

FOAM ROLL RELEASE CLASS May 6, 2015

With Amelia Perez

How many of you have a muscle that feels tight and you stretch it but it doesn't feel better?

-If this happens to you, odds are your fascia is restricting your motion and causing your muscles to stay tight.

Explanation of fascia

- Thin layer of connective tissue that is not stretchy. It lies over your muscles and organs and protects them. It also holds everything together inside of us!

- Sometimes fascia will fold over itself and stick to itself like saran wrap. This is usually caused by poor posture or mechanical imbalances in your body. When your fascia adheres to itself it can cause the following

- Decreased joint range of motion (you can't move as well)
- Increased pain and inflammation
- Digestive problems
- Indigestion
- Difficulty maintaining a good posture
- Fatigue
- Malalignment of your joints, which causes wear and tear and increased chances of arthritis
- Increased risk of injury

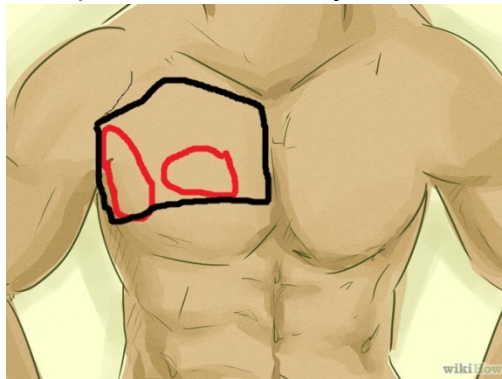
Fascial release program for Calf Muscles:

1. Check the tightness in your calf muscle at the wall or a door frame by placing the ball of your foot up on the wall with your heel on the ground. Keep your leg straight. You should feel a stretch in the back of your calf. If not, gently shift your hips forward toward the wall until you feel a stretch.
 - a. Pay attention to where you feel the stretch in your calf.
 - i. Is it really intense? Gentle?
 - ii. Is it just in one concentrated spot?
 - iii. Is it spread out all the way from your knee joint down to your Achilles tendon?
 - b. Test the other calf muscle
2. Keep in mind how the stretch felt on each calf muscle and where the stretch was located.
 - a. Typically where you feel a strong/intense concentrated stretch is where the fascia is tight. This is where you want to concentrate on your release.
3. Follow the instructions on the foam roller release handout for gastroc (calf) muscle release for each leg.
 - a. Perform release form 30-60 seconds each leg

4. Retest your calf tightness by performing the stretch at the wall again. If you feel the stretch is even across the muscle and not intense, hold the stretch for 30 seconds each leg.

Fascial release program for Posture:

1. Check the balance of your body at the wall with a Posture assessment.
 - a. Back is to the wall
 - b. Feet 6 inches off the wall
 - c. Bottom touching the wall
 - d. Mid back (at bra strap level) against the wall
 - e. Pull shoulders back to the wall **without letting mid back come off the wall.**
 - f. Pull head back to the wall **keeping your chin parallel to the ground.**
 - i. **If you cannot get your head to touch the wall with your chin remaining parallel DON'T FORCE IT. It is more important to keep your chin parallel to the floor and just pull your head back as far toward the wall as you can without pain/straining.**
2. Does this position feel natural? Is it painful? Are your legs tightening up? Can you keep your mid back AND your shoulders against the wall? Do you feel like you are going to fall forward off of the wall? Do you feel a stretch across your chest? Do you feel a stretch in your neck?
 - a. **These are the questions you need to ask yourself in the Posture assessment position. If the answer is yes to any of the questions, follow up with making a mental note of that and where and what intensity!**
3. After your posture assessment, you need to release your pectoral (chest muscles) You can either use your fist, a tennis ball, or a golf ball (this is more intense, don't hurt yourself).
 - a. Apply tolerable but firm pressure through your fist/tennis ball/golf ball and begin to roll in circles over pectoral muscle. You need to release the entire black area in the below diagram on each pec. The circled red areas are the areas you need to concentrate your release on. **These will probably be the most tender areas of the release, so start gentle and increase pressure as these areas start to release. It will take a couple weeks of doing this consistently (at least 4-5 times/week.) for the fascia and pectoral muscle to release effectively.**



- i.
4. After you release your pecs, you are going to do the Vertical foam roll stretch from the handout. This is the one where you are lying on the foam roll with it supporting you

from Head to Tailbone. **Knees should be bent, both feet flat on the floor, and arms straight out to the side so your body is in a cross position.**

- a. If you feel “pinchy” in your shoulders, move your arms closer toward your hips.
 - b. As you feel your arms start to relax into the floor, move your arms a little closer up toward your head, working towards a goal of making a “Y” shape with your body. **Do not force this goal!!!! It may take months before you are loose enough to get into this position without shoulder pinch/pain/strain.**
 - c. You should stay in this stretch position for 3-5 minutes!!!! The longer you hold this stretch, the more long term benefit and relief you get from the stretch. But, you will only get the benefit if you keep this stretch comfortable and gentle.
5. After this stretch roll to the side off of the foam roller.
 6. Follow this stretch up with rolling your quadriceps or quads, which are the big strong muscles on the front of your thighs. (Fun fact: they are called quadriceps because there are 4 muscles that make up the quads) Use the instructions on your handout.
 7. Go back to the wall and do your Posture assessment again.
 - a. Is it easier to hold yourself up in that position?
 - b. Is there decrease stress or pain?
 - c. Do you feel lighter?
 - d. Do you feel stronger?

IF YOU DO THIS POSTURE ASSESSMENT AND RELEASE ROUTINE FOR 2 WEEKS AT LEAST 4-5 TIMES A WEEK, I GUARANTEE YOU WILL FEEL A DIFFERENCE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING: YOUR DAILY POSTURE, ENERGY LEVEL, JOINT PRESSURE, MUSCLE TIGHTNESS, INFLAMMATION, PAIN LEVEL.

This Posture routine, once you have done it a few times and have it memorized, should take no more than 10 minutes. (Just so happens we have two 10 minute breaks every day. If you devoted one of those breaks to this daily, I would recommend the morning break so that you set yourself up for less physical and mental stress for the rest of the day!)

How long is long enough to hold a stretch???

- The correct answer is at least 30 seconds, and the older you are you should shoot for more toward 60 seconds for a stretch to be effective.
- If you hold a stretch for 30-60 seconds and you don't start to feel a release then it's not the muscle that's tight, it's the fascia and you need to release it.

There are several other muscles you can release with the foam roller. (See handout)

You can use the same assess with a stretch, release the muscle, re-assess method for any muscle in your body!

Other releasing tools for smaller muscles

- tennis ball for chest
- golf ball for bottom of feet
- highlighter for base of the skull
- edge of desk for forearms

Correct order of balancing body; release, strengthen, stretch.

I recommend doing your assessment, releases and foam rolling, and re-assessment before your exercise. This will ensure that you are strengthening your body while you are in a better posture.

When you strengthen your body while you are in a better alignment, it helps keep you in that better alignment.

Follow your exercise with stretching. This is so important. Stretching after you work out is more effective because your muscles are warm and more pliable, therefore, more willing to elongate.

You can also do core strengthening exercises on the foam roller. It's a great way to incorporate both strengthening and balance into one exercise.