

# THE LOCKDOWN SESSIONS

#StayHome #BeActive #StaySafe



WELSH ATHLETICS  
ATHLETAU CYMRU

## FOAM ROLLING

**Now that we're all at home exercising, its important to be doing all you can alongside your training to minimize injury risk and keep on top of any niggles that could build into longer term issues. Foam rolling can help in a range of ways.**

Popular thinking suggests the three main benefits are:

1. Increased flexibility, including increased range-of-motion (ROM).
2. Improved short-term athletic performance, when included as part of the warm-up routine.
3. Improved recovery post-activity, through reducing the experience of delayed-onset-of-muscular-soreness (DOMS).

### Flexibility

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There is good evidence to show that foam-rolling has short-term ( $\leq 10$  minutes) benefits to flexibility but, if done regularly, long-term flexibility may be improved.

Foam-rolling has also been proven to increase joint ROM. Interestingly, a 20 second repetition seems to be just as effective as one of 60 seconds.

### Performance

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As a warm-up, foam-rolling is preferable to standard, static stretching - which may produce negative outcomes, such as reducing:

- force production,
- power output,
- running speed,
- reaction, and
- strength endurance.

### Recovery

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Foam-rolling may assist with post-activity recovery, through reducing the sensation of DOMS. Recent research has shown that foam-rolling for 90 seconds per muscle group may achieve a short-term reduction in pain/soreness.

## Best Practice

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There is no established “best practice” for foam-rolling but after reviewing the current body of research, the following protocol is suggested for potentially optimal results:

<b>Frequency:</b>	3-5 times per week
<b>Duration:</b>	3-5 sets of 20s-30s per targeted muscle group
<b>Timing:</b>	As a warm-up practice, before exercise or as part of post exercise recovery

- Never roll over bony joints or directly on an injured area.
- Always maintain good posture, form and attention.
- Use alternatives, e.g. tennis or hockey balls, for variety of impact

## Contra-indications: who should not foam roll?

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Foam rolling is not for everyone. In addition to serious illnesses or medical conditions, athletes displaying any of the following conditions, should avoid foam rolling:

- Acute infections; Peripheral neuropathy; Recent surgery and/or Fractures
- As always, check in with your own physiotherapist if you have any questions

*NB Although clinics may be closed, many therapists are offering video appointments and can help you self-manage your muscle care and niggles.*

## Alternatives to Foam Rolling;

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Be imaginative and find other round or cylindrical and firm, items for the purpose of roller-massaging, such as PVC piping, rolling pins, hockey/cricket/tennis/golf balls and even medicine balls.

However, the density of the foam and the shape of the roller makes foam-rollers preferable to these items.

