

Tips and techniques for reducing muscle soreness

July 3 2017, by Olivia Ramirez

When you try a new exercise, lift heavier weights or run steeper hills, muscles experience strain and micro-tearing at the cellular level. This leaves your muscles sore. Foam rolling, stretching and foods with anti-inflammatory properties can help reduce soreness, alleviate discomfort and get you back to your favorite exercise.

Stretching is an important [recovery](#) step in reducing [muscle soreness](#) and preventing injuries. Muscles can't react to changes in length effectively when they are tight; stretching before [exercise](#) can help muscles move more effectively. Static stretching, holding a stretch without movement, can be done before exercise, but is most important after activity. Kinetic stretching, warming up muscles with movement, is also beneficial, with the most benefit coming from its combination with [static stretching](#).

Foam rolling has become a more popular recovery technique for the general population. Foam rolling consists of using a cylindrical tool and body weight to massage muscles. Foam rolling can be helpful when combined with stretching because it helps break up adhesions in the soft tissue around the muscle which allows for a better and deeper stretch. Foam rolling can be beneficial both before and after exercise for different reasons. Rolling out before can help break up adhesions and rolling out after acts as a form of self-massage which has been shown to aid in muscle recovery. Targeting large muscle groups with the foam roller, like the lower extremity muscles (Quads, hamstrings, calves, glutes etc.) is most beneficial, but it can also be used on the large muscles of the back. If you have muscle soreness from the previous days

exercise, you can foam roll the subsequent days to help alleviate muscle soreness. It is recommended to foam roll directly after activity and every 24 hours thereafter to reduce soreness.

Diet also plays a role in recovery; tomatoes, olive oil, green leafy vegetables, nuts, fatty fish like salmon and tuna and fruits, especially berries, have [anti-inflammatory properties](#) that help reduce [muscle soreness](#).

Don't be afraid to try to a new workout, just make sure recovery through stretching, foam rolling and a healthy diet are also part of your routine.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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