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Roll Away Muscle Soreness

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Written by [kylestack](#) on 09/28/2010 9:30:22 AM

I love working out but loathe the muscle soreness that follows an intense session at the gym. Some trainers believe stretching before a workout is essential; others are adamant that stretching afterward is key to limiting soreness. Whenever you do it, there are still likely periods of muscle soreness the day after working out a specific area. An NBA trainer has a piece of gym equipment that he swears by to knead those kinks away.



Chip Schaefer, the Director of Athletic Performance for the Los Angeles Lakers, employs foam rollers to spark soft-tissue mobilization in his players. NBA players traditionally develop sore hamstrings from the miles of hard-surface running they do every game and practice. So, Schaefer has them mobilize their muscles by practicing a self-myofascial release with the rollers. It's a form of therapy that helps knock out some of the pain and soreness experienced in soft tissue.

The benefits are real if the roller is used correctly; Schaefer observes instances where it's not. "You see a lot of people doing it improperly," Schaefer says. "They'll just roll back and forth over the length of the muscle. The way we do it is you roll the length of the muscle, and then you find the area that's the most uncomfortable position. That is thought to be the area you have the greatest restrictions in that muscle, so you hold that position from 45-to-90 seconds. You'll feel the muscles release and relax. Afterwards, you stretch, to get an increase in mobility and flexibility."

Schaefer insisted this could be used by people of any fitness level. He added that foam rollers, which are typically 1-to-3 feet long and 6 inches in diameter, even have a fashion element to them. Once I start ramping up the intensity of my lower body workouts, I know I'll need to use a roller so that I can walk without soreness the next day. Sometimes how you treat your body after a workout can be just as significant as it is during a workout. Ward off the soreness and pain and live to see another day in the gym.

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09/28/2010 10:52:05 AM

I love my foam roller! After a long run, nothing works out the kinks in my legs better!

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