

Give Yourself a Massage!

REDUCE TENSION IN YOUR MUSCLES WITH A TENNIS BALL

Massage your muscles to get rid of, or lessen, your tension before it is a problem. You can use a tennis ball to self-massage the knots in areas that are hard to reach with your hands. Unlike other tools, a tennis ball is low-cost and won't take up much space.



Use these three steps to get some relief

1 Follow these instructions to massage specific areas of your body:

Back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie down or lean against a wall. Or sit upright in a chair. • Place a tennis ball on the desired spot of your back. • Ease your weight into the ball, until it is between you and the wall (or chair). • Shift your body up-and-down or side-to-side to allow the ball to knead the focus area.
Hips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place your weight against a tennis ball so it is between a wall, or chair, and your hips. • Shift your weight to allow the tennis ball to knead in circles, focusing on the tense area.
Calves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit on the ground or floor. • Place a tennis ball below the top of the calf muscle, around the knee area. • Use your arms and one of your feet to support you. • Roll over the tennis ball so it goes from below the knee to above the ankle. • Repeat until you feel the tension in your calf release.
Feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place one of your feet on top of the tennis ball. • You can sit. Or stand and put a hand on a surface such as a wall, counter or chair for balance. • Apply more pressure to the foot on the ball as you roll your sole over it. • Use long strokes with the ball from your heel up to the ball of your foot (or area behind your toes).

Increase the pressure for a deeper massage!

(continued)

2 Aim for relief instead of pain or soreness. If you grit your teeth or hold your breath, there's too much pressure. If so, reduce the weight against the ball, relax and breathe.

3 Finally, keep these tips in mind:

- **More isn't always better**

Avoid working one area for more than 10 or 15 minutes. Instead, devote time to your entire body and address all the muscle groups. A few minutes each day is better than once a week for half an hour.

- **Don't try to force the ache away**

A common mistake is to over-massage an already-inflamed area. Work on one spot for a while and then change to another.

- **Make sure to warm up**

Your muscles and tissues are complex and sensitive. If you apply too much pressure at the start, the muscle can tighten rather than release.

- **Know your limits**

Look for signs that you may need professional help.



If a muscle does not respond well to self-massage, or you feel intense pain, contact your doctor.