



Foam Rollers

A great addition to any Handballer's training and recovery routine.

Foam Rolling is a method of self-myofascial release, or in simple terms, self-massage, with the technique getting extremely popular for people of all fitness levels. The main benefit is the release of muscle tightness/trigger points to aid in the recovery of muscles, and assist in returning them to normal function.

Normal function means your muscles are elastic, healthy, and ready to perform at a moment's notice. Releasing trigger points helps to re-establish proper movement patterns and pain free movement, and ultimately, to enhance performance. Utilizing stretching alone is not always enough to release muscles tightness. Foam rolling can assist in breaking up muscle knots, resuming normal blood flow and function.

Self-myofascial release provides the user the ability to control the healing and recovery process by applying pressure in precise locations, because only you can feel exactly what is happening. After a Handball match, particularly in tournament weekends when multiple matches are played daily, your muscles can feel overused/stretched. If our muscles are not taken care of properly we can experience loss of flexibility and painful movement. The compression from foam rolling allows normal blood flow to return and the restoration of healthy tissue.

The pursuing pages provide an array of foam rolling techniques (which can be also completed using tennis/hurling balls) applicable for Handballers that has the potential to increase your performance levels.

Tips

Keep note of these useful, and important guidance notes when attempting any self-myofascial exercise.



- Foam Roller massage is best performed after warming-up, and prior to stretching
- Roll slowly – you should not be moving at more than one inch per second
- Pressure to the muscle group you are working should be moderate
- This pressure should produce a slight amount of discomfort. While foam rolling can make you feel really wonderful after, the fact is it isn't always the most pleasant experience
- If discomfort becomes painful, you have found a muscle knot/trigger point
- When a knot is found, do not continue to roll – instead, pause for 5-30 seconds and rock the area that is knotted back and forth slightly. The knot should release within that timeframe, but if it doesn't, work around and back to the area again until it does
- Always stretch the area following foam rolling.
- Tennis/Hurling/Lacrosse & Medicine Balls can all be used as alternatives for various self-myofascial exercises

Feet

Start with a tennis ball on the curve of your foot. Roll the ball back and forth across your foot, pulsing on any tight/sore/knotted areas. Spend roughly one minute on each foot.



Calf Muscles

Using a foam roller, position yourself as shown in picture below. Use hands to raise your body off the floor, adding increased downward force on the calf area. For one minute with each leg, roll your leg slowly back and forth down the foam roller. Focus on any tight/knotted areas, pulsing on this affected area. Tilting your foot to either side, therefore allowing the foam roller to hit either side of your calf, can modify the area of the calf worked on.



Hamstrings

Sit on the foam roller, placing your hands behind you for balance and support. Proceed to roll your hips towards the ground. Roll from slightly above the knee to the bottom of the Glutes.



Quads

The Quads are sensitive, and you may want to start back rolling both at the same time, before progressing on to one at a time. Place your forearms on the floor as illustrated for balance, rolling slowly back and forth on the roller.



Iliotibal Band (IT Band)

Put the roller under your hip and keep one leg on the floor as a support. Start at your hip and work the roller down to the knee by moving alongside it. Ease yourself gently into this, as the Iliotibal Band is a very sensitive area and can feel uncomfortable to begin with. This exercise can actually loosen tension around the knee so is an important area for you to concentrate on.



Glutes

Sit on the roller, with one knee folded as shown. Twist your body slightly to find pressure on the glute you are working, rolling the hip towards the ground. Keep a slight bend in the knee on the side you are targeting. This will help you get deeper into the muscle. If you find an area that the roller won't get into, use a tennis ball.



Groin

Place your forearms flat on the floor to provide support for the upper body. Position your right thigh so that it is perpendicular to your body, resting the inside thigh on the roller. Roll the inside of the leg, from the adductors right out to just above the knee. Never roll the knee itself.



Back

Sit on the floor with the foam roller on your lower back, resting your hands behind you for balance, or across your chest. Tighten your abs and slowly bend your knees to move the roller up your back, just below your shoulder blades.



Rotator Cuff

This exercise is designed to improve rotator cuff flexibility (muscles of the shoulder blade), which is an often-common injury among handballers. Place the foam roller under your shoulder blade as illustrated. Using your legs, slowly move your body forwards and backwards allowing the roller to massage the shoulder blade region and back of the shoulder.



Pecs & Deltoids

Lie face down with the foam roller positioned diagonally to one side of the chest, and the same arm extended out overhead like half of a Y. Plant your other hand and feet to lift the body and hips off the ground. Use the planted hand and arm to guide your body along the roller from the lower portion of the, across the front of the armpit and deltoid. Can also be done using a medicine ball.

