

Taming Tension with Foam Rollers

Work out the kinks and build strength and flexibility with these foam roller moves.



It's way more than a massager. "A foam roller helps release tension in your connective tissue, but as you do these exercises, you're using your core and other muscles to stay balanced," explains Pilates instructor Lauren Roxburgh, author of *Taller, Slimmer, Younger*.

Using a 36-inch roller, try this series for a quality workout.

1 Snow angel: stretches upper back, shoulders, neck.

Lie on roller lengthwise so it supports your entire spine. Bring arms straight out to sides at shoulder level, close to the floor, palms up. Inhale, reaching arms overhead slowly. Exhale as you bring arms back to start. **Repeat 8 times.**

2 Rolling bridge lift: works glutes, hamstrings; stretches quads, feet.

Lie faceup on a mat with the arches of your feet on the roller, knees bent. Slowly lift hips, forming a straight line from knees to shoulders. Without moving roller, pulse your hips up and down about an inch (don't arch your back). **Repeat 10 times.**

3 Rolling swan: works arms, upper back, glutes; improves posture.

Lie facedown on a mat with arms stretched out in front of you; place roller under forearms, thumbs facing up. Inhale as you raise your head and chest and move the roller toward you along your forearms. Exhale as you slowly return to starting position. **Repeat 8 times.**