Self Myofascial Release with Tennis Ball to Release Muscle Tension
Dr. Heather Morales, DC, MS, CKTP

Foam rollers are a little big to travel with and take to places other than the gym or home. The same type of myofascial exercise can be conveniently done with tennis balls, lacrosse balls, golf balls, and even roller hockey balls (the harder the ball the better the result, but more sensitive to pain). I will go over the areas that you can use the tennis ball (or whichever ball you choose), and discuss some injuries you can prevent from occurring. For each area, you will lie on the spot for 10-15 seconds at the “sore areas” of the muscle group. I like to do this two to three times to get the full benefit before and after my workday or workouts.

UPPER BODY

Myofascial release of the upper body (from the wrists to the back of the head) will result in pain relief for conditions such as: carpal tunnel syndrome, outside elbow pain, inside elbow pain, headaches, TMJ dysfunction, neck pain, shoulder tension, shoulder impingement syndrome, posture correction, and thoracic outlet syndrome. The following images will show you the exact position.
LOWER BODY

Myofascial release of the lower body (lower back down to the feet) will help relieve and prevent conditions such as: IT Band syndrome, lateral knee pain, patella-femoral syndrome, plantar fasciitis, sciatica, low back pain, hip pain, piriformis syndrome, shin splints, and achilles tendonitis to name a few.

“One parallel that may help to see (the fascial proliferation in the body) this is an orange: the rind, pith, and the walls between the sections would all be like the fascia of the body.”

Thomas Myers
The ball will be in the middle and middle-inside of the calf, with the other leg over the affected leg. This will allow for deeper release of muscle tension. The toes should point upward towards head and also down towards the ground.

**Remember a few things:**

- You may feel slight discomfort where the tennis ball is hitting the trigger points.
- You should take deep breaths in and out to allow relaxation and better results.
- If the pain is too unbearable, you should put a hand towel over the ball or switch back to a foam roller.
- You shouldn’t have any significant bruising. This is a sign you are pressing TOO hard over the area and may cause tissue damage.

Consult your physician if you have any other questions before beginning these exercises.