

Innovative Soft Tissue Strategies for Health and Performance

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The information in this book is offered for educational purposes only; the reader should be cautioned that there is an inherent risk assumed by the participant with any form of physical activity. With that in mind, those participating in strength and conditioning programs should check with their physician prior to initiating such activities. Anyone participating in these activities should understand that such training initiatives may be dangerous if performed incorrectly, and may not be appropriate for everyone. The author assumes no liability for injury; this is purely an educational manual to guide those already proficient with the demands of such programming.

We all know how important it is to have good soft-tissue quality, so I won't belabor the point. What I will do is show you how to get some of the often-neglected areas. But, before we get to the how, we need to know what tools are needed to get the job done effectively.

1. A [Foam Roller](#)

You should definitely already have one of these if you care at all about your tissue quality. This is where improving your tissue quality starts; the tools below are for addressing areas more specifically and precisely, but you need a tool that can cover large areas quickly, which is where the foam roller is huge.

2. [The Stick](#) or [Tiger Tail](#)

It doesn't matter which one you get; just get one of them. To be honest, though, I prefer the Tiger Tail. These versatile tools allow you to get a large number of body areas. Our athletes at Cressey Performance love to use them for the biceps and forearms and I will show you how.

3. [The Original Index Knobber](#)

I use the Index Knobber frequently in my massage work, but even more frequently, I use it to dig at my own TFL and proximal attachment of the Rectus Femoris among other areas.

4. A [Lacrosse Ball](#)

Again, you should already have one of these, as they are great for getting into the glutes, teres muscles, and plantar fascia. In addition to those areas, I will show you how to use a simple, cheap lacrosse ball to address the forearms, pectoral muscles, and palmar fascia.

5. [Golf Ball](#)

Cheap is the name of the game, right? Well it doesn't get much cheaper than a golf ball. Heck, you can probably find some in your neighbor's yard if you don't want to buy them. They are a great tool for the palmar fascia and a more specific tool than the lacrosse ball for the forearms.

6. [Theracane](#)

This is just a great tool that I think everyone should have. You'll find ways to make use of it – trust me.

Okay, so you probably don't need all the items listed above, but they are relatively cheap and having them will provide you with the versatility to address almost any area of the body. What follows is a list of areas that need some extra love when it comes to soft tissue work. You can access videos of each of them by going to the following password-protected online library:

URL: <http://vimeo.com/album/946190>

Password: howard

1. Forearms – Flexors & Extensors

I don't care whether you are a competitive power lifter, desk jockey, or professional athlete: you grip stuff – a lot. Whether it is grabbing the bar for a deadlift, the computer mouse during hours of data entry, or a bat to crush a baseball, your forearms are taking a beating. So, let's get at them to improve their tissue quality. As the video demonstrates, you can use the tiger tail, a lacrosse ball, or the index knobber to address this area.

2. Biceps Brachii

If you want to keep the elbows happy on this program or any other, you need to address the tissue quality of the biceps. Lots of bench pressing, rowing, chining, and curling can leave the biceps a mess. I prefer the tiger tail for this area, but I am sure you can figure out how to use each of the other tools here too.

3. Pectoralis Major & Minor

Good posture is more important than people realize. Often, due to years of sitting during school, sitting during our commute to work, working at a computer, and then going to the gym and bench pressing, our pecs are not only short and tight, but full of adhesions and trigger points as well. Here are some great ways to address the tissue quality of the pecs and get you back to a better posture.

4. Adductors

The adductors are an often-overlooked muscle group – from a strength training and soft tissue quality perspective. Foam rolling the adductors is incredibly important, and as the video shows, there are a few ways to get at the area.

5. Triceps Brachii

Along the same lines as the biceps, years of pressing can really eat at the quality of the triceps muscles. Address length issues by stretching this area, but don't forget to work out those knots and adhesions first with some soft tissue work. Your elbows will thank me.

6. Palmar Fascia

Due to the work of Thomas Myers in [Anatomy Trains](#), a lot of attention has been brought to the plantar fascia and its role in hamstring and calf flexibility. If you look at the palmar fascia and its relation to the forearm flexors, it's no different. In my experience with our baseball guys, loosening up this area goes a long way toward loosening the forearm. So, if you are going to get the forearms, you may as well start at the beginning of the train and address the palmar fascia.

7. Tensor Fascia Latae (TFL)

I think the TFL is responsible for more hip issues than we truly appreciate. In my own experience, improving the tissue quality of the TFL has greatly improved my range of motion in hip horizontal abduction and reduced a significant amount of anterior hip pain.

If you liked the information provided above, then you will love [The Trigger Point Therapy Workbook by Clair Davies](#). In it, he goes over how to treat trigger points in practically every muscle in the body.

About the Author

Christopher Howard has his Bachelor's of Science in Exercise Science and Masters of Science in Nutrition Science from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Chris spent the 2008 Off-Season and Training Camp as a Strength and Conditioning intern with the Buffalo Bills, after which he completed an internship at Cressey Performance in Hudson, MA. In 2009, Chris attended the Onondaga School of Therapeutic Massage in preparation for becoming a licensed massage therapist. Currently, Chris is certified as a Personal Trainer (NSCA-CPT) and Strength & Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) through the National Strength & Conditioning Association (NSCA) and a Licensed Massage Therapist in the state of Massachusetts.