

Tissue Restoration and Muscle Regeneration Exercises

As high level hockey players it is both the responsibility and expectation that you come ready to perform on a daily basis. Taking care of your body with proper training regimens, nutrition, sleep, stress management and overall general health is necessary to reach your maximum potential. But let's face it, the game is tough and often times it leave you sore and stiff. This is why it is imperative that you recover as effectively as you play. In order to keep yourself primed and ready you must have a plan of action and the ability to take matters into your own hands. For this very purpose we have put together some simple restoration exercises that require no more than bands, bars, lacrosse balls, softballs or tennis balls. You can do these exercises yourself at home or in any facility you train at. Pick what you need the most and allocate just 5-10 minutes per day hitting those exercises that work best. Your body and your game will thank you for it.

The manual is broken into upper body and lower body exercises. Each exercise is categorized by the area we are trying to target and points of emphasis are provided in parentheses. Pick the exercises that work best for you and follow the directions outlined below. For further reference on set-up and execution, watch the videos.

UPPER BODY EXERCISES

1. Foam Roller Arm-Cross Mid to Upper Back (great for upper back stiffness)
 - Start by sitting on your butt, rapping your arms around your chest and position the roller on your back at the level of the beginning of your ribcage.
 - With the tissues in the back wound up tight, create an extension force by arching over the roller. From this position roll back and forth over the tight areas until you feel a change occur.
 - Keeping your arms wrapped tight, sit up as if you were doing a crunch. As you sit up, keep the majority of your weight positioned over the roller. Scoot your butt toward your feet, slide your back down the roller and move to new areas.
 - Roll 10-15 times back and forth or until you feel a change in the tissues of your mid to upper back
2. Double Tennis Ball Arms-Cross Mid to Upper Back (great for upper back stiffness)
 - Start by sitting on your butt, wrapping your arms around your chest and position the double tennis ball in between the vertebra of your mid to upper back (find the tight zone). Lie back on the balls and wrap your arms around your chest.
 - With the tissues in the back wound tight, create an extension force by arching over the balls slowly. Because there is more pressure in one area than the previous exercise, you must keep your ribs down by keeping your abs slightly contracted.
 - Perform mini crunches on the balls, arching back then crunching up, keeping your hips on the ground.
 - Perform 10 mini crunches then move up or down the spine one segment and repeat in another zone of your back.

3. Upper Back/Shoulder Blade Single Lacrosse Ball Mob (great for upper back stiffness)
 - Position a lacrosse ball in the area of your upper back bordering your scapula, between your right shoulder blade and spine.
 - Lie down on your back keeping the ball in place and readjust the ball to find your tender area.
 - Keep your hips down and with your thumbs always facing the ground at each end point, rotate your right arm across your body towards your left hip, and then back across your body going overhead on your right side.
 - Keep your arm straight at all times and reach end range both directions.
 - Perform 10 cycles of this on the right side then repeat on the opposite side.
4. Kettlebell Mid Back Rotation (great for upper back and stiffness of your hips)
 - Position a 12-16kg kettlebell next to your right shoulder and latch onto the handle with your knuckles facing the ground. Grip the top of the handle with your left hand.
 - Roll onto your back and pull the kettlebell over your right shoulder while simultaneously straightening your right arm and lying flat on your back.
 - Hold your right shoulder blade down towards your back pocket and the kettlebell in place then cross your right leg over your body making a 90 degree angle with your hip and knee (keep your left leg straight).
 - Your right arm should stay straight, take a deep breath in, exhale and try to drop the inside of your right knee towards the ground with each breath.
 - Perform 10-15 deep breaths on the right side then repeat on the opposite side.
5. Banded Overhead Distraction (great for issues with forward rounded shoulder posture)
 - Start by hooking a ½ inch band around a pull-up bar.
 - Hook your right wrist through the band and rotate a full circle in a clockwise manner in order to hook the band around your wrist. Do not latch onto the band with your hand!
 - Close your left hand onto your right hand and turn your right hand so your palm is facing up and your thumb is pointing toward the outside of your body.
 - Keep your arm locked in that position and step back with your right leg and kneel down. Keep tension on the band and move back until you feel a good stretch.
 - Take a deep breath, exhale and sink your hips back away from the stretch.
 - Perform 10-15 deep breaths on the right side, and then repeat on the opposite side.
6. Front Squat Rack Set-Up Stretch (great for issues with racking a power clean or front squat)
 - Start by hooking a ½ inch band around a squat rack pillar around mid-thigh height.
 - Hook your right wrist through the band and rotate a full circle in a clockwise manner in order to hook the band around your wrist.
 - Turn away from the rack while simultaneously winding your right palm up (similar to how your arms look during a front squat). As you do this, step out with your left leg, rotating your body underneath the band.
 - Keeping the palm up, maneuver your shoulder completely under the band and stand up and away from the pillar until you feel the tension.

- Make sure to keep your right elbow in contact with your head and right arm-pit forward at all times.
 - Take a deep breath, exhale and step into the stretch then return.
 - Perform 10-15 deep breaths on the right side, and then repeat on the opposite side.
7. Lacrosse Ball Chest Release (great for issues with forward rounded shoulder posture)
- Start by placing a lacrosse ball on your right upper chest (45 degrees down from the front of your deltoid)
 - Laying on your stomach keep the ball in place and put your right arm behind your back as if you were getting handcuffed.
 - Push off the ground with your left hand, and slightly rotate towards your left, putting pressure down on the ball and into the tight areas.
 - After hunting out a stiff spot, throw your left arm behind your back and grab your right hand. This puts additional pressure into the area you're trying to change.
 - Move the ball back and forth over the tight area 5-10 times. If you hunt out a tight point stay on the point and take 15-20 deep breaths (or until the stiffness clears up)
 - Perform one cycle on the right then one on the opposite side.
8. Banded Shoulder Lateral Opener (great for issues with forward rounded shoulder posture)
- Start by hooking a ½ inch band around a squat rack pillar about hip height.
 - Hook your right wrist through the band and rotate a full circle in a clockwise manner in order to hook the band around your wrist.
 - Keeping your arm straight, rotate your palm up as you turn your body away from the squat rack.
 - Step out with your left leg until you feel a stretch in the front of your chest.
 - Take a deep breath, exhale and step into the stretch then return.
 - Perform 10-15 deep breaths on the right side, and then repeat on the opposite side.

LOWER BODY EXERCISES

9. Softball Psoas Release (great for relieving tension in the lower back)
- Start by positioning the softball to the outside of your belly button just above the hip crease.
 - Keeping the ball in place lie on your stomach creating pressure of the ball into your lower abdomen. This may take some tinkering so move the ball up and down along this line and find out where you are stiff.
 - Cross your arms in front of your body and rest your forehead onto your arms.
 - Take a deep breath into your belly, pushing the air into the ball, exhale and relax.
 - Perform 10-15 deep breaths, then keeping your hips down, come up to your elbows as if you were performing a plank. Perform 10-15 breaths again pushing the air into the ball and then repeat on the opposite side.
10. Lacrosse Ball Glute Release (great for loosening up the hips and opening up your stride)
- Start by positioning a lacrosse ball in the side of your butt.
 - Keeping the ball in place, sit on the ground with your hands behind you, creating pressure into the ball.

- With the ball tacking down your underlying muscle, move the surrounding tissue around the area by dropping your knee toward the ground, then bringing it back up (keep your foot on the ground).
 - Continue moving your leg up and down 10-15 times. If you hunt out a tight point stay on the point and take 15-20 deep breaths (or until the stiffness clears up)
 - Perform one cycle on the right then one on the opposite side.
11. Lacrosse Ball High Glute Release (great for loosening up the hips and opening up your stride)
- Perform all the same directions as previous exercise except lie on your back and put your hips and knees at 90 degrees by resting your feet on a weight bench.
 - Position the ball in the same spot or higher on your glutes (just below the low back)
 - Continue moving your leg up and down 10-15 times. If you hunt out a tight point stay on the point and take 15-20 deep breaths (or until the stiffness clears up)
 - Perform one cycle on the right then one on the opposite side.
12. Quadruped Hip Capsule External Rotation Mob (great for loosening the hips and opening up the stride)
- Start by kneeling on the ground on all fours and shift the majority of your weight onto your right knee, aligning your knee directly underneath your hip (vertical femur).
 - Keeping your weight loaded over your right knee, turn the right foot in toward the middle of your body.
 - Next swing your left leg across your body and pin your right leg in place using your left knee.
 - Keeping the majority of your weight over the right knee, drop your right hip to the outside of your butt. Imagine trying to pop the head of your femur out the side of your butt.
 - Continue to press in and out of tight areas for 10-15 reps or until the stiffness clears up.
 - Perform one cycle on the right then one on the opposite side.
13. Quadruped Hip Capsule Internal Rot Mob (great mob for a very restricted motion due to skating)
- Start by kneeling on the ground on all fours and shift the majority of your weight onto your right knee, aligning your knee directly underneath your hip (vertical femur).
 - Keeping your weight loaded over your right knee, swing your right leg to the outside of your body and hook your foot around a kettlebell or dumbbell (50#'s or more to ensure there is no movement).
 - Keep the majority of weight over your right leg and sink your hips back and toward your right side.
 - Still keeping the majority of your weight over your right knee and dropping your right hip toward the ground, you can crawl forward to capture the front of your hip.
 - Continue to press in and out of tight areas for 10-15 reps or until the stiffness clears up.
 - Perform one cycle on the right then one on the opposite side.
14. Banded Hip Extension (great mob for a very restricted motion due to skating)
- Start by hooking a 1 inch band on a squat rack pillar about knee height.
 - Hook your right leg through the band and put it directly under your butt crease. Then step back until you get tension in the front of your hip, dropping your right knee to the ground and taking a kneeling position.

- Squeeze your right glute and tuck your hips underneath your body to create more tension in the front of your hip.
- With the band distracting your femur into the front of your hip socket, slowly shift your weight forward over your ground knee. Be sure to keep your right glute squeezed and hips tucked underneath you (do not lean back) and slide your entire body forward and back.
- Continue to rock in and out of tight areas for 10-15 reps or until the stiffness clears up.
 - Perform one cycle on the right then one on the opposite side.

15. Double Tennis Ball Anterior/Posterior Shin Release (great for relieving trigger points in your lower leg after skating)

- Start by sitting on your butt with legs out and positioning the double tennis ball behind your Achilles tendon just above the heel on your right leg.
- Cross your left leg over your right to add resistance down into the ball and with your hands behind you, push into the ground and lift your butt off the ground.
- Putting pressure into the ball, use your arms to push you and roll the ball up to your calves.
 - Perform 10-15 rolls up and down the back of your leg. This can also be done by flipping over on your stomach and rolling the front of the shin.

16. Bottom of Foot Release (great to keep feet healthy and mobile after skating)

- Start by sitting on a weight bench and positioning a lacrosse ball on the bottom of your foot towards the heel.
- Apply as much pressure as you can and slowly roll the ball towards your toes. If you find a tight or tender spot, stay on it and roll up and down until you have released the tension.
 - Perform 10-15 rolls up and down your foot, starting to the inside of the foot and moving towards the outside, then repeat on the opposite leg. This can also be done with a golf ball or while standing for more pressure.