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Facts vs. Fiction on Foam Rolling

Lake Hiawatha, NJ, March 2015— Foam rollers have rapidly become a popular tool for athletes over the last 5 years. Most commonly thought to be an instrument for self-myofascial release, there are many misconceptions about the best uses and purposes of this tool.



Many readers might be surprised to learn that your foam roller is not actually an effective tool for reducing the presence of scar tissue. Scar tissue forms when muscles rebuild with inelastic material to protect the muscle from further injury. Reducing scar tissue requires a very specific force to be applied in a specific direction while the muscle lengthens under tension parallel to its fiber direction. Scar tissue treatment is best done by a professional.

Ok – so if foam rollers are not reducing scar tissue – What are they doing? The primary function of foam rolling is actually to move waste products out of the muscles and through the body so they can be processed.

When you exercise, you tear down muscle causing local inflammation. This inflammation is found in the form of excess fluid in the blood carrying healing cells to an area of injury. This inflammation does not usually find itself inside

your muscle cells, but rather in between them. It is this excess fluid which takes up space that causes you to feel tight and stiff after a work out.

Your body pumps approximately 20 liters of blood around per day. Your capillaries, arteries, and veins however, are only responsible for approximately 17 of those liters. The other three liters are carried along by your lymphatic system. Your lymphatic system is a series of tubular vessels that transport the additional three liters of blood, water and cells until they reach their final destination at the subclavian vein near your neck.

While your arteries are aided by the pumping of your heart, your veins and lymph vessels don't have that luxury. In order to move liquid through your lymphatic system and your veins, your body requires pressure and force, in most cases in an upward direction. Your muscles are used to doing this work all day long as you move, but because that direction is against gravity it takes a lot of pressure and force. This is where your foam roller can come in handy!

However, in order to assist the lymph system in carrying the fluid that accumulates in between your muscles when you work out, there are some basic rules that you should follow...

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LINCOLN TUNNEL CHALLENGE



5K FUN RUN/WALK

Don't forget to **REGISTER** to join us in the **2015 Lincoln Tunnel 5k Walk/Run Challenge** on April 19th. Use the coupon code: **RUNLTC** to save \$5 on each entry. For those of you considering the event, but have questions about the race or how to prepare/train —especially if it is your first 5k— Please call our office, stop by or email: dr.scarano@santiagochiropractic.com.

We look forward to seeing you all there!



For more health tips and ways to eat well, move well & think well:
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Directions to Register:

- Go to www.LTC5k.org
- Click on "LTC5K Registration"
- Read the waiver & Click on "I agree"
- Click on "Join a Team"
- Select "Santiago Chiropractic"
- Click "Continue"
- Follow the Directions to complete registration!

\$5 OFF
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Foam Rolling Continued...

1. **Roll in a singular direction:** This direction is towards your neck. By rolling towards your neck you are assisting the muscles in pushing blood and fluid against gravity. Your muscles don't need the help, but they are certainly happy to take it. To simplify this concept, always start with the roller as far away from the center of your body as possible and roll towards the center. Once that blood and fluid gets to the subclavian veins, the rest is easy for your body as the path to the heart is downhill.
2. **Roll slowly:** Use your foam roller to slowly roll up towards the mid-line of the body as described above, take the weight off and then begin again. There are no advantages to rolling more quickly, but you also don't want to place sustained pressure on any one body part as you may actually hit a nerve or damage the tissue leading to bruising.
3. **Pin muscles between foam roller and a bone (See Figure 1):** Foam rollers are meant to be used this way. If you don't feel you can do this, your results may be limited –ie. hamstring.
4. **Beware of pain:** For those of you who enjoy rolling the outside of your thigh (IT Band) because it "hurts so good," beware that this pain you are feeling may be caused by pressure on a superficial nerve located in that region called the lateral femoral cutaneous nerve which should not be abused.
5. **Do not foam roll your lower back:** If you are feeling you need relief from your lower back pain try yoga's child's pose or foam rolling the muscles that connect to your pelvis and relate to the back — the gluteal region and the rectus femoris (the quadriceps muscle that attaches to the pelvis) for example. Most importantly, you should understand the origin of your back pain before beginning any self-treatment.



Figure 1. The correct way to roll the vastus lateralis muscle of the quadriceps group.

Biomechanics with Dr. Andrew



Dr. Andrew Blonski,
Exercise Physiologist

Optojump (www.optojump.com) is an analysis & measurement system designed to measure an individual's performance & physical condition. It is the only objective, dynamic device that quickly and easily assesses body mechanics while the athlete is in motion.

Testing Capabilities include:

- **Gait and Running Analyses** (General postural & form assessments, pre & post endurance run)
- **Stability** (Single leg balance assessments, lateral movement agility)
- **Strength** (Maximum vertical jump assessment, recognition of areas of weakness)
- **Endurance** (Baseline testing, effects of fatigue on form)

We offer individual or group appointments, so feel free to bring a friend or teammate. Appointments will be ~30 minutes long/person & will evaluate speed, power & control of your lower body. From the data obtained we will be able to determine lost efficiency, flawed form and wasted energy. With questions about fees or scheduling an appointment, inquire with our front desk.



Hang in there...Spring is around the corner!