next side.



## 2. Upper Body Foam Rolling Exercises

### 2.1 How to Foam Roll the Lats



To foam roll the lat muscles:

1. Start by resting on your side, the arm on the bottom extended out, but not rigid; keep it relaxed. Place the roller just above the bottom your ribs, midway up your torso.
2. Roll upwards. You should stop around your underarms.

TIPS: Shoulder blade tightness is a common problem. So, it is likely that you'll come across a sore or tight spot during this. When that happens, keep breathing and continue working for about a minute. You'll need to adjust your angles to roll other parts of this muscle group, similar to the legs.





## 2.2 How to Foam Roll the Back Muscles



To begin Foam Rolling the back muscles:

1. Start with your roller positioned beneath your mid-back. To provide your head with support, you can use your clasped hands to cradle the back of your head. Alternatively, you can cross your arms over your chest, like a push up. Choose whichever feels right for you. Then, lift your hips up until they are no longer on the ground.

2. Now, you'll want to roll your body downwards. This will put the roller in direct contact with your upper shoulders. Make sure your hips never touch the floor.

TIP: You should definitely NOT use the roller on your lower back or neck. That's best left to a professional masseuse. Rolling here will actually cause more tension and pain.



## **How to Make Your Foam Roller Workout Even More Beneficial.**

Are you one of the few that has a gym with access to a power plate? Great! You can use this by adding the power plate to your foam rolling regimen. Even more benefits!

Because the power plate offers three planes (moving in all directions, from forward and back, side to side, and even up and down), it will force your muscles to compensate for this. This will exercise your muscles, leaving them lean, healthy, strong, and flexible.

## **Avoid Critical Foam Rolling Mistakes**

To help you foam roll successfully, remember to avoid:

**1. Foam Rolling directly onto an injured area.** Though it doesn't seem logical, rolling an injured area isn't a good choice. The reason is that the pain's source isn't usually where the pain is actually located.

**What to do instead.** Instead of directly rolling the painful area, try to roll the areas around it, focusing on any connecting muscles. Then, roll in towards the painful area again. This stops any inflammation, while also working the actual injury source.

**2. Foam Rolling too quickly.** This basically renders your rolling a moot point. It won't do any of the things you want, such as relieving tense muscles. It won't do you any good; instead, go slowly for maximum benefits.

**What to do instead.** You'll want to move slowly. Preferrably, at a ratio of one inch per second. Work sensitive areas even more slowly, and go over it repeatedly. Think about what you're doing, why you're doing it, and how it works.

**3. Staying on one spot too long.** It might not seem to make sense; we've been harping on the benefits of repeatedly going over spots. We promise you, there's a reason behind it, and an explanation! Though working one spot for up to ten minutes is normal for some athletes, you don't want to do it for too long. That can cause problems, ranging from bruising and inflammation to nerve and tissue damage. Be cautious!

**What to do instead.** Gentleness will get you far. Don't begin using your full body weight; use half. You'll adjust pressure with your body. Once you have the hang of it, you can use all of your weight. Remember: You can always have another session later if you have sore spots. Don't overdo it!

**4. Foam Rolling in bad posture.** Like most exercises and other fitness regimens, posture is key in Foam Rolling. It's hard work, and is often done in strange positions. But, if you find yourself falling out of the posture needed for each exercise, you should regroup and then continue. If you don't, it can make the problems you face even worse...or even form new ones.

**How to prevent bad posture.** Keep yourself mindful of your alignment, and don't let your mind wander from it during your session. If you've had a long, gruelling workout, and are beyond exhausted? You can always do your Foam Rolling later, so that you can be sure to maintain posture. To check your posture, use a mirror, or even record it on your phone. Then, adjust.

**And finally - Enjoy using your Reehut Foam Roller, and enjoy the increased benefits that it is sure to bring to you!**

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