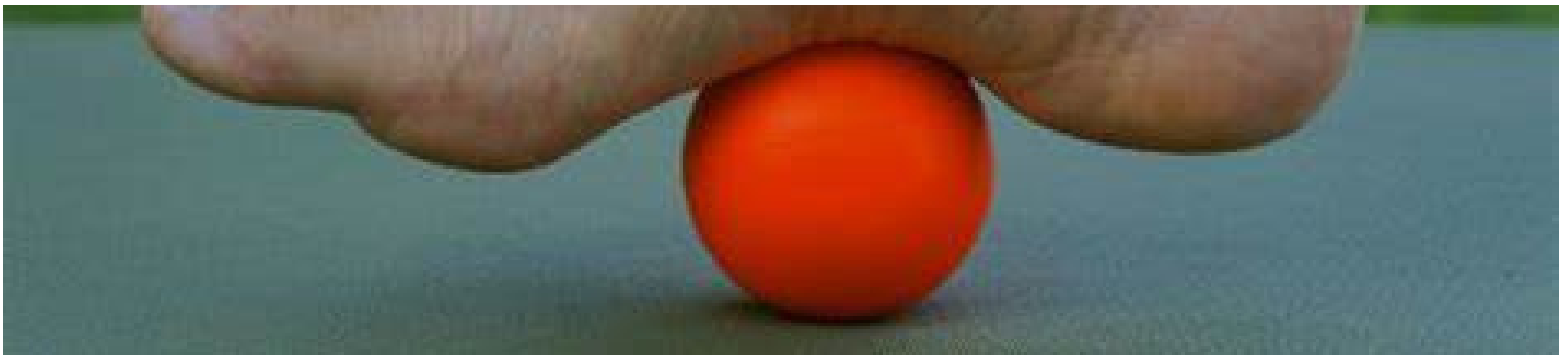


TRIGGERING THOSE KNOTS



What Are Trigger Points?

Trigger points are also referred to as “knots” in muscles. These points are areas of increased tension and contraction of a muscle that causes pain, weakness, and decreased range of motion. This area is on red alert, and trigger point release can be a way to override the red alert signals and give you some pain relief. Firefighting and EMS involve heavy lifting, awkward position, repetitive movements, and joint stress. All of which can contribute to muscle overuse and trigger points. **If left untreated, these can lead to:**

- Chronic pain
- Reduced joint mobility
- Increased injury risk
- Poor performance in the field

Signs you may have trigger points:

- Deep aching pain in a muscle that won't go away on its own
- Persistent muscle stiffness or tightness
- Limited joint range of motion
- Sensitivity when pressing on certain areas of muscle
- Pain that radiates from a specific part of your muscle

Common Hot Spots

- **Upper Trapezius (“Traps”)** – from gear weight and overhead tasks
- **Lower Back (Quadratus Lumborum/QL)** – from lifting and twisting
- **Forearms and Hands** – from gripping tools and hoses
- **Hip Flexors and Glutes** – from crouching or sitting
- **Calves** – from stair climbing, standing for long periods, and mounting and dismounting units

Preventing the Knots

Start with treating the source of the issue! Not sure why these knots keep occurring? Make a confidential appointment with Dr. Kelsey Loftus, MCFRS Athletic Trainer. All appointments with her are confidential and your information is not shared with FROMS in any way. Click on the link at the bottom of this page or contact Dr. Kelsey Loftus directly at her email and cell in the info banner to the right.

Incorporating the following activities into your daily and weekly routine can lead to less tight muscles and better muscular performance:

- **Trigger point release with a lacrosse ball** (see attached lineup drill and NEW video!)
- **Regular mobility**- incorporating mobility work for even just 5 minutes a day can improve and prevent knots.
- **Hydration and nutrition**- muscles recover better when well-hydrated and fueled.
- **Professional help**- invest in a monthly massage, seek out an acupuncturist, or schedule an individual appointment with Dr. Kelsey Loftus to find the root of why you're experiencing tension.

Looking for a guided trigger point release routine? Check out the attached Trigger Point Lineup Drill and NEW guided video!



Dr. Kelsey Loftus

*Certified Athletic Trainer
MCFR Health & Injury
Prevention*

Did you know that you have someone working within MCFRS to provide you with quality injury care, injury prevention, and functional assessments to lengthen your time on the floor and keep you out of FROMS?

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Starting this year, all station visit requests will be submitted through the link attached to the QR code below. Any station in any battalion can sign up for a station visit with the choice of activities, now including:

- [In-station injury clinic](#)
- Trigger point release work
- Group instruction on prevention of common injuries (low back pain, shoulder immobility, or any area of your choosing!)
- And more!

***ALL APPOINTMENTS ARE SAFE AND CONFIDENTIAL AND CANNOT EFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO STAY ON THE FLOOR WORKING!**



kelsey.tanler@montgomerycounty.md.gov



(240) 962-0147

[CLICK HERE TO MAKE AN INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENT!](#)



Trigger Point Lineup Drill

Need some quick pain relief for a sore muscle or achy knot?

Trigger point release is an easy way to relieve pain in the short term while you get on track with incorporating the long-term treatment of joint mobility. All you need is a lacrosse or tennis ball!

WHAT ARE TRIGGER POINTS?

Trigger points are also referred to as “knots” in muscles. These points are areas of increased tension and contraction of a muscle that causes pain, weakness, and decreased range of motion. This area is on red alert, and trigger point release can be a way to override the red alert signals and give you some pain relief.

PREVENTING TRIGGER POINTS

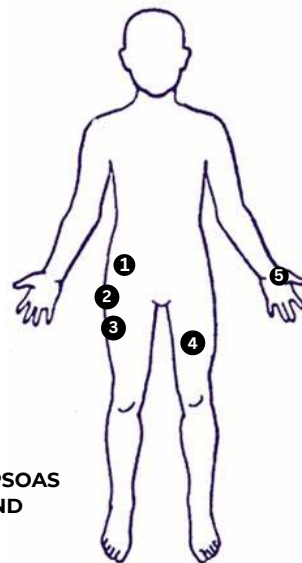
- **Regular exercise** to keep muscles mobile, strong, and resilient to stressors.
- **Managing stress** which can cause muscle tension (especially in your shoulders and neck).
- **Having a proper warm-up routine before physical activity** (check out Dr. Loftus' many mobility programs!).
- **Good posture** can help to keep you from overstressing muscles that control posture like your pecs, between your shoulder blades, and your low back.
- **Dealing with your injuries!** Talk to Dr. Loftus about any injury or discomfort concerns.

HOW DO I RELEASE THESE TRIGGER POINTS?

By applying sustained overpressure to these trigger points or knots, you are tiring out that muscle. That area of muscle is in overdrive, so the way to turn it off is to tire it to a point that it is forced to relax. The pressure overrides the pain signals to your brain and tells your body to send more blood flow there to help heal whatever the issue is. And thus, the trigger point or knot releases!

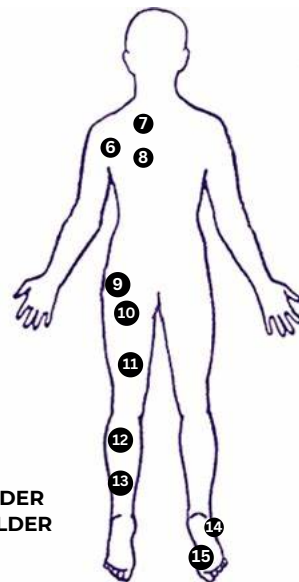
1. Place your lacrosse or tennis ball between you and a flat surface (can be the floor or wall).
2. Place the area of issue, where the trigger point or knot is, over top of the ball.
3. Try to lay as much of your body weight over top of the ball. Letting yourself relax and “melt” over top of the ball.
4. Remember to take deep breaths and focus on relaxing that area of muscle.
5. Hang out in this spot for 1 to 3 minutes or as tolerated.
6. Drink lots of water and stay moving after to help with blood flow and flush out the waste that can be released from the muscle!

FRONT



- 1.) HIP FLEXOR/PSOAS
- 2.) UPPER IT BAND
- 3.) MID IT BAND
- 4.) QUAD
- 5.) THUMB

BACK



- 6.) LATS
- 7.) UPPER SHOULDER
- 8.) LOWER SHOULDER
- 9.) PIRIFORMIS
- 10.) GLUTE
- 11.) HAMSTRINGS
- 12.) UPPER CALF
- 13.) LOWER CALF
- 14.) OUTSIDE OF FOOT/ARCH OF FOOT
- 15.) BALL OF FOOT/TOES

CLICK HERE OR SCAN THE QR CODE FOR A QUICK, EASY TRIGGER POINT RELEASE ROUTINE THAT YOU CAN FOLLOW IN LESS THAN 10 MINUTES!

