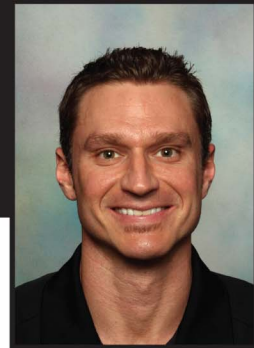


# Dynamic Fitness



BY BRIAN RICHARDSON M.S., NASM-CPT, PES

## Preventative Injury Strategies for MMA Athletes

**C**ombat sports such as MMA generate high levels of mechanical wear and tear followed by a cumulative and chronic injury cycle. Although few soft tissue techniques can compare to the human touch during massage, self myofascial release techniques (SMR), using a foam roller along with static stretching, can pay great dividends when done both before and after training sessions. As repetitive and fluid movements such as punching and kicking ensue, the lats, pecs, hip flexors and quads become prime areas for potential fighter training injuries. Below are three preventative exercises I have implemented throughout the Dynamic Fitness MMA performance protocol. They have allowed our MMA athletes to sustain and maintain optimum levels of performance while staving off debilitating injuries. **G**

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### Foam Roller Self-Release Techniques



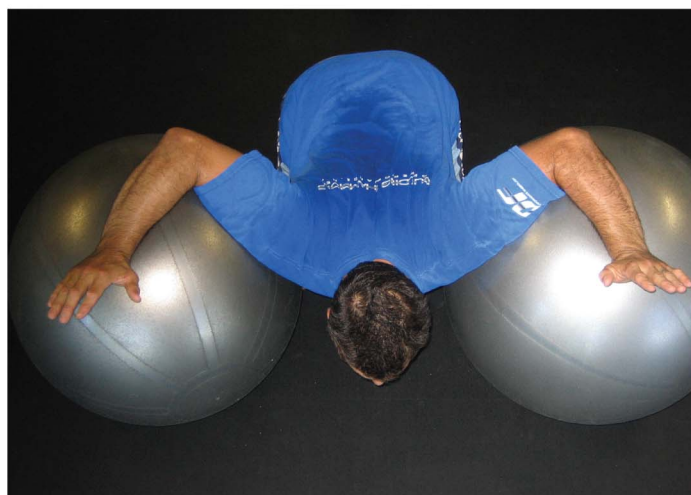
#### LAT MUSCLE TECHNIQUE

As a result of the *lattisimi dorsi* reliance on the central nervous system to decelerate punching and stabilize the hips and spine, it is common for these powerhouse muscles to develop adhesions and knots. Lying on his side with arm extended and thumb upwards, MMA fighter Art Santori places the foam roll just below the armpit, and then moves forward pinpointing any areas of discomfort. The National Academy of Sports Medicine recommends holding this position on the knotted muscles for 20-30 seconds or until pain dissipates.



#### HIP FLEXORS AND QUADRICEPS TECHNIQUE

With the endless myriad of level change, takedown shooting, and kicking performed both in training and competition; it's no surprise that the hip flexors and quads seem all too often to be the bearer of bad injury news. Not only do these particular muscles work in concert to produce stressful movements, they also create structural stability for the hip and knee. Lying face down in a comfortable position, MMA fighter Art Santori places the foam roll at the top of the hip with the leg outstretched. Slowly moving forward, Art puts pressure on the knots, finishing just above his kneecap.



#### PECTORAL MAJOR/MINOR TECHNIQUE

Although just seconds in the cage results in unpredictable situations, striking often leads the way. Not only does this muscle group accelerate punching, it also decelerates motion as well as adding shoulder stability. Using two Swiss balls, MMA fighter Art Santori places his arms at 90 degrees with his elbows perpendicular to his shoulders. He then slowly moves forward creating a comfortable stretch, holding the tension for 20-30 seconds.