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Effects of Self Myofascial Release on Exercise Performance

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Self-myofascial release (SMFR) is a soft tissue mobilization technique that uses pressure on the fascia to restore proper alignment. Previous SMFR studies have used continuous rolling on a foam roller (FR) as opposed to a sustained direct pressure technique of SMFR resulting in no significant performance improvements. The purpose of this study is to determine the acute effect of SMFR using a foam roller, on agility, lower extremity power, and range of motion (ROM). College-aged women who engage in physical activity 3 times a week have been recruited for this study. Following a familiarization and baseline testing session, subjects were randomly assigned to complete the foam rolling protocol (FRP) or the control (CON) protocol. During familiarization sessions, subjects were instructed on proper performance for SMFR, 5-10-5 shuttle test, broad jump, and sit and reach test. During session 1, subjects completing the FRP rode a stationary bike for 5 minutes followed by SMFR of the hamstrings, quadriceps, gluteus maximus, and tricep surae and then retesting of variables. The CON performed planking instead of SMFR. For session 2, the subjects switched conditions. It is anticipated that ROM will increase following the FRP protocol compared to the CON while lower extremity power and agility performance will decrease. These results could be due to the inhibitory effect of SMFR and are consistent with previous literature that has used variations of SMFR. While inhibition may be effective for improving ROM, it may not be an effective prior to dynamic activity.