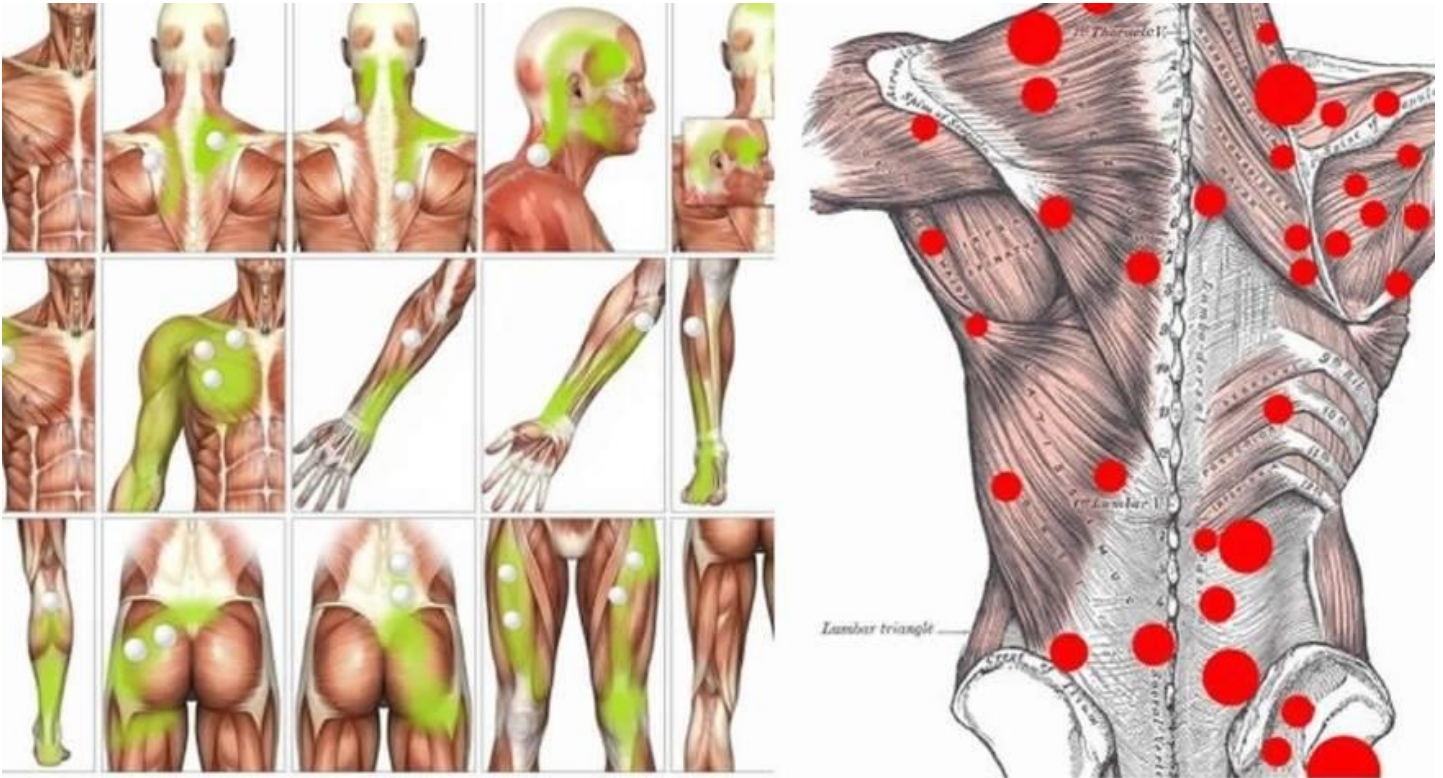


Trigger Point Balls



What is a Trigger Point?

- A tight knot or hyperirritable spot in the muscle's tissue that can cause pain in that specific area or a distant part of the body.
- Can be muscular or myofascial.
- Trigger points are caused by repetitive motion and/or stress to the painful area.
- Trigger points are hot spots. Heat, gentle pressure, oscillations, and gentle stretching are good to prepare the tissue before a trigger ball is used

Using a massage ball for just 30 seconds can improve muscle flexibility

- A study published in the Journal of Sports Rehabilitation found that rolling a massage ball over tight muscles for 30-60 seconds can increase range of motion by up to 10%, making it an effective alternative to static stretching. This is particularly useful for areas like the calves, hamstrings, and shoulders to enhance flexibility and reduce stiffness.

Benefits of Trigger Point Ball Massage

- **Reduces Muscle Soreness:** Sore muscles make you feel sluggish and uncomfortable. Self-massage is a great way to work through that soreness, find relief and get back to normal as soon as possible.
- **Eliminate Tension and Tightness:** Tension and tightness in the body can really hamper performance and make self-motivation difficult. Massage balls work deep into those knots removing tension while also relieving any muscle soreness.
- **Increase Flexibility:** Tension is the enemy of flexibility. It can be found throughout your body: tight tendons and ligaments, as well as fascia. Massage balls are an excellent tool, they provide deep pressure to the muscles without being too painful. They can pinpoint difficult to access points releasing built-up tension from anywhere within reach.
- **Improve Blood Circulation:** This massage is also the best way to get your blood flowing and heal any injuries or soreness. It can also relieve tension in other parts of your body, which will help with overall pain management.
- **Improve Posture:** Every muscle has a different way of working, and when one becomes too tight it can create deep pain. One common example is tension in the back or neck from sitting at an improper angle for long periods of time without releasing some knots to allow more space between them, which leads to long-term discomfort.

Types of trigger point balls

- **Tennis or foam balls:** Easily available at stores with a sporting goods or pets department. Offers a gentler massage because the ball is softer. Disadvantage: the ball can slide off the surface or collapse under pressure.
- **Lacrosse balls:** Sold individually or in a pack of various sizes. Multiple sizes is usually the best option because you can vary the intensity of the massage to your liking, depending on the points you want to release. Start with the softer balls to prepare the musculature.
- **Balls with spikes:** Come in both highly flexible and very rigid material. Work well for the back and feet. The bigger spikes you have, the deeper the massage.
- **Peanut-shaped balls:** Great for stimulating all the muscles near the spine without touching the bones. Neck, between the shoulder blades, over the midback and into the lumbar region this is a great tool. Also works well on the shins, providing pressure on the muscles but not the bone.



- **Point balls or golf balls:** Work well for the feet. Small enough to fit into the space between the bones and release the musculature **Using a TP ball against a wall is one of the best ways to relieve upper back tension**
- A study in the International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy found that applying pressure with a massage ball between the shoulder blades for 60-90 seconds can reduce muscle tightness and improve posture. This technique works by targeting trigger points in the trapezius and rhomboid muscles, which often hold tension from prolonged sitting and poor posture.

When is a trigger point ball NOT recommended?

- Acute injury: open wounds, burns or recent trauma
- Fracture or osteoarthritis
- Active infection
- Recent surgery
- Varicose veins



Treatment Technique

- Apply heat and do some gentle stretches before using a trigger point ball. The tissue will be in a more relaxed condition after these treatments.
- Place the TP ball in the treatment area. Move around: up, down, left & right to find the sensitive tissue.
- Apply steady pressure to the trigger point for 30-60 seconds or until the tender spot releases **OR** perform small movements to better target the tissue. (i.e. with the ball under the upper calf, slowly pump the ankle up & down)
- Focus on slow deep breath to help the body relax & release
- Target no more than 2-3 points in an area. Anymore and the area will be sore.
- Repeated treatments to the same area need to be spaced 2-3 days apart. Higher frequency can cause irritation and more pain.
- Always stretch the muscles after treatment. This helps the muscles return to a relaxed state prolonging the benefits.

Best exercises with TP balls



Treatment Areas Suggestions

- Shoulders - With your back against a wall, place the ball between your neck and shoulder blade. Gently lean into the wall and roll up and down or sideways. Hold still to release any knots as you find them.
- Neck - Use the ball with your opposite hand to rub over your upper trapezius muscle (the slope of your neck into your shoulder)
- Buttocks - Start by placing the ball on a tender spot in your buttock and apply pressure by leaning against the wall with your body. Find the tender spot by rolling up and down and sideways, sometimes it may be necessary to turn the body all the way to the side so that the ball is pressing into the side of your hip. Careful not to press on any bones. You can also do this lying down on the floor or sitting on a chair, but this is not advised for first timers as it's more difficult to control the pressure.
- Feet - In either sitting or standing, take off your shoes and step lightly onto the ball. Roll the ball back and forth on the bottom of the foot.