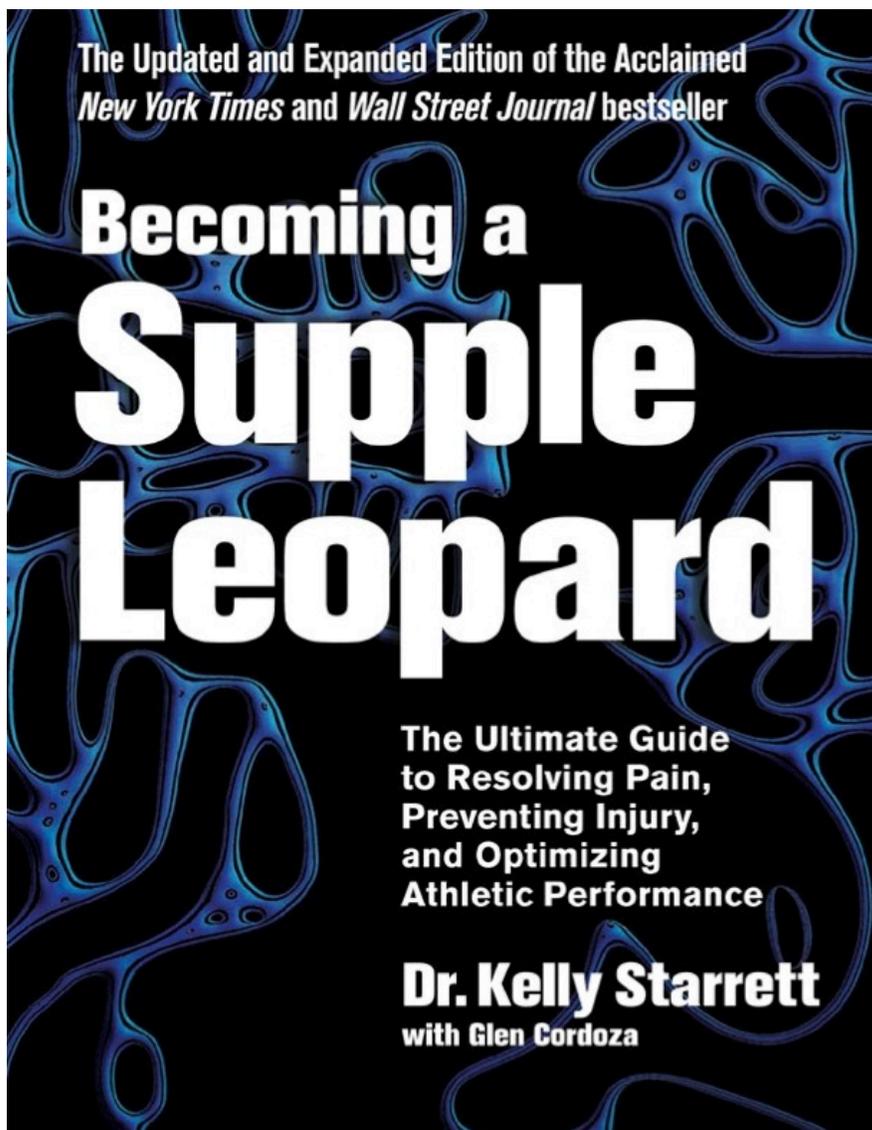


# Foam Rollers and Lacrosse Balls Found to be Effective in Breaking Up Adhesions in Muscle Tissue and Releasing Fascia For Better Healing

Dr. Jelly Starrett et al

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Foam rollers and Lacrosse balls are great tools to assist you in breaking up tissue adhesions in the fascia and the muscles. One of the greatest books written on function and eliminating pain through correcting movement and increasing mobility is “*Becoming a Supple Leopard*” by Dr. Kelly Starrett. This book points out how to best benefit from the foam roller and lacrosse balls.

**Information on Foam Rolling Cited from “*Becoming a Supple Leopard The Ultimate Guide to Resolving Pain, Preventing Injury, and Optimizing Athletic Performance*” By: Dr. Kelly Starrett with Glen Cordoza**

## **Foam Roller Usage**

### ***T-Spine Roller Smash Mobilizations***

*When your thoracic spine gets stiff, it’s difficult to stabilize your shoulders and head in a good position. It can also result in neck and shoulder pain. The T-Spine Roller Smash Mobilizations are your first stop on the road to better thoracic mobility.*

*These mobilizations are what we call global extension exercises. You’re not trying to target any single tissue or motion segment as you would when using a double lacrosse ball. Instead, the goal is to open up your entire thoracic system. While a ball is more precise at digging into tight, nasty spots, a foam roller or Battlestar can tackle two or three motion segments of your back, your rib facet joints, and some of the soft tissues in your upper back.*

#### ***Option 1: Extension Smash***

*The key to this mobilization is to focus on creating large extension forces over the roller by arching back. A common mistake is to mindlessly roll back and forth with zero intention. At the gym, you often see people foam rolling aimlessly in the name of warming up—while catching up on a new Game of Thrones episode. This does nothing. To make real and lasting change, you have to create as much of a teeter-totter effect and extension force over those tissues as possible.*

*When you find a tight area, use the roller as a fulcrum by arching your back. Think about letting the roller break you into extension. You can take a big breath and try to snake your way around, extend back and forth, elevate your hips to add pressure, and then lower your butt to the ground. Explore the area, find where your back is tight, and stay on that. (pg.716)*

*You can’t just roll around aimlessly on a foam roller. You must smash. You can incorporate several smashing techniques, ranging from the horribly painful to the mildly uncomfortable. Depending on your level of stiffness and pain tolerance, you may have to start with the most basic, which is the Roller Calf Smash, and work your way up. Just remember, the more uncomfortable the mobilization, the more change you will see, feel, and realize. (pg.1142)*

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### Lacrosse Ball Usage

#### **LACROSSE BALLS**

**Good for:** contract and relax, pressure wave, smash and floss, flexion gapping, tack and twist

*To restore sliding surfaces, you have to release that skin from the underlying tissue or bone using mobilization methods like the pressure wave and smash and floss (see pages 142–151) and techniques like the Ball Whack (see page 432). There are a number of different tools that you can use, the most common being a lacrosse ball, roller, or VooDoo Floss Band.(pg.255)*

*Lacrosse balls are firm enough to sink deep into your tissues. You can do some incredible mobility work with lacrosse balls alone.(pg.696)*

*Many people, when they’re lying over a roller or lacrosse ball, can’t move their arms into a good overhead position and press their hands on the ground due to a lack of mobility. This is why I recommend*

*anchoring your hands to the ground. It facilitates better reach and increases the impact of the exercise.*

*Let’s explore an important concept here. Imagine two exercises that are similar in shape but have a different effect on your system—like the handstand pushup versus the strict-press. Both require a good overhead position, yet each one exaggerates a different movement. One begins in the overhead position, while the other finishes in the overhead position. On paper they appear very similar—but you wouldn’t restrict yourself to just one exercise, right? Of course not! All self-respecting athletes and coaches understand the importance of balancing exercises as a means of maximizing performance and health. It’s intuitive. However—and here’s the message that I want you to embrace—people tend to get stuck in one dimension when it comes to mobility.*

*The point is, you have to address both ends of the spectrum in your mobility work. If your goal is simply to improve thoracic extension and bias arm flexion in the process, the previously demonstrated exercises are great. But if you want to create change across the entire system, you have to approach mobility from both ends—just as you stimulate a multidimensional training effect by using both the strict press and the handstand pushup. For optimal results, you have to balance it out.(pg.732)*