

## How's your recovery?

Lots of us are spending more and more time at home lately!

People seem to have gone one of two ways!.....COVID couch potato or more time to train!

With gyms closed many of us have taken up different exercise regimes to normal.....different workouts, climbing mountains and longer runs are a perfect recipe for sore muscles.

### So what are you doing to avoid that?

For many of us, recovery training is often an afterthought...or even forgotten about! But it really is a vital part of every exercisers programme!

But why is it important?

Quite simply, when we workout or exercise we stress our bodies. This stress causes minor damage. The body is an amazing machine! When this damage is caused, it automatically begins a healing response that allows us to heal, adapt and get stronger.

However, our bodies don't always get it right! Sometimes as the muscles heal a knot or trigger point can form in the muscle. These knots can cause discomfort, the feeling of tightness and even lack of strength and mobility.

Normally, this is where I come in as a Sports Massage Therapist!.....I warm up the muscles, find the problem and then pull, push, poke and prod to fix it!.....but obviously, with the current climate I cant yet get my hands on you!

So, rather than leave you all to steadily get more and more knotted I thought id give you some at home tips that can help keep you moving until we can open The Studio again!

### Foam Rolling

For those of you that have treatment with me, you know how much I love a foam roller! It should be a staple of every exercise program!



Foam rolling is a type of self-massage also called myofascial release. It's very similar to a technique I use on you during treatment sessions and it really is a great way to break up knots and loosen off sore muscles. Most of the time when we think of foam rolling our brain automatically jumps to images of runners rolling out their legs!.....and that is very common! However, foam rollers can also be useful on your back, chest, shoulders and arms after you have trained them!

With foam rolling its important to remember that it wont feel nice! Some discomfort is ok but stop if you feel any pain. Pain could be a sign you are causing more damage.

### **Rolling with a Massage Ball**

Much like a foam roller, a massage, polo, cricket or lacrosse ball is another great tool when it comes to self-massage and releasing those knots.

Like a foam roller you can use your body weight to apply more pressure or to get deeper but being smaller than the roller, it has the advantage of size and can easily target smaller spots. Another technique is to roll the ball over a sore muscle with your hand.....you cant really do this with a foam roller!

It's a great, albeit uncomfortable, way to hit the inner thighs, gleuts and quads after that long run or leg day!

Like foam rolling, it is ok to feel some discomfort but back off for any pain.

### **Stretching**

This is what we automatically think of when we say recovery and flexibility!

But how do you stretch?



There are two types of stretching I will focus on here. Static and Dynamic.....both are beneficial for recovery and when done correctly and regularly, both will help with mobility and flexibility.

Quite simply, **Dynamic stretches** are active movements where joints and muscles go through a full range of motion. For those of you that have been involved in team sports or have been part of a club, dynamic stretches will

be something you may have used as part of your warm up. However, dynamic stretches aren't just for warming up. They can be a good way to stay loose throughout the day.

This differs greatly to the type of stretching most people are more familiar with.....Static stretching!

Static stretches should be held for 30 seconds at a time and are best done after exercising when your muscles are already warmed up. Try spending 15 minutes on the floor stretching while watching TV instead of sitting on the couch.

As with all flexibility work, listen to your body and never force the stretch!

If done correctly, adding in these types of stretches to your exercise program will help greatly!

### **Epsom Salt Soak**

A soak is a fantastic way to help with sore muscles after a hard training day.....it really is one of my favourite methods of recovery!

The magnesium in the Epsom salts is great at soothing sore muscles and the hot water can promote blood flow to help with muscle repair and recovery.

Try to make sure you have the water as warm as you can comfortably stand and enjoy a nice long relaxing soak.....I often multitask and have my post workout protein shake whilst in the bath!

### **Yoga or PiYo**

Taking a rest day off training can be hard! I will admit, I used to really struggle with the idea of a rest day!

But then I realised, rest day doesn't necessarily have to mean having a day on the couch! Instead opt to have an active recovery day instead.

Yoga or gentle PiYo is a great alternative to get moving and loosen up. There are loads of apps and YouTube videos available to explore from home.



If you're new to yoga don't worry if you are lacking the flexibility to match some of the poses. I will be the first to admit that I often feel very uncomfortable in a class of Yogi!.....I am by far the most amateur one in the room, struggling to hold the poses for long and often unable to progress out of the level 1 option!.....but don't worry!.....the flexibility and strength needed for yoga is very different to the strength and flexibility needed to lift weights, or run or play polo and it will come with time!....and when it does, it will also improve your ability to preform and recover from your sport of choice.

As with anything. Starting is the first step....and when was the last time you did something for the first time?



**Maybe now is that time!.....Start adding in some recovery to your training!**

Recovery days or time can be a new concept for many who are so used to hitting the gym every day. So don't worry if it takes a few attempts to get it right!

Start off slow! Maybe try working in stretching and rolling into your day. Just start with 5-10 minutes here and there through the day. This all adds up and even this small amount adds up and helps loosen up those tight muscles!

For examples of stretches and rolling check out the videos on our Facebook Page: The Studio – Sports Massage & Beauty Therapy.