Self-Myofascial – Quadratus Lumborum Release

Fascia is a thin sheath of fibrous tissue encasing every muscle fiber, nerve cell and organ of the body. Fascial restrictions may be caused by a prior injury, trauma or surgery that created tightness, weakness or faulty movement patterns. Restrictions in this systemic connective tissue can cause pain, limit range of motion and interfere with the body’s normal healing process. Myofascial Release therapy can help.

Myofascial Release is an advanced manual therapy technique that involves applying gentle, sustained pressure to soften and elongate the fascia. MFR typically requires a therapist to perform this manual therapy. However, there is a type of self-myofascial release you can do at home using the Soma System.

Before we begin, let’s explore our anatomy and palpitation cues.

The Quadratus Lumborum is known for being a prime cause of lower back pain. It contributes to stabilization and movement of the pelvis and spine. Signs and symptoms of QL dysfunction include:

- Deep, aching low back pain worse in the upright posture of sitting or standing.
- Sharp pain when moving the hips/pelvis
- Coughing and sneezing because this causes contraction of the rib cage where the QL inserts
- Difficulty rolling to either side from a face-up position
- The pain can be referred and be mistaken for trochanteric bursitis
- Often will observe an elevated hip on one side if the muscle is tight or spasming

The QL runs deep to the Erector Spinae and so it is likely you will find and trigger points in these muscles during your work.

The iliac crest is the broad, bony surface that comprises the back and sides of the pelvic bowl. Feel the bony ridges of the iliac crest, which rise like gentle arcs on either side of the back of your hips.

The broad, triangular bone at the base of the spine is your sacrum—it is situated between the overhanging sides of the pelvis and is about the size of your palm.
As with all Soma System techniques, try to find a comfortable edge in which you can remain present with your breath and working with sensation, rather than fighting against it. Remember that working with just one Double Track Roller tends to be more intense than distributing your weight across two or even three.

**Technique Cues**

**QL Rolling**

Hold one ball of the Double Track Roller in your right hand. With your knees bent and feet flat, lift your hips, and slide one end of a Double Track Roller on the right side of your spine so that it is just above the ridge of your iliac crest.

Let your knees drop a bit to the right and turn your gaze to the left, mindfully exploring the territory of the lower back, until you discover the deep layers of the back that are embedded underneath the superficial ones. Pause here and take five slow breaths, allowing for plenty of time for the tissues to receive and release with the deep pressure. Return to lying flat on your back.

Repeat on the left side.

**STRETCHING THE QL**

"Child's Pose" in yoga – reaching to each side. Hold for a count of 10 breaths. Relax into the stretch – only going so far left or right as is comfortable and focus on getting a QL Release. Lot's of supporting muscles are stretched in this movement so you will need to draw your attention to the QL for best results.

Self-myofascial work is a great way to break up adhesions and relieve tension but it may cause mild inflammation, especially in the evening. This can be managed by applying an ice pack to the area for 10-15 minutes after your session. Be certain to protect your skin by having a layer of fabric between your skin and the ice pack (clothing or thin towel).