Myofascial Rolling Shown to Increase Flexibility Without Inhibiting Performance

Two recent studies demonstrate the effectiveness of myofascial rolling versus static stretching, which is associated with declines in performance, announced Performance Health.

Akron, OH (PRWEB) August 06, 2013 -- Two recent studies out of Memorial University of Newfoundland (St. John’s, Canada) support the effectiveness of myofascial rolling. The studies (1),(2) concluded that as little as two minutes of myofascial rolling with foam rollers and a mere five seconds of rolling with a roller massager significantly increased range of motion (ROM) without any significant detrimental effect on muscle strength.

“Decline in muscle strength has been associated with static stretching, which is often used for increasing flexibility and ROM prior to activity. This association discourages some athletes from stretching immediately before an event, which may increase their risk of injury,” stated David G. Behm, PhD, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, Memorial University. “Even though myofascial rolling has become popular because of its purported benefits in recovery after exercise, there was very little research on the effectiveness of the technique. Our first study, completed late last year, demonstrated the efficacy of myofascial rolling using foam rollers, and our second study, completed just last month, demonstrated its efficacy utilizing the Thera-Band® Roller Massager+.”

Although used for many years in physical therapy, foam rollers have recently surged in popularity both in therapy and fitness for myofascial rolling. The rolling pressure applied along a muscle is thought to compress the tissue and increase flexibility of the muscle and fascia, possibly ‘breaking up’ fibrous adhesions between layers of fascia. While myofascial release is usually performed by a therapist on a patient, ‘self-myofascial release’ is widely performed using tools such as Thera-Band® foam rollers and the Roller Massager+.

The first Memorial University study, conducted by Dr. Behm, Dr. Duane C. Button and colleagues, found a significant (10° to 20°) increase in knee range of motion after rolling the quadriceps for only two minutes. In addition, the participants did not experience a decrease in knee strength or muscle activation with the increased range of motion, often seen immediately after static stretching. This study was published in Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research.

In the second study, the Memorial University research team wanted to determine if similar results were possible using the Thera-Band Roller Massager+. All study participants were measured for hamstring flexibility (sit-and-reach test), maximal strength, and muscle activation before and after the intervention. The researchers reported a significant increase in hamstring flexibility (4.3%) after only five seconds of rolling. After 10 seconds, there was a 6.6% increase in flexibility, although not statistically greater than at ten seconds. There was no advantage to performing multiple sets of rolling. As expected, there were no changes in hamstring muscle performance after the rolling intervention.

“We are very pleased that our second study further substantiated the benefits of myofascial rolling and demonstrated the effectiveness of the Thera-Band Roller Massager+, an inexpensive and readily accessible tool,” stated Duane C. Button, PhD, Assistant professor, Memorial University. “With just seconds of use, the Roller Massager+ provided statistically significant increases in ROM without any significant effect on muscle strength. This should prove to be beneficial as part of an immediate warm-up prior to an athletic event.”
About the Academy
The Thera-Band® Academy was formed to scientifically document the benefits of resistance exercise and pain relief, guide the company in its development of new products and exercise programs, and to promote therapeutic exercise and pain management through professional and consumer education. The Academy web site is a unique resource that connects healthcare professionals and consumers to the ever growing body of knowledge on exercise. Registration is free and provides access to the largest database of rehab exercises, protocols, research and education in the world.

About Performance Health
Featuring leading brands like Thera-Band®, Biofreeze® and Pedigenix®, Performance Health offers a broad portfolio of products for the therapy, rehabilitation, wellness, massage, podiatric and performance markets. In addition to market-leading products, Performance Health provides practice building support, evidence-based protocols, clinical and product education, turn-key dispensing and pain management solutions.

About Thera-Band Myofascial Rolling Products
The Thera-Band® Roller Massager+ is an innovative tool for myofascial release and deep tissue massage. Its unique patent-pending ridged design supports both superficial and deep tissue mobilization while providing a massage-like experience. Use of the Roller Massager+ can help increase blood flow and circulation in targeted areas, while helping to increase muscle flexibility and range of motion. Patent-pending, ridged Thera-Band® Foam Roller Wraps+, used in conjunction with standard 6" round foam rollers, serve as a novel tool for hands-free myofascial release, deep tissue massage and stabilization exercises, and can help increase muscle flexibility and range of motion. Designed to support varying degrees of tissue mobilization, the Thera-Band Foam Roller Wraps+ are available in four successive colors of progressive density.


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