



# Self Active Release

- 1) *Shorten muscle*
- 2) *Apply pressure and then tension in muscle tendon*
- 3) *Move/stretch muscle through active range of motion*
- 4) *Feel the tissue stretch under your fingertips*

This Self Active Release guide shows you a quick way to increase blood flow and tissue elasticity by using your hands. Muscle pain can often be caused by myofascial restriction. This is the tissue surrounding the muscles. These techniques can help reduce the restriction as you prep for activity, release tension from repetitive motions and start your morning with a full body routine.

## General Guidelines:

The concept is to shorten a muscle then apply pressure to the tendon of the muscle. Next, take out slack from the tendon by pulling or pressing along the length of the muscle. While the tendon is stabilized lengthen the muscle by moving the body part. You will feel the tissue slide under your thumb/fingers. This technique can also be done by sliding along the muscle.

It is generally best to have dry skin in order to get enough friction on the skin when stabilizing the tendon. For moves along the muscles some massage cream or lotion will help you slide a long distance.

This technique can be difficult to learn, but with practice you will find the hand position and body movement that works best for you.

There is a difference between “smashing” the tissue under your thumb and taking slack out by pulling along the muscle. Smashing the tissue is quite uncomfortable. Taking slack out is advisable.

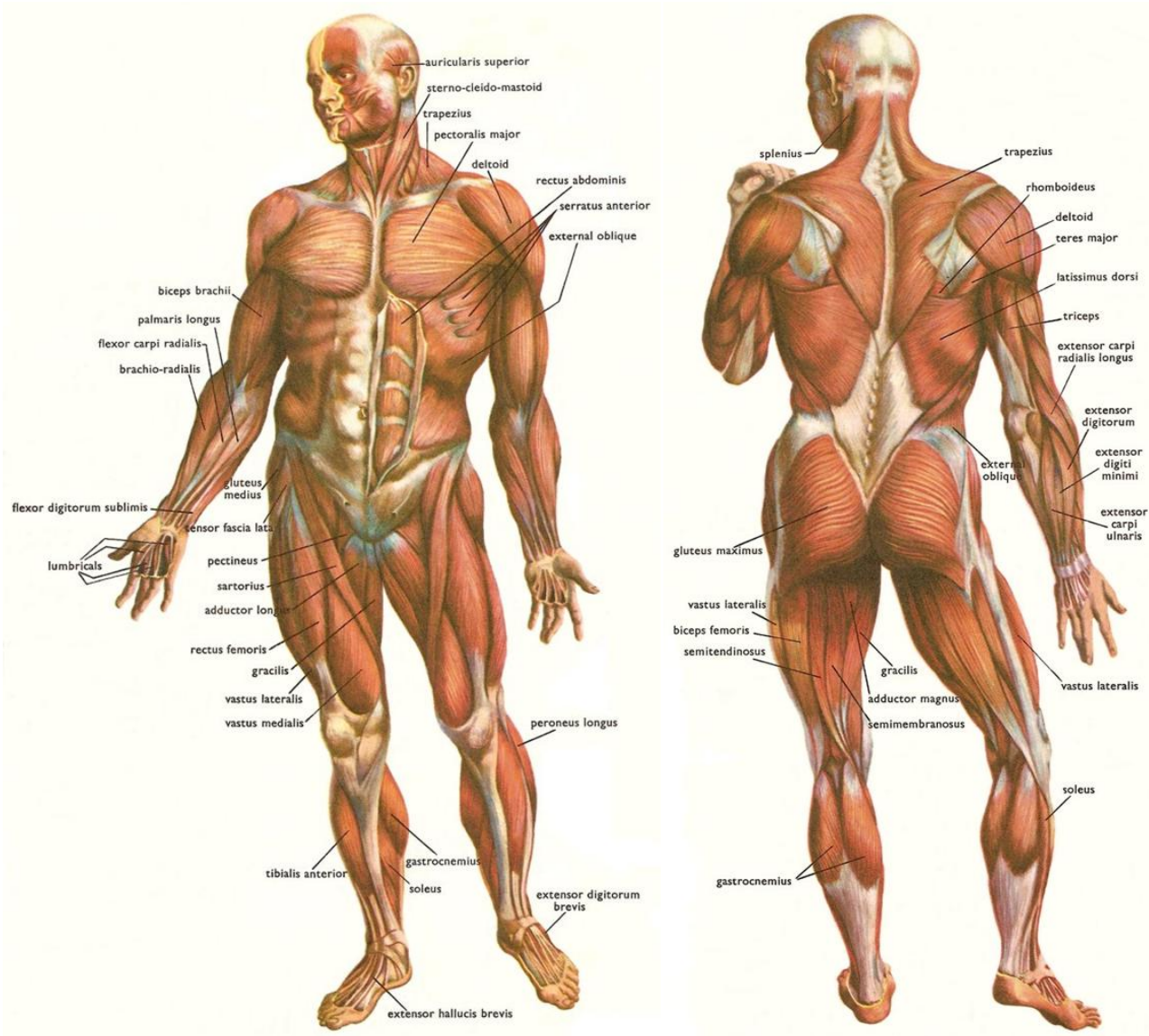
Alternative lower body techniques can be done sitting in a chair, with your foot on a chair, on the floor or while kneeling. Use your body weight and good mechanics for effective pressure.

Practice deep breathing for better results. As you inhale visualize a healing energizing light and visualize exhaling stress and toxins. Cleansing breaths help increase the oxygen that has been deprived to your muscles.

An anatomy chart is useful to see the body structures. I encourage you to become more familiar with anatomy, trigger points and fascia.

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Presented by Elysia Tsai, M.Ed., ATC. Elysia is a NATA Certified Athletic Trainer with a Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training and a Master of Education in Developmental Kinesiology specializing in Sport Psychology. Working in the sports medicine industry for over 15 years she has helped athletes maintain great function. Questions and comments- please contact her at [elysia@si-boards.com](mailto:elysia@si-boards.com) or 714-809-5109.

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**Head**

- Massage your scalp and work from front to back
- Massage the base of the skull with subtle head movements
- Run your fingers through hair and gently pull for added stretch



**Anterior Neck**

- Start at base of skull with chin tucked to chest
- With downward pressure pass front of neck and lift head
- Move past clavicle, press downward and away from sternum



**Sternocleidomastoid**

- Start behind ear with head tilted toward shoulder
- Bend head towards other shoulder with downward pressure
- Complete small strokes to the front, side and back of neck



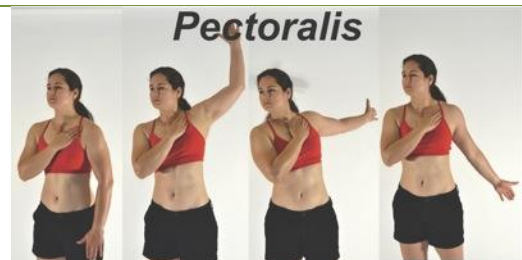
**Trapezius**

- Start at muscle between clavicle and shoulder blade
- Press deep and toward neck as you move arm across body
- Press deep in middle of shoulder for trapezius trigger point



**Pectoralis**

- Start with pressure towards opposite hip from under clavicle
- Move arm diagonally upward and away from body
- Stand straight and with right leg extended for better stretch



**Pectoralis**

- Start with downward pressure toward feet from under clavicle
- Complete backstroke movement and rotation shoulder around
- Complete different areas of the chest from sternum to armpit



**Anterior Deltoid**

- Start with pressure in front of shoulder and pull upward
- Move arm across the body and push elbow outward
- Move arm straight backward to extend shoulder



**Medial Deltoid**

- Start with pressure in middle and push toward elbow
- Move arm across body in the front or behind back
- Pull upward toward shoulder from base of deltoid

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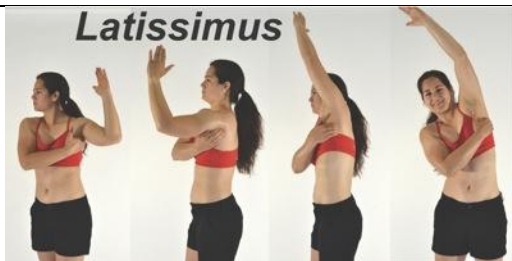
## Posterior Deltoid

- Start behind shoulder blade and press downward toward floor
- Bring arm across body and press toward spine
- Bring arm from behind body forward and upward



## Running Arm

- Start with outward pressure on front of shoulder
- Slide fingers to chest across biceps tendon as arm moves back
- Continue running arm and slide back and forth across shoulder



## Latissimus

- Start on side of shoulder blade and pull downward
- Reach overhead and increase stretch by leaning to side
- Work on different areas of shoulder blade and armpit



## Obliques

- Spread fingers, press between ribs and pull toward hip
- Start bent forward then stand and rotate body open
- Work entire side of rib cage down to pelvis



## Diaphragm / Abdominals

- Press downward along bottom of rib cage and pull outward
- Stand upright and slightly bend backward
- Pull diagonal across abs from rib cage and rotate backward



## Low Back

- Stand straight and press knuckles into lower back
- Pull downward and then bend forward toward ground
- Add side bending and slight rotations with forward bends



## Biceps

- Use thumb or palm to press into elbow crease and pull upward
- Start with elbow bent then extend elbow and open arm
- Continue to work the entire front side of arm



## Triceps

- Start with arm straight and press into area above elbow
- Pull upward toward shoulder and bend elbow
- Continue to work the entire back side of elbow and arm

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## Forearm Extensors



- Bend elbow, extend wrist and press into top of forearm
- Apply pressure toward elbow, straighten arm and flex wrist
- Continue to work entire top and length of forearm

## Forearm Flexors



- Bend elbow, flex wrist and press inside of forearm
- Apply pressure toward wrist, straighten arm and extend wrist
- Continue to work entire inside and length of forearm

## Forearm Rotators



- Wrap thumb and middle finger around forearm
- Rotate entire forearm from palm down to palm up
- Continue to down forearm with pressure and rotations

## Wrist Extensors



- Start with wrist and fingers extended and bent backward
- Press into top of wrist and pull toward elbow
- Bend wrist forward and continue to work backside of hand

## Wrist Flexors



- Start with wrist flexed and bent forward
- Press into bottom of wrist and pull toward elbow
- Bend wrist backward and continue to work palm and fingers

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**Hip Flexor**

- Start from front of hip and press to the outside of pelvis
- Continue to swing leg and press inward as you swing backward
- Pull upward and swing leg back and forth



**Gluteus**

- Press deeply into top of gluteus and swing leg back and forth
- Pull upward into top of gluteus and swing leg back and forth
- Add a forward bend for increased stretch



**TFL**

- Start with downward pressure in top of hip under pelvis bone
- Swing leg to inside and outside of body
- Pull upward toward head and swing leg across body



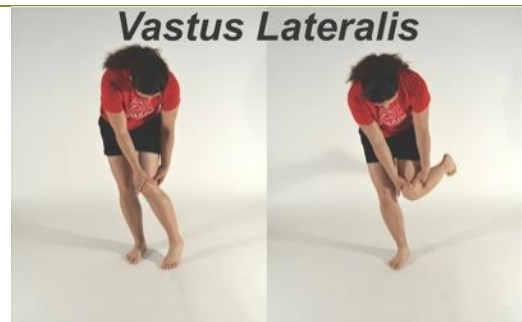
**VMO**

- Use both thumbs and press into inside of quad above kneecap
- Pull upward toward hip and bend knee
- Can also be done seated or lunging into thumbs



**Middle Quadriceps**

- Use both thumbs and press middle of quad above kneecap
- Pull upward toward hip and bend knee
- Can also be done seated or lunging into thumbs



**Vastus Lateralis**

- Use both thumbs and press outside of quad above kneecap
- Pull upward toward hip and bend knee
- Can also be done seated or lunging into thumbs

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**Sartorius**

- Start with overlapping fingers and press into inside of quad
- Pull upward toward hip and move leg away from body
- Start with hip and knee bent then straighten leg away body



**Adductor**

- Press all fingers into inside of mid quad and behind knee
- Pull upward toward hip and move leg downward and outward
- Work all parts of the inner thigh



**IT Band**

- Press all fingertips into the outside of thigh and behind knee
- Pull upward with hip flexed and then extend leg backward
- Work all angles of the outside thigh



**Hamstring**

- Press middle fingers into back of knee with knee bent
- Pull upward toward hip and straighten knee
- Can also be done seated in a chair



**Hamstring**

- Press all fingers into back of knee with knee bent
- Pull upward, keep foot on the floor and straighten leg
- Work upward through hamstring and include bending forward



**Gastrocnemius**

- Press middle fingers into top of calf with knee bent
- Pull upward, keep foot on floor and straighten leg
- Continue to work down calf

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**Achilles**

- Start with foot pointed downward
- Wrap hands around shin and press thumbs into Achilles
- Pull upward toward knee and point foot and toes upward



**Heel**

- Start with foot pointed downward
- Press thumbs into top of heel and pull upward toward knee
- Pull toes and foot upward and work all angles of ankle



**Plantar Fascia**

- Press thumbs into bottom of foot and fingers on top of foot
- Move toes, foot and ankle up and down
- Continue to work entire arch and top of foot