

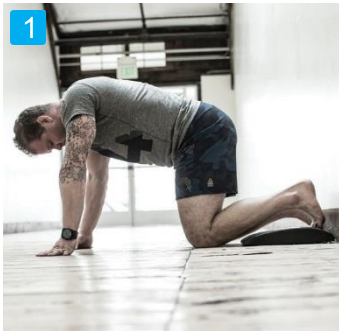
So you think you're a runner—or you want to be one? Even those who know their way around a half marathon can benefit from this 10-day movement program.

By Dr. Kelly Starrett

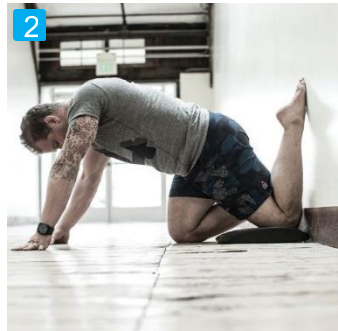
Day 1: THE COUCH STRETCH

Alternate legs and rounds. Perform 10 minutes total.

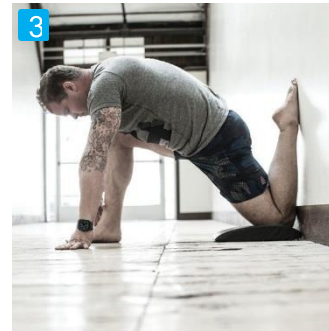
The couch stretch is a weapons-grade technique to open up the hip and open up some slack upstream of the knee. It can help alleviate some of the common types of knee pain that runners confront, like patella tendinitis (aka runner's knee), and help resolve hip and back pain. Meeting this standard will support your mission to sustain good posture both in your running and as you go about your day.



1 Back your feet up against a wall, a box or the upper cushion of your couch. If you're on a hard floor, put down a cushion for your knee.



2 Draw up your right leg and post it in front of you, with your shin vertical.



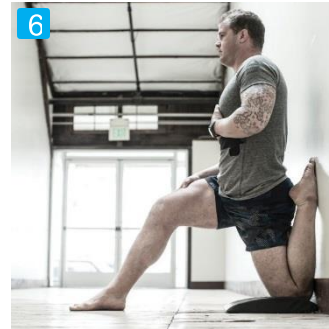
3 Slide your left leg so that your knee fits into the corner where the floor meets the wall (or whatever corner you're using). Make your shin flush with the wall and point your toe.



4 Squeeze your butt and drive the front of your hip toward the ground. Maintain this position for at least one minute.



5 Really crank your hip flexor by lifting your torso (with your glutes still engaged) and hold for another minute.



6 Drive your torso upright, with your glutes and abdominals engaged.

Day 2: CALF SMASH AND PRESSURE WAVE

Alternate sides and rounds. Perform 10 minutes total.

Working on your calves is a gnarly business. Runners know this—these muscles are short, abused and sensitive as hell. The calf smash is a good place to start, and it can be a nice mobilization to throw into your pre-run warm-up. Performing the calf smash will likely reveal tight patches and knots that you didn't know you had. When you find those, swoop in with the pressure wave.



1 Place your calf on top of the roller of your choice, or a pipe or barbell. Use your other leg to apply some extra pressure and weight.



2 Relax your muscles, breathe and sink into the roller to connect with your deepest tissues. Now move into the pressure wave, slowly rolling your lower leg from side to side and kneading your way into the tissues.



3 Contract and relax the tissues by flexing and extending your foot through its full range of motion.

Day 3: CALF SMASH BONE SAW

Alternate legs and bouts. Perform 10 minutes total.

The bone saw is a potent way to work on your dorsiflexion range of motion and the fascial tissues within your feet and ankles. As your ability increases, work through the positions shown in the photos to the point at which you can sit back on your lower leg for optimal pressure. Don't be surprised if you start sweating while you're doing this mobilization—that's your fascial tissues being challenged.



1 Lower yourself so that the front of your ankle complex is supported by an AbMat or a folded towel.



2 Cross your opposite ankle on top of the calf you're working on.



3 You also can move up and down along the tissues, tacking and flossing those matted sliding surfaces.



Strength in Motion

Transform yourself into a runner in 10 days.

Day 3: CALF SMASH BONE SAW (continued)



4
Move your hips up and down in a contract-relax fashion.



5
Sit back to apply as much pressure as you can handle without things getting sketchy. This is the smash part.



6
This is the saw part: Your right leg is sawing into your left calf.



7
Drive your shin up the tissue, looking for knots to destroy.

Day 4: TWO-BALL SMASH AND FLOSS

Do four minutes per side for eight minutes total.

You'll be working your shins in this mobilization, but keep in mind that this work also does wonders for your feet because the two are connected. Think of it like working on puppet strings. Place one ball between the bones of your lower leg (the lateral compartment) and the floor and another ball on the inside of your shin (the anterior compartment). Dig into the tissue from above and below, moving up and down your shin. Say goodbye to shinsplints!



1 Prepare to work along your tibia.



2 While pressing a ball into your tibia with your hands, place another ball between your fibula and the ground to get a double whammy.



3 In addition to flexing and extending your foot ...



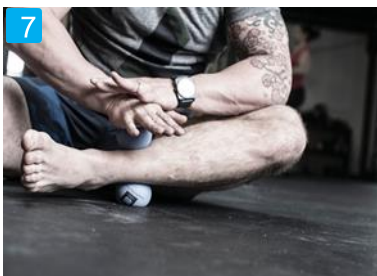
4 ... rotate your foot laterally.



5 Roll the top ball from near your knee toward your ankle.



6 Lift your foot off the ground and contract-relax your ankle to get a deep flossing effect.



7 Work the top ball down your shin. As you move down your tibia, continue flexing and rotating your foot.

Day 5: SHIN MAKEOVER—DOUBLE-BALL ANKLE SMASH AND STRIP

Do four minutes per side for eight minutes total.

Although acute pain and aches from running can be expressed in the feet, an upstream problem is often the culprit. All the tissues that control the movement of your feet are contained in your lower leg. So if you have arch pain, don't forget to create some slack by searching for trouble spots in your shins. This mobilization will dig in and let you know what's going on.



1 Use a double-lacrosse-ball setup or the Gemini. (Pictured is Jill Miller's Yoga Tune Up® Therapy Ball Pair in Tote.)



2 Using your body weight to exert force, slowly strip the tissue, rolling your shin up and down between the balls.

Day 6: PLANTAR MOBILIZATION

Spend 10 minutes exploring your feet.

Using a ball, spend a few minutes working up and down the arch and around your foot. Simply apply pressure-wave motion using your body weight. Hunt down those messy little knots and spend some additional time working through that tissue. Are you watching "Game of Thrones"? It's a good time to get in some plantar work, as well.

The main rule of the game with plantar mobilization is to actively search for acute hot spots in your foot and then use twisting forces, pressure waves and smashes to invigorate the fascial tissues, muscles, nerves and other tissues that make up the leaf spring that is your foot.





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Day 6: PLANTAR MOBILIZATION (continued)



Day 7: ADDUCTOR SMASH

Spend 10 minutes total.

Your adductors are critical to achieving the stabilization you want to achieve each time one of your feet touches the ground. Runners tend to focus on the hamstrings, IT band and quads and blow off the adductors. Your adductors help stabilize your back, so putting in some regular maintenance on them is going to help you.



Position your roller on the inside of your thigh and relax into it to get good depth. Drive the same-side hip toward the floor to deepen the pressure. Explore the adductor for tight spots and work your way into them.

Day 8: ANTERIOR HIP SMASH

Spend 10 minutes total.

This mobilization is an excellent tool to aid you in your pursuit of the standards related to optimal hip function. It's also a good way to alleviate lower-back pain. Use a ball to smash your way into the deep tissues on the front and side of your thigh. Spend five minutes on one side, then stand up and compare it to the other side.



The starting place for working in these areas of the anterior and high glute is right at the top of your hipbone. If you've been putting in some mileage, you're going to feel this mobilization in a big way.



Press your body weight into the ball, and then roll back and forth through the mashed fibers.



Rotate your femur to get some twisting forces into the mobilization. And remember to breathe.

Day 9: HAMSTRING FLOSS

Spend 10 minutes total.

Hamstrings are a runner's best friend, particularly if you're using the powerful muscles of your posterior chain (which is how you should run). Note that hamstrings is plural: You have three muscles that work together to flex your leg. They all deserve your attention. Using a box or chair and a roller, pressure-wave your way through your hamstrings in search of knots and pockets of tight tissue. Give those hot spots special attention.



Using a box or other elevated surface on which you can get leverage, place the roller into your hamstrings.



Rotate, flex and extend your leg to work the tissues from a variety of angles. Be sure that you work up into the high hamstring area.



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Transform yourself into a runner in 10 days.

Day 10: PATELLAR SMASH AND FLOSS

Spend 10 minutes total.

This mobilization can do wonders to release tightness that is being expressed as pain. Prone on the floor, use a ball and your body weight to un-mash the tissues around your kneecap. Lie down, place a ball above your knee and begin exploring the tissues around your kneecap. Rotate your leg, flex, and extend your lower leg and foot and really unglue the area.





Strength in Motion

Transform yourself into a runner in 10 days.

BONUS: KNEE 360

Spend 10 minutes total.

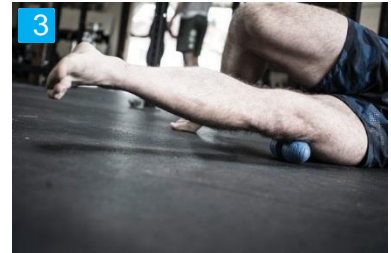
Does your knee hurt? Using a double-lacrosse-ball setup for the outside and another ball for the inside, work around and above your knee to relieve the tissues that spend so much time stabilizing the joint.



1 Pictured on the left, a double-ball setup, and on the right, the Gemini. You also can tape together two lacrosse balls.



2 Position the tool so that you can begin working upstream of your knee.



3 Lean back and work through the tissues.



4 Rotate your leg and use a pressure wave.



5 Add a softball or Supernova to the inside of your upper leg for additional work around your knee.



6 Flex and extend your top leg to pressure-wave through your adductor issues.

BONUS: KNEE FLEXION GAP AND SMASH

Spend 10 minutes total.

This mobilization is a great way to unglue the tissues behind your knee. It's also a great tool for dealing with tight calf muscles. Fold a ball into your knee joint and then flex your leg. Work through the tissues by moving your foot around and posting it underneath you to increase the pressure.



1 Seated on the floor, place a ball behind your knee.



2 Flex your leg around the ball to create a compression force into your tissues. Flex and extend your foot.