

WHY WE ROLL!



Let Me Ask?

How many times have you gone to the doctor in the last one to three years, with a chronic pain you just could not explain? Did the problem get fixed? Did it go away and come back? Are you reliant on a drug or supplement to keep it at bay? Did you see more than one 'specialist' for this ailment? Did you learn anything about your body or how to take care of it through the process?

Apologies for all the questions up front, but they are important to ponder before reading further.

If you take a step back and think about your daily habits, most chronic pain does stem from a simple explanation. It could come down to something as silly as the way you get in and out of your car everyday; how you bend over to pick up your child or grandchild; a seemingly insignificant repetitive motion required by you to execute for your job, day after day... It could also derive out of a compensatory pattern of your body moving around another injury that you've been nursing for awhile, or did so awhile ago (scar tissue is oftentimes a particularly stubborn culprit).

Most chronic pain originates as tight, dehydrated tissue and various degrees of inflammation [usually due to the type of food we eat, or again, a repetitive deficient movement patterns]. Another commonly misunderstood notion is that because 'my knee hurts, so there is an issue with my knee!' It isn't as typical as you would believe that the ailing area is the problem, but rather something up- or downstream from that area is the root of the problem. A quick, easy-to-understand example of this is a little exercise you can do while you read on. Tug anywhere on your shirt and notice what happens to the rest of it. It gets tight, right? Tissue works similarly. A tight chest yields a sore neck or shoulder. Tight glutes equal lower back pain. Tight adductor muscles (inside of the thigh) tug on the knees to cause perpetual aching. Heck, bound up feet have even been shown to cause tight shoulders...I hope you're starting to pick up the idea!

When we roll, we are addressing our tissue system. If you've been educated at all in biology, this most likely wasn't one of the five or six your teacher covered in class. However, recent research is indicating that it plays a very major role in overall mind-body health. 'Fascia' is a word that has been popping up more frequently in the realm of fitness lately. You may have a question along the avenue of 'how are we just exploring this system after dissecting and researching the body for the last 'x' years?' Well, when physicians would study the body, they'd study cadavers [because you cannot easily open up a living person without much pushback from the subject]. When you begin to open up a subject, the tissue is in the way of everything that is the focus of study. Therefore, it would be gathered, removed, and thrown right into the trash bin as the heap of dehydrated mass that it is. Now with the help of new medical technologies and devices, we are able to observe the role that living tissue plays on your health.

“TUG ANYWHERE ON YOUR SHIRT AND NOTICE WHAT HAPPENS TO THE REST OF IT. IT GETS TIGHT, RIGHT?”

Hopefully you noticed it was previously mentioned this tissue was in the way of *everything* students were looking to uncover. Your fascia [or, connective tissue] is attached to every part of your body. Not only that, it permeates your muscles, tendons, and organs throughout its entirety. Shouldn't the abundance of such a system suggest some importance? Maybe so, although by the time it happens that the body is to be dissected, the tissue has dried and is seemingly insignificant. What haven't these lifeless bodies been doing up until being dissected in the name of science? Moving or hydrating. And what are the characteristics of this system that are most essential to its health and function? ...Movement...and hydration...



It is increasingly recognized especially within the fitness community that fascia may be the most important system to overall function of your physiology [and even psychology if you want to get deeper!]. Tight tissue starts a chain reaction of symptoms in the body that would cause some folks to believe they have a more serious health issue with a completely different system. For instance, lack of blood flow to certain parts of the body will cause a functional deficiency to those areas. When every part of your body needs oxygen and other various nutrients to function properly, wouldn't it be safe to infer that a lack of blood flow – which is your body's delivery system of all those essentials – may be a detrimental cause of any ailment? Same goes for lymphatic flow, which is likely not anything your teacher or doctor ever spoke about, either. If your system is tight, flow becomes restricted and fluid remains stagnant. Bottom line, *this is bad*. So when you roll, you're doing more than loosening some tight joints and muscles; you're improving circulation and freeing up your flow!



When you foam roll and begin to feel the benefits, it is customary to our pattern of thought to believe that when the pain subsides, 'I'm all better and don't need to do this anymore!' Sorry friends, but that just isn't so. You may be feeling good, but it takes time and consistency to keep your tissue supple, viscous, and unbound. In fact, it can take up to eighteen months to completely rearrange your structure into a permanently loose and relaxed resting position. 'Eighteen months?! Really??' Yes, however it can take much, much less than that. It is all a matter of the attention you give your body and how diligent you are in staying hydrated. As well, turning awareness to your daily habits and holding patterns; that is, where you maintain tension in your body in your 'resting position.'

“UP TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS TO COMPLETELY REARRANGE YOUR STRUCTURE”

All this is not to say that foam rolling is the secret cure-all to every pain your body is dealing with. It is a wise practice to begin with if you deal with any chronic stiffness or soreness, though. It gives you further autonomy to learn and understand how to take your health back into your own hands. It doesn't stop there either. As you may have heard around the JMB studio, 'motion is lotion.' Foam rolling alone won't keep you loose – it needs movement to compliment the potential benefits. It is the continued movement and activation of muscles, tendons, ligaments, and joints that lubricates the tissues. The rolling opens the tissue up to receiving that hydration.

SO THIS IS [JUST A GLIMPSE INTO] WHY WE ROLL!

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