



When you have sore muscles, nothing works to relieve pain and tension better than a massage. Unfortunately, it can sometimes be hard to reach certain spots on your body, and getting professional massages can become expensive. Whether you're using massage for rehabilitation, relaxation, or as part of a warm-up, massage balls can help you work the knots out of those hard-to-reach spots. Best of all, you might even be able to use a ball you already have on hand!

## Practicing the Basics

**Use your hands to roll the ball over your muscles in a circular motion.**

If you can reach the spot that's sore, place the ball over the area, then gently roll it back and forth with the palm of your hand. You only need to move it about 2–3 in (5.1–7.6 cm) at a time.

- ◆ Gently roll the ball against the back of your neck for a soothing way to relieve tension.
- ◆ Roll the massage ball up and down your forearms to help relieve the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome.



**Stop when you find a sore muscle and apply gentle pressure for about 30 seconds.**

Press the ball gently into the muscle to work out the tension and soreness. It's actually this pressure that will give you relief, more than the movement of the ball.

- ◆ The idea is to keep the ball pressing down into the muscle, but it's okay to rock the ball back and forth a little if you need the extra pressure.
- ◆ A sore muscle isn't the same as sharp pain from an injury. If you encounter that, you could be pressing on a nerve, so stop what you're doing. If the pain persists for several days or prevents you from normal activity, see your doctor.



**Don't press on your joints or bones.**

When you're moving the ball, avoid putting too much pressure on your joints or bones. This could cause pain and bruising, or even an injury. If the ball feels uncomfortable when you're using it, you're probably pressing into a bone. Just roll it a little to the side

- ◆ For instance, if you're massaging your neck, roll the ball over the muscles on either side of your neck and spine, rather than directly on top of the bones.
- ◆ It can be harder to feel when you're pressing on a joint, but just try to keep the ball from resting on the bend of your elbows, shoulders, wrists, or knees, in particular.

