

Advanced Technological Breakthrough!

Sophisticated engineering meets an easy fix*.....

The amazing, animated, integrated, self-renewing, **and** restructuring *human body* meets.....two tennis balls knotted into a sock...

for Relaxation

Re-integration

Improved oxygenation and circulation

Enhanced nervous system function

Reduced dependency on chiropractic visits

Greater resilience and range of motion

TENNIS BALLS 101

Reduced pain

Increased alertness &

Body awareness!

Materials and parts list:

2 (two) tennis balls

1 (spare) sock

Assembly Instructions:

Push the two tennis balls into the sock; firmly knot sock so that balls are pressed together and knot is located on the long axis of the two balls.

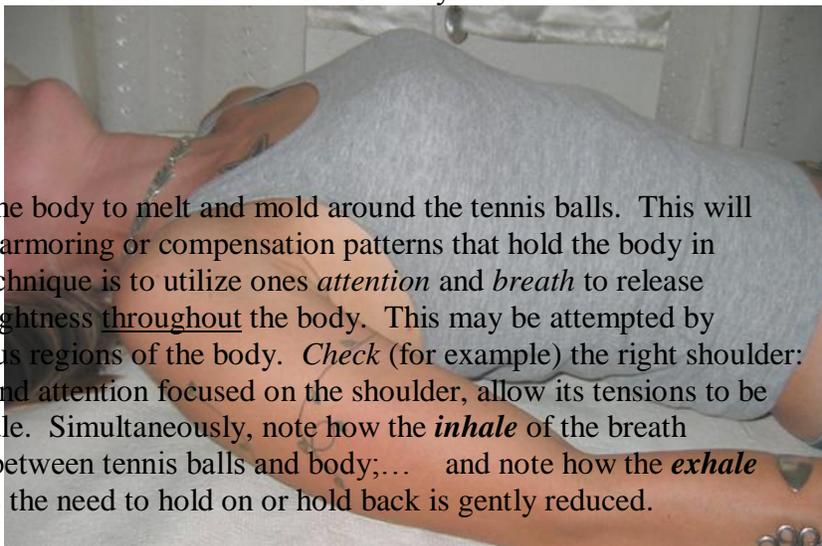
Procedure:

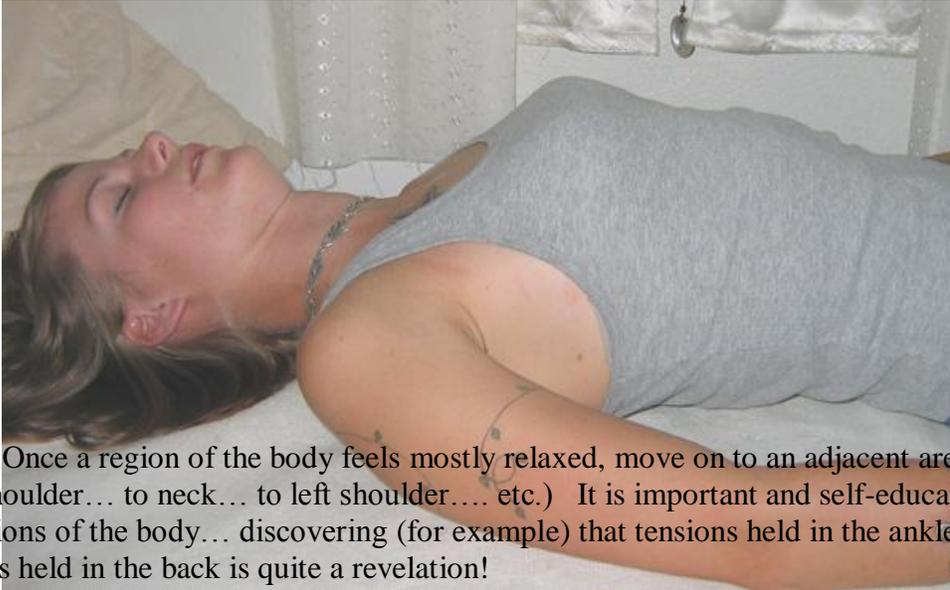
While lying on your back on a carpeted / padded floor with about 3' of space reserved to move into above the head... place the tennis balls symmetrically between the shoulder blades in such a way that there is a ball on either side of your spine straddling the spinous process (the bony knobs at center back of spine).

Step 1: Notice how your first inclination to lie on the balls in such a manner is awkward!! See how the body *spans* the tennis balls.... and that they feel intrusive...

The next step is to **allow** the body to melt and mold around the tennis balls. This will occur in stages as you release the armoring or compensation patterns that hold the body in suspension over the balls. The technique is to utilize ones *attention* and *breath* to release dysfunctional gripping / muscle tightness throughout the body. This may be attempted by systematically checking the various regions of the body. *Check* (for example) the right shoulder: with a full and expansive breath and attention focused on the shoulder, allow its tensions to be released during the extended exhale. Simultaneously, note how the **inhale** of the breath increases the pressure or contact between tennis balls and body;... and note how the **exhale** leads to a kind of surrender where the need to hold on or hold back is gently reduced.

[note the subtle difference between the picture above and the one which follows: in the first photo (the first stage of the exercise), note the bulging SCM (sternocleidomastoid muscle -- diagonal muscle in the neck) and the protrusion of the lower rib cage; then notice the difference in these areas in second photo, after the rigidity has eased].





Once a region of the body feels mostly relaxed, move on to an adjacent area (eg from right shoulder... to neck... to left shoulder.... etc.) It is important and self-educating to visit all the regions of the body... discovering (for example) that tensions held in the ankle may relate to tensions held in the back is quite a revelation!

Once you are satisfied that your whole body has cooperated to allow for the rearranging of the spinal vertebrae in “draping” fashion (rather than “spanning” fashion) over the tennis balls...

...it is time to move on to a new position. This position should be 1 ½” to 2” down the spine. If space has been left on the floor to move into, try scooting to your new position by pushing off with your heels and rolling over the balls. [Alternatively, and when scooting bunches up clothing (or when treating yourself on a bed) -- you can simply re-position balls by hand.]

Work each position along the spine similarly to how the first was worked. One will probably find that it takes considerably less time to clear subsequent positions...

Sometimes you will find a very gnarly part of the spine where it may be questionable as to whether it is healthy to proceed! This is an area where one will need to be wise and especially patient *and present* to reap the rewards should you decide to continue on. Gently, but methodically, visit the various regions of the body with attention and breath. And keep checking in on the level of sensitivity along the spine. When you find that your sensitivity has noticeably diminished, move on. Neighboring areas may also be tender. Be patient. Probably you will succeed in milking out waste materials and easing muscle spasm. This is so good! ... it is very empowering to discover that you can offer so much healing and relief to yourself.

After a few sessions of successfully working the whole spine* with the tennis balls, you might venture further ... such as onto the sacrum. Here one needs to be especially sensitive to the delicate balance between resistance that can be gently released and armoring which may be too resistant to deal with “at the moment”... * *read on for an idea of how you can treat uppermost back – from about “T-5”(thoracic vertebrae #5) up, the body is not heavy enough to effectively treat from floor position unless you position feet so that you can lift your buttocks off the floor.*

TENNIS BALLS 102

Advanced and extended techniques....

*If the tennis balls are “stacked” to form a column with one on top of the other – [it’s a bit of a trick to maintain the column] – the reward is that one can work quite deep into the gluteals (fleshy butt muscles) and receive quite a lot of wonderful release even from early stages of sciatic pain. Find about four major positions on the fleshy gluteals to work thru the process of relaxation as described in “101”. Also, once comfort has been achieved with working onto the

sacrum, keep moving the balls downward while slowly coming to a sitting position and until the balls become lodged against the sitz bones.

*When working from a seated position: one can press into the “quads”-- the muscles on the tops of the thighs, by straddling the femur (thighbone) with the tennis balls... and pressing the balls strongly into the fleshy thigh by leaning onto the tennis balls with the heels of both hands and slowly and deeply rolling down the top of the thigh.

Now get creative! Notice that one can position balls *under* the thigh (on the hamstrings) while again straddling the femur. Perhaps you can even manage to roll them under the thigh in this position. A great position for the tennis balls is up against the sitz bone at the very top of the posterior thigh.

Try, as you get more adventurous, to use tennis balls (in a sock) on your forehead and top of the head for relief...! I start just above the eye orbits and press strongly enough into the frontal bone that I can feel the balls compressing tissue against the bone. Proceed onto parietal bones on top of skull.

You can give tremendous relief to neck muscle attachment points at the base of the skull (*the occiput*) by lying with your tennis balls at the base of the skull. Roll up a small hand towel and place it under the curvature of the neck; this will prevent the tennis balls from rolling away from where you want them to stay put.

Try them (the marvelous tennis balls) trapped between the wall and your body! Positioning them as a column works well for the gluteals as a variation of floor position already mentioned.

For treating the uppermost back... back flexibility permitting, try standing about a foot and a half away from the wall You are standing far enough away from the wall so that when you lean back to trap the tennis balls, your center of gravity is helping to hold you against wall (thus increasing depth of contact). Release your armored and gripping muscles of the upper back by using the now familiar breath -- emphasizing the extended exhale -- and awareness. Savor that deep surrender moment at the end of a long exhaled breath. Move balls up or down the spine of your uppermost back by adjusting your relationship to the wall ... through bending your knees, going up on tiptoes, ...etc..

A fun breath exercise in this position is to begin by allowing lower back to sag back towards the wall. A full expansive inhale initiated with a *diaphragm breath* (a breath that expands the tummy first) continues to inflate the body until your low back moves away from the wall and the torso and legs form a straight line. An extended exhale returns the body to starting position.

Tennis balls in a sock are *great traveling companions* for extended road and plane trips... enjoy refreshing thighs, gluteals, and spine by positioning the balls between yourself and your seat and pressing into the balls. [ps I don't sit through long conferences without my tennis balls close by!]

Please send comments and testimony to seaheart@olympus.net.

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Photo: from *Tennis Balls103* - tying your tennis balls into a sock using a slipknot.