

Getting The Most From Your Fitness First Foam Roller

Safety

- **CAUTION:** Fitness First Foam Core Rollers can be dangerous! They are not toys! Practice balancing on one leg on solid ground and then standing on the roller while hanging on to a stationary object. Learn movements slowly with control.

Exercise Instruction

- The goal when performing a resistance exercise on the Fitness First Foam Roller is to maintain stability while performing resisted movement. Focus, be patient and start out slowly.
- Repetitions should be performed slower than traditional resistance training exercises. Fewer repetitions are not counter-productive. Strive for quality repetitions instead of quantity.
- If movement is unilateral, (one side at a time), always switch sides after set and perform equal number of repetitions.
- Strive to eliminate any unwanted movement while on the Fitness First Foam Roller. Stability must be achieved before beginning any movement or applying resistance.
- Always be aware of posture and spinal position when rotating and squatting. Maintain slight contraction in the abdominals to counter unwanted spinal and pelvic movement and protect the spine.
- As speed increases, so can detrimental effects. Focus on good mechanics and control of the muscles producing and decelerating the movement. If you feel discomfort at all, stop and evaluate the problem.
- Although speed may be part of your goal, be aware the increased speed without control equals injury. Practice and perfect the mechanics of the movement before increasing speed or tempo.
- Performing exercises in bare feet will heighten the stimulus and eliminate unwanted stability from the shoes.
- Keep in mind that in order to improve posture you have to practice and maintain posture in, and out of the exercise room. Practice keeping your head back, eyes forward, shoulders back, chest up, and torso slightly contracted.
- Although an excellent addition to anyone's exercise regiment, balance and stability training should only be considered one aspect to be explored during a workout. Dedicating an entire exercise session may be counter-productive by placing constant stress on the system and inhibit actual strength.
- Avoid holding your breath or exaggerated breathing.
- Seek the help of a qualified fitness professional for further advice and variation on these exercises.



All exercises were designed by Bill Leavitt, RTS₃, M.A.T.T. Bill is the owner of Fitness Alliance, LLC., located in Kansas City. He may be contacted at bleavitt@kcfitness.com

Fitness First Foam Roller

Body alignment and posture are essential for effective function of the human body. Day by day through repetitive activities of sitting, forward reaching, and improper exercise selection, we promote bad posture, muscle weakness, imbalance, and joint misalignment. Balance Training can improve posture and strength through focus on stability and utilizing the core muscles of the torso. By challenging our balance mechanism one becomes aware our deep core musculature and of the importance in gaining body stability through neuromuscular control over these muscles which is essential in improving alignment and posture. The Isometric Contraction of the muscles involved to stabilize the body heightens neurological capability and efficiency. The term 'Core' has been described by many who have differing points of view as to what muscles are included and their respective functions. I will define the core as the musculature responsible for the stability and transference of power linking the upper and lower extremities. This would include all muscles of the abdominal group, erector spinae group, and most hip musculature. Recognition and definition of function of all is beyond the scope of this brochure.

Sedentary activity in the past century has forced us to create artificial means of physical activity and exertion. Treadmills and weights have become our substitute for physical labor. The problem is that too many times, especially in the gym, we get carried away with moving too much weight at too fast a tempo and forget the reason we are there in the first place. Training stability through instability has become a proven method in increasing coordination of neural reflexes to improve motor skill acquisition. Regimented practice will prepare the body to react to certain instable positions and may actually prevent injury. Patience, focus, and body awareness of ones core will improve alignment and promote control and overall bodily strength. It is important to realize that although we may be balancing on two or one foot, the entire chain upward is also affected; knee, hip, and spinal joint segments. Also, having effective core strength gives us a solid foundation to use and apply resistance to our extremities. From athletes to seniors, balance and stability training make a great addition to any workout regiment. The variations and applications are endless and can be applied to many exercises to promote control and stability.



Two Leg & 1 Leg Standing

Stand on Fitness First Foam Roller with shoulder width stance. Start with knees slightly flexed and arms forward. Try to eliminate movement and eventually straighten knees and place arms at sides.
Challenge: Close eyes, add rotation.

1 Leg Standing Lengthwise

(Lateral ankle stability)

Stand on Fitness First Foam Roller lengthwise with one leg on the other off to the side. Do not drop hip on unsupported side. **Challenge:** manipulate free leg position.



Dumbbell Deadlift



Tube Deadlift

Deadlifts

(gluteals, hamstrings, erector muscles of the spine, scapular retractors)

A great exercise in its own right, even more challenging on the Fitness First Foam Roller. Stand on Roller with a hip width stance and gain stability. Initiate movement by pushing hips back. Maintain a neutral spine, and keep knees above ankles with no forward movement of the lower leg (tibia). Knees can flex slightly. Depth and range of motion will depend on hamstring flexibility and goal.
Challenge: Use dumbbells, cable, or tube attached low.



Straight Arm Pulldowns

(Latissimus dorsi, teres major, posterior deltoid, isometric tricep)

Torso more vertical, more posterior deltoid; more bent over, more lats. Choose a form of resistance, tube or cable. Assume a stable, shoulder width stance with knees and hips flexed. Back must stay neutral throughout entire movement. Hold straps or handle(s) and begin with arms at 180° relative to the body (overhead). Pull to touch thighs, pause and return.



Push-ups

(Pectorals, anterior deltoid, serratus anterior, triceps)

This is a great exercise to not only strengthen the upper body, but the core muscles of the torso as well. Be sure to vary the height that your feet are positioned since performing a push-up with feet on the floor is actually a slight decline pressing motion. **Variation:** (1) Hands on roller (2) feet on roller (3) Feet and hands on rollers (4) Various inclines (5) Feet on fit ball.



Tube Chest Press - Start



Tube Chest Press - Finish

Tube Chest Press

(pectoralis, anterior deltoid, triceps, serratus anterior)

Attach tube at shoulder height, face away and align tube so it falls slightly outside of the arm when straight. This ensures constant resistance on the pectorals. One of the benefits of performing a chest press standing as opposed to lying on a bench is a natural and free movement of shoulder blades (protraction). Vary tube attachment height to perform different levels of incline.



Row - Elbows Up



Row - Alternating Row



Row - Finish

(Latissimus dorsi, rhomboids, mid-trapezius, teres major, posterior deltoid, biceps)

Choose a form of resistance, tube or cable. Assume a stable, shoulder width stance with knees and hips flexed. Back must stay neutral throughout entire movement. Hold straps or handle(s) with a neutral grip and begin drawing the arms backward along side the body. Focus on retracting the shoulder blades and maintaining good posture with head and neck in line with the rest of the spine. **Variations:** Elbows up (horizontal, parallel to floor), will emphasize more posterior deltoid and remove some lat. Alternating will challenge stability and core trunk musculature.



Overhead Press - Start



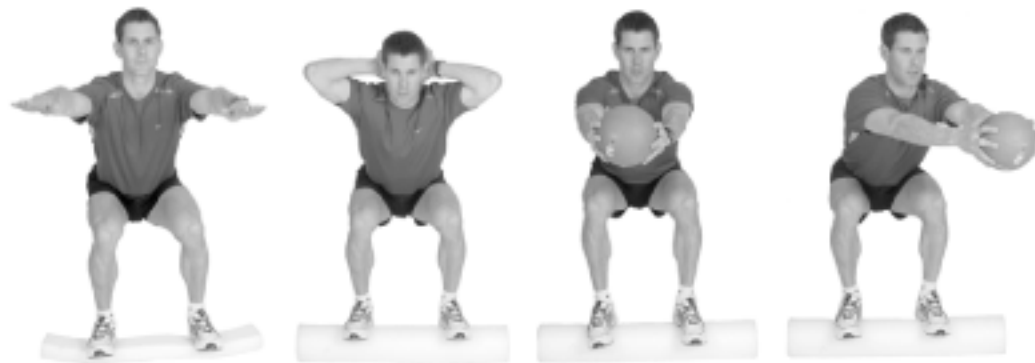
Overhead Press - Finish



Overhead Press - Tube

(anterior deltoid, trapezius, serratus anterior, triceps)

Assuming a shoulder width stance, start with dumbbells at ear height and raise overhead. Be concerned with elevating from the shoulder blades and reaching toward the ceiling instead of just straightening the arms. Maintain slight contraction in the abdominals to counter unwanted spinal and pelvic movement.



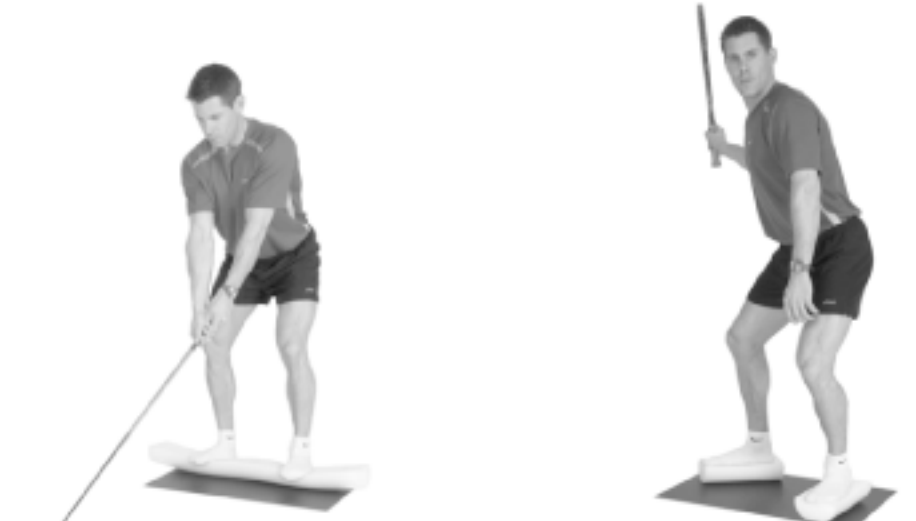
Squat

Assume a shoulder width stance and gain stability. Keep eyes forward, chest up, arms out front, and neutral spinal alignment. Initiate squat by pushing hips back and keep knees the same direction as the toes. Practice control by minimizing Fitness First Foam Roller movement. **Variations:** Add resistance such as a medicine ball or dumbbells. Change placement of resistance in relation to the body e.g. Overhead to side, in front.



Squat Variations

Incorporate the same mechanics as one leg standing and squat with the following variations: (1) Straight (2) Lengthwise (3) Leg to front/back (4) Reach to left/right (5) Medicine ball pickup with rotation (6) Leg to front going down (7) Dumbbells move to back for up.



Sport Moves

From tennis to golf, the Fitness First Foam Roller makes an excellent tool to increase balance, stability, and control away from the playing arena.