



Video Transcript

Learn Foam Rolling To Release Your Body's Stress & Tension

Hi, I'm Melissa, and I'm here to help you elevate your foam rolling practice. You probably have seen foam rollers before, maybe you've been worked with them. Foam rollers are often used to help people roll through tight tissue like muscle and fascia. You'll often hear about IT band for, you know, foam rolling for that. And that's great. I'm not here to dispel any of that. I want you to have this as a constructive tool to manage discomfort, stiffness, or pain in your body. But I also want you to know more about your body and the information we hold in our tissues. And this is going to help you strengthen your brain-body connection. So here's what you need to know about a foam roller. This one that you see is of a particular density. It's pretty tough. Phone rollers can be really soft to really hard and dense like this one. Some have ridges and some even vibrate. That is to help the fascia get the treatment it needs. Your fascia is like saran wrap around your muscle. It holds its own information through mechanoreceptors. So that's very fancy science language for receptors in your soft tissue that tell you about pressure, they respond to touch differently, they respond to temperature, and even friction. And so we're going to cover some of those movements on your foam roller to elicit certain tissue responses, ultimately to help relieve you of any stiffness or pain, and maybe even transport you into a more relaxed state. I'm very excited to show you this because as I get to demonstrate, I get the benefits. So, let's begin. We're going to start with the foam roller underneath our scapula. So your scapula are like your wing bones behind you on your back. I don't want you to put the foam roller right in the middle, but you can think of going just towards the end of them and even a little below.

You might think about this as bra strap line if that reference resonates for you. So if I'm too high up, see how that foam roller's going to, right underneath me? That's what you want to avoid. That's what I'm saying. Bring it lower. And be conscientious of a hood. You don't want to get it stuck and start rolling and choke yourself. You don't want to get your hair caught. So put it up if you have long hair. I have that foam roller underneath what I would call like my bra strap line and even up on my scapula a little bit. I'm always going to support my head here. So I'm going to put my hands underneath my head. I don't care if you interlace your fingers or not, you're just going to support your head so that you feel comfortable in the neck. You're going to take an inhale and experiment with dropping back.

You are going to respect when your body says that's enough. You don't have to drop back very far. And I also don't want you to hinge through your chin.

So none of this.

It's not that it's wrong, but most people don't benefit from having a very strong hinge at the skull. In fact, let's try to keep the forehead, the nose, and the chin somewhat lined up in the same plane so that you can really enjoy the stretch through your upper back and chest. Oh, yeah.

Take a couple of deep breaths here.

Can you see the shape of my spine? This is called spinal extension, just like in cat -calf. So I'm also using my pelvis to exaggerate that line.

Feel free to do that if it feels good for you, and I'm still enjoying, oh, yeah, the stretch along my chest because holding onto my skull this way in my hands opens up the chest more. Let's start to bring this on and exhale into spinal flexion. Notice the pelvic movement.

Can you hold this shape with me here and breathe just for a couple of seconds? You need to slow down. I'm going to be slowing you down a lot in this segment so that you can feel. Remember that foam rolling is about feeling. We're trying to elicit a tissue change. You can't do that if you don't tell your nervous system through your breath to calm down. So this is what I mean by elevating that brain -body connection. Because I can show you the same exact move like this.

And technically, I'm doing things in a way that, you know, makes sense.

It looks like Cat -Cow, kind of, and I'm connecting to my breasts, and I'm not bringing a quality of enjoying it the same way, like here.

I'm tucking my pelvis here to exaggerate spinal flexion, so I'm getting actually quite a bit of stretch around my lower back. It's fantastic, And it feels really good to slow down. And if someone like me who can be very type A and very into intense productivity, then this is a great way to slow down. It's like a sedway so that you're not just dropping into nothing, but you can use your body to help you relax. This is also a great setup for meditation. I want you to establish a rhythm that works for you and

notice that I'm bringing my elbows close to one another. I'm pulling on my skull just a little bit with some rotation and it feels so good.

Can you demonstrate this feeling good? And if it doesn't, stop, Feel.

As I pull my head forward, tucking my chin, and I'm supporting myself, and I tuck my pelvis, getting a very long line of stretch here.

The next time you drop back, can you start to curve to one side? And then the other. Again, keep the breath slow.

Find a rhythm that feels good. And I'm just going side to side.

And if I want to drop my knees, in a twisting motion here. You can.

Add that in in a way that feels natural to you.

I'm really enjoying this side stretch.

And can you see that I'm smiling?

Not just because it looks cute, but because when I smile, I change my breasts.

And then I can even communicate that breath change deeper into my body.

And that's what allows me to release tension, stiffness, and then that tissue change is more likely to occur. Well done. That was a great setup. Let's go a little deeper. Let's take this into another place. I'm going to change perspective so that you have another angle. I'm going to make this really easy for you to set up on.

We just did the upper back, head and neck. And I'm showing you a few patterns.

You take the time you need in each pattern, okay? Just for the sake of this segment, I want to get a few patterns in, but you can always pause and do what you need to do. Let your body lead you.

Okay.

If I lie down and I have the foam roller close to me, I can bridge up and settle it underneath my sacrum and lower back. Now,

in this position, we're going to bring the knees to the chest because I don't want the foam roller to pop out from underneath you. If it's too low and too close to the end of your tail, then it's going to pop out, which is not a big deal.

It's not a big deal because you can just bring it back up. But if you bring your knees to your chest, see how secure this is? It's not going anywhere. You're also not putting the foam roller so high that you feel uncomfortable. Like this is a little too high. I don't necessarily want to roll into this space right now or for a long period of time. So I want to make sure it's settled around by sacrum and you can pull the knees into the chest and we're going to continue with that glorious stretch to your lower back.

That's really nice. You can Hold.

You can play with a little bit of knee movement here. So if I inhale,

I'm going to let the knees move away, fully extend the arms.

And then exhale.

Let's do that again. I'm just going to inhale, Push the knees away. And I'm using my hands on my legs because I don't want to do it without. I end up using my hip flexors a lot. And I don't want this to be a very effortful practice.

I want you to relax. I want this to be about you communicating deep relaxation to

your body. And along the way, you're going to find out what could possibly be standing in the way of achieving a state of deep relaxation.

What about some knee circles? Oh, I always get that little pop in my hip, which is fine if you do too. It's very normal to have noisy joints. As long as they're not associated with any pain, it's fine.

Hear how I added a sigh.

Feel free to do that at any time. The reason we do that is because when your brain, essentially, hears a sigh come from you out loud.

It's another way to communicate to your nervous system that you are content. You are safe. You can experience deep release and pleasure.

This is very important as a restorative practice. I even have my eyes closed so I can go deeper into the places that I want to sense and

Can you hold on to the edges of your phone roller? And notice that I came down just a little bit because I'm giving a sacrum another little bit of rub on a different place. So I'm going to inhale, turn the knees to one side here.

Hmm,
hang out.

When you're ready, when your body innately speaks to you and says, hey, let's go to center. Why don't you wait for that signal? But do it on an exhale.

You can drop on an inhale to the other side and wait. Wait for the innate signal from your body to move.

So again, I could be presenting this to you like this. It's the same thing.

And it might even bring up a little bit of core work for you, which is fine, but the idea is to address pain and stiffness. And so we want to be able to feel what is that pain and stiffness about? What is the source of that? So you slow down so that you give your body time to speak to you. And this is really the basis of a lot of improved and enhanced restorative practices, and body magic.

I'm going to concentrate now on rolling through my lower back. And this is a very firm foam roller, so if you're on one of these and you're like, wow, it's a lot of feedback, especially when I slow down, go for a softer one or give yourself a break. You don't have to be on it forever. This is one of my favorite moves. I like feeling pressure on my sacrum. And I'm just keeping the phone roller from popping out from underneath me. So I'm just holding it casually here. There's not a lot of effort in my body. And I love the feeling of my legs as if they're defying gravity. They're just floating towards the sky. And I'm getting that pressure on my sacrum, which is actually Right, lovely. Because your sacrum is a major nerve plexus in your body. What that means is there's a network of nerves that runs down the legs that controls not just leg muscle, but also organ function. And when you massage that plexus in a way that feels good to you, not in a way that feels good to me or anybody else, but in a way that feels good to you, your body can respond by accepting and receiving that massage, that pleasure, and that release.

And this can help you move into a restful state or in more scientific language, a

parasympathetic response.

The legs floating up to the ceiling is a great way for you to also relieve leg pain and stiffness, especially if you're someone who stands all day for work and you can even play with elevated happy baby positions here. This is a great way to really deepen that lower back stretch.

Now you can also start to bring one leg towards the ground.

Oh and you see this is clearly a really nice hip opener. And again, nice firm B.

So if you don't want to go that far, you don't have to. You could also bend this knee casually and just hang out. Always bring the level of effort down until it feels really good for you. Because in order to release pain, it's not just about treating it. It's about understanding how to create another state within yourself.

Carving out the space within yourself, to breathe at ease and to create a relationship with your body where you feel like you're the one in control. So don't feel like you have to push really hard here.

You can reestablish that centered feeling as you switch legs and even release that knee.

I love this. As someone who works really hard in her body, my body also craves and needs this deep restoration in order to keep performing. So try not to get caught up in the performance cycle. This is part of your performance. This is how you remain healthy, supple, and strong. Trust me. Ask me how I know. Ask me how I know about getting stuck in the performance cycle. So now I'm going to go for a straddle. This is a fantastic stretch for the inner thighs. Again, you might hear some bone popping from me, very normal. Under thighs, outer thighs, and I can just bend those knees and play.

See how I'm starting to play with leg circling.

Let's keep it one leg at a time. If you go with both legs at the same time, that becomes very intense core work. So since we're not trying to go there and we're trying to keep this nice and easy, keep it one leg at a time and let your body lead you through this. There is no right or wrong here. This is now about what feels good for you. So play with keeping one leg bent as you explore space, play with maybe doing like a helicopter blade movement through the legs. Again, I'm referring to legs and you're going to get a lot of nice hip stretch there. But it's really that sacral rub. I'm getting a lot of seed back through my sacrum.

And now I'm going to prepare myself for extension. This is a very intense form of extension through the spine that can feel amazing if you've been sitting for a long time at a desk, if you stand for a long time as you a job, and I'm going to start by extending one leg. Again, there's that very strong hip flexor stretch, but the weight of my leg is also pulling on the soft tissue around my spine. So take it slow because I really like this kind of extension, but you may not.

And by the way, there are days where I don't like this kind of extension. Don't judge what your body's saying. Simply observe and take in the data so that you know where to go next.

So I'm going for the full extension with both legs. And it feels good,

but depending on the day and for a multitude of reasons this might have a time limit so right now I'm starting to feel that time limit so I just put my feet on the floor I have these limbs too so I can create extension through my upper back and then when I feel ready I can start to load that extension throughout my spine here

now this feels delicious absolutely phenomenal what

are you feeling do you love this could you stay here forever or Do you say, that's enough, Melissa, and you don't have to wait for me to give you permission.

You never have to have permission from me or any other instructor to follow the signal your body is giving you. You're the boss of your body. I'm giving you techniques and tools. Make them work for you. Yes. Oh, I think it's time to switch up the work, right? This is going to feel really interesting. We're going to take the foam roller out from underneath and we're going to lay our bodies flat on the floor. And I'm just putting the foam roller under my knees. Oh,

you know it's been a little too long from this kind of practice when this feels amazing to you, right? Because you're just lying here. Give yourself a second to have a shavasana midway through your practice, just feeling that.

Check for your jaw. We've talked a lot about your sacrum here, but as you're lying here, I want you to ask yourself, what's happening to my jaw and what's happening to the back of my skull? This is an opportunity for you to explore cranial sacral connections. And you may have heard of cranial sacral therapy, where there's the manipulation of the body's mechanisms on many levels through this connection of the skull via the spine to the tail. And right now, as you're lying here in this moment, what is that connection saying to you? How could you enhance it? And if you don't know yet, don't worry about it. That comes with the practice of a pause, of being still and listening.

They're doing great. This is how you elevate that connection to yourself.

You listen without judgment and let the information flow.

Well done. If you can, you can open your jaw, you can stick out your tongue, roll your head around out of the ground a little bit. Beautiful.

We're going to start to elevate our systems a little bit again because you can feel that you're probably dropping down into what we would consider more of a parasympathetic state. A lot of the work we've done has been about feeling deeply in the body, and you might be getting really relaxed and even a little sleepy, which is great. But if you're not getting ready for better meditation or something where that state feels more appropriate, this is how you can start to judge yourself up and lubricate the transition back into more of a sympathetic state, an arousal state where you can more easily take in external information. So I'll show you.

It's very difficult, by the way, to get into your hamstrings on a foam roller, so this isn't going to be necessarily the most therapeutic thing for tight hamstrings, but it's a good starting place. And again, we're going to bring some friction and other forms of feedback to the body through touch.

So instead of lying flat on the ground now, I am going to bring this foam roller

underneath my hamstrings. You can see that my butt's off the floor. And depending on the size of your butt, it may or may not be off the floor. That is not a prerequisite here. I just want you to see that I've taken the foam roller up as high as I can onto my hamstrings. Hamstrings are the muscles on the back of the leg. And I can relax or I can use my glutes and I'm going to squeeze them a little bit here, just a little bit, to help me remain elevated and my feet are relaxed through the ankles, but they're off the floor. Why? Well, because I want to be able to really roll the legs in and out. Oh, and now we're bringing friction. I love friction like this. It feels really good and it's excitatory. It's not the same depth of feeling. It's much more warming, right? So again, we are teaching you here in this moment how to create different states through touch in the body. And the better you are at knowing the kind of touch your body likes and what elicits a particular state of being, the better you're going to be at translating that in other situations in life that are going to benefit you. So I'm just breathing. Again, I'm keeping my jaw relaxed because all of this is connected. But now my smile is different. Before it was a much more like the smile of somebody getting a massage and going in deep. But now it's kind of like, ooh, what is this? This is fun. And again, you might be right there with me. But if you're doing this and you're like, this feels like trash, you might want to investigate why Or stop. It's okay to stop. Let's take a breather.

Drop the bum on the ground.

Beautiful, well done. When you're ready, which feels like I'll never not want to be here. But we're going to sit up together.

Caves. It's just a natural continuation down the line of the leg, let's get into your calves. We're in a perfect place for them. Listen, calves are intense, so we're not going to be here for very long. But this is a place where we hold a lot of tension, walking, standing, even sitting, but if you work out a lot in your body, trust me, your calves are going to need this. See how I've got my hands behind me, very casual, not not trying very hard. And anytime your hands need a break, give yourself a break. I am relaxing my calves by relaxing my feet.

So my seat are not like this, because if I dorsa flex through my ankles, activating calf muscles, I don't want that. I want to be as relaxed here as possible. So I wait for my breaths to reach my calves.

What does that even mean? You don't have lungs in your calves. That's somewhat metaphorical, somewhat. But wait for the calves to release a little bit of tension on their own. Let them get soft. And then you can start to roll in and out this way. Yeah. You can do friction. You can simply internally and externally rotate the legs.

You can find a nice spot and just rotate through the ankle and I'm just breathing.

If you're ready, you can go into a forward fold that's going to put more pressure

on the legs and calves. That can feel good or It might feel like too much, so you back away.

But if you like this, this is where toe pointing really work the toes.

A lot of the muscle in the legs, really all of the muscle in the legs, ends in the feet. So the better you aren't manipulating your toes, the better you are manipulating those muscles in the legs, that also make their way up to your core, that in fact make your way up to your diaphragm. This is not pretend. This is actually the fascial train. And remember, foam rollers are more about fascia than they are about muscle, really.

Even though I'm referring to calves, we're dealing with the fascia on the calves.

See how I just put this leg on top, very intense feedback. If you do this or any other foam rolling move and you

brace for survival,

maybe back off. It's not wrong to have an experience like that in your body where you're going to brace to survive a moment, but it doesn't have to be most of the time. If you were in competition mode and you had to get back in the ring or you had to get back and do whatever you need to do, I get it. Then you better call upon that voice and suck it up and breathe and do what you got to do. But hopefully that's not how you're living most of the time and not in your body. I want you to be able to distinguish the states of being but the attitude and intention with which you touch yourself and relate to yourself.

And if this is ever too much, just listen.

And in fact, start to prioritize a free breath, one that lets you sustain and experience. Mm

Wonderful.

You did so well.

Way to elevate that brain -body connection and learn about your body and what it can do and the fashion and the magic of the fashion and all the data it has for you.

This practice of touch that we've used today that hopefully has illuminated certain aspects of your physical self, as well as how to treat your physical self, is not isolated to just this moment, but to any moment in which you are being touched.

So remember to be in charge of knowing how you like to be touched and what you want to receive and pay attention to what your body is ready to receive, especially via your breathing. Your breathing reactions will tell you a lot about what your nervous system is telling you about the physical experience in your environment. So thank you so much for doing this work with me today. Good job. Good job, body.

Thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you for your efforts. And looking forward to advancing again. Take care.