

Body rolling uses balls to manipulate muscles

By [Nancy Arcayna](#)

POSTED HST, Jul 30, 2013



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Senior practitioner Suzen Murakoshi, left, guides Yumi Okamoto, Susan Suzuki, Yuko Fujitani and Tomohiro Fujitani through the usage of Yamuna Foot Wakers (left), and talks the class through rolling into the hip joints (above) during a Yamuna Body Rolling class at the Healing Arts Center in Aiea.

If you're looking to work out some of the kinks, stretch out your muscles and let go of the physical and mental tensions that are dragging you down, Yamuna Body Rolling might just be the thing.

Practitioners roll their body over specially designed balls, ranging from 4 to 10 inches, in specific sequences, stretching, aligning and elongating the muscles and opening the joints to release tension, increase blood flow and improve range of motion. There are specific routines for different parts of the body, from your feet, ankles, calves, knees, hips, back to your shoulders, hands and wrists, and even your face.

The system was devised by master teacher and healer Yamuna Zake of New York City.

Visiting senior practitioner Suzen Murakoshi is teaching special workshops on Yamuna body rolling at the Healing Arts Center in Aiea through late August. "With each and every one of our cells, all of our life experiences are stored," she said. "Not only is our emotional baggage carried within our brain through memories, but also within our bodies on a cellular level. Letting go is a lifelong process as we move from one phase to the next."

Rolling around on the squishy balls feels awkward at first, but after working one side, I could feel an obvious difference. Working some areas of the body was a painful exercise, but I managed to breathe through the discomfort and the end result was worthwhile. I left the class feeling lighter and more centered. And my body felt in better alignment.

No experience is needed and it's suitable for all fitness levels. The instructor showed where to put the balls and came around to each participant to make adjustments. Even couch potatoes should feel energized after a session; an athlete might find relief from tight muscles. And if you're injured, direct pressure on the injured area is avoided, with the rolling done around the area.

As a former Broadway dancer for nearly 10 years, including performing in "The King and I" and "A Chorus Line" and doing eight shows a week on the road or in New York City, Murakoshi said she was plagued with injuries, "especially as I aged."

"Yamuna has taught me how to work with the balls so that I can now snowboard, dance and practice yoga while being relatively pain free. If something hurts because of a structural issue, 9 times out of 10, I can fix it myself."

The balls used for the feet are prickly and painful to stand on but the positive effects are evident as soon as you step off. If it's your first time, you may have to step off the ball and take a break, but take a deep breath and just go with it.

"Tryouts" features exercise and wellness classes and other fitness activities.

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YAMUNA BODY ROLLING

>> Healing Arts Center, Aiea:
10:30-11:30 am Mon & 5:30-6:30 pm Wed. \$15 or \$72/6 classes.
Call 484-4881.

>> Shambhala Meditation Center, Aikahi Park, Kailua: 6-7 p.m. Mon & Thu. Cost: \$20. Call 352-3947.

>> Kaimuki, 3959 Koko Drive: 9-10:30 a.m. every other Sat. \$20.
Call Connie Moore, 735-7107.