

Lower Extremity Mobilizations using a Foam Roll

Foam roller use can be incorporated as part of a health optimization program, recovery program, treatment modality or during a rest day. For best results, it should be performed regularly, several times a week if not daily. The foam roller can mobilize the fascial system to improve performance or recovery, decrease pain, and improve mobility and joint range of motion (ROM). It has a positive effect in reducing muscle soreness and spasms. Foam rolling promotes more blood flow to the area, which allows the body to eliminate waste more efficiently while providing much needed nutrients to aid in recovery. Improving recovery may allow for more intense or frequent training sessions or prepare you for multiple events with little rest. It's an amazingly simple and useful tool.

- I typically recommend 1-3 minutes of body weight rolling (if it is tolerated) per extremity and for the thoracic, low back, and buttock area.
- A good rule of thumb is to roll out an area that is tender and sore or recently worked until it no longer feels tight and sore.
- The recommended 1-3 minutes per area may vary based on your size. Increased time will be needed the more developed your muscles are.
- Foam rolling is generally not advised for those taking blood thinning medications or with blood clotting disorders.

This is not an exhaustive list of methods to utilize the foam roll. Get creative! You can roll out nearly every area of your body. (Just remember to be cautious over the boney areas of the body.) Find your sore spots and roll them out to improve performance or recovery, decrease pain, and improve mobility and joint range of motion (ROM).

IT Band Mobilization

Position your affected side down onto the foam roller. Slowly roll your body back and forth along the entire length of the IT band and lateral thigh. Do not roll it over the greater trochanter of the hip (the boney part near your pelvis). Spend extra time on the most painful areas. Perform on both legs, but spend more time on the affected side.

Perform 1-2 minutes on each leg once per day.



Glutes and Buttock Mobilization

Position your affected side down onto the foam roller. Slowly roll your body back and forth along the buttock region. Continue on down the leg in the hamstring area as you feel it is needed. Spend extra time on the most painful areas. Perform on both legs, but spend more time on the affected side.

Perform 1-2 minutes on each leg once per day.



Quadriceps Mobilization

Position your upper thigh onto the foam roller. You may have one or two legs on the roller. Slowly roll your body back and forth making sure to cover the entire surface of the quad. You may perform with both legs at a time or just one leg. Start with your leg(s) straight. For added intensity, bend your knee. Spend extra time on the most painful areas. Perform on both legs, but spend more time on the affected side.

Perform 1-2 minutes on each leg once per day.



Thoracic Extension Mobilization

Position the foam roll (or a towel roll) perpendicular across your thoracic spine. Try to position it in the “tightest” area. Using your hands behind your head **for support only**, try to extend your thorax backward over the foam roll. Try to keep your pelvis rolled under and your back flat toward the floor. This will allow for a greater stretch in the thoracic area. Gently oscillate in this tight area 20-40 times depending on how it feels. If you experience increased pain, stop.

