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Transforming Body

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Abstract

This is a reflection about the use of balls for body therapy.

Author/Artist Bio

Angelina was born into the performing arts and began studying classical ballet at age eight. She was trained in the Royal Academy of Dance repetotire in England, and then studied with Kansas City Ballet, Boston Ballet, Perry Mansfield School of Performing Arts, and Gelsey Kirkland Academy of Classical Ballet NYC. At twelve she joined The Exeter Little Theatre Company UK, and later continued studying acting at The American Musical and Dramatic Academy LA. Angelina picked up a few other skills including stage combat, martial arts, and stilt dancing. She was very happy to find Yamuna Body Rolling and become an Instructor to save her body from breakdown amidst all the physical work she enjoys.

Keywords

anatomy, bodywork, rolling, joints, muscles, conditioning

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Transforming Body

Angelina Prendergast

“No pain, no gain” and “if it hurts, you’re doing it right” were concepts shoved into my head for as long as I remember. Once I started training in classical ballet at age eight and throughout the next thirteen years, I adopted them as my own truths. This attitude resulted in an incident where I had such a tight Iliotibial Band (I.T.) band (which is the muscle on the outside of the thigh) that it was pulled all the way down my leg and



Paolino Photography

immobilizing my right ankle. I was in New York City at the time training with the famous ballerina Gelsey Kirkland, and the physical therapist told me I needed to work with one of those ‘Yamuna’ balls, created by Yamuna Zake to provide therapy for the body. The pain was preventing me from dancing, so I skipped the rest of my classes for

the day and went to Yamuna Zake's flagstaff studio in the West Village. I took an eye opening class and bought a Yamuna ball. After rolling out my I.T. band and thigh on my own about five times, my ankle was completely mobile and my hips felt better than ever! Magic! I believe that is why ballet stuck with me for that long, just so I could discover the Yamuna work!



Paolino Photography

Yamuna Body Rolling has some similarities to the better-known foam roller, but it works much deeper and has more long-lasting effects. This is because the work follows the logic of the neuromuscular system of the body. Yamuna Body Rolling is just as much about visualizing the inner workings of the body as it is about the science of the physical body. We place the ball at the point where the muscle is beginning - the origin; this is where the tendon is attaching the muscle to bone. Then we slowly roll the ball out the length of the muscle to where it finishes – the insertion; meaning where tendon is

attaching the muscle to another bone. By focusing on bone stimulation, we initiate a release throughout the entire muscle and experience how a muscle fully lets go. The texture of the balls and the way you learn to send your breath to the area you are working, allows a full-release of the muscle. It is a wonderful feeling that results in lightness, looseness, and a tremendous gain of mobility and flexibility. The goal of the work is always on realigning the skeletal structure, which is fairly easy to do once the muscle has taken its full length and is no longer pulling on the bone. The Yamuna ball acts as a bridge between body and mind, and makes sending the breath to specific parts of the body a tangible experience even for body awareness newbies. The benefits are endless and the unique concept of being able to work on your own body is truly a blessing.



I became a certified Yamuna practitioner in 2010, and discovered a much more balanced approach to working with my body physically, mentally, and spiritually. This

resulted in my body flourishing to meet all my physical goals, because I was no longer constantly tight and in pain. Now I use the work as a stellar warm-up, before I train in extremely physically demanding activities, like my recently found passion of Stilt dancing. Afterwards, I'm able to self-massage to prevent soreness and breakdown. Teaching Yamuna Body Rolling has given me a way to further my understanding of anatomy, and how the body reacts to movement. Yamuna is Body Sustainability!



Mae Koo Photography