



FOAM ROLLING



Foam rolling, or self-myofascial release, should be an important component to every athlete's training routine and can be extremely beneficial as it prevents injury, increases circulation to muscles, increases joint mobility, and because it feels so good after you are done. Be warned though, it DOES NOT usually feel good during.

Imagine the scales of justice for a moment, on one side of the scale you have training and on the other side you have foam rolling, massage, stretching, resting, etc. If you do too much of one area, your scale will become unbalanced which will lead to injury or poor performances athletically. So, if you are one of those athletes who just trains themselves into the same hole every year and the same old injuries keep creeping up, learn from your previous mistakes and start doing some foam rolling!

What is fascia?

Fascia can be described as a casing surrounding each muscle that helps to give the muscle greater structure and separates individual muscles and organs. Fascia was described to me in school as a "sausage casing", but it actually makes total sense and is a great way to think of it. Fascia is extremely fibrous and dense and can become bunched up in certain areas forming a **trigger point**. These trigger points are the areas that can be very painful when foam rolling, but need to be released to enable the muscle to function properly. Trigger points are caused by muscles being overused, traumatic events, or general training. Since cyclists use their glutes, quads, hamstrings, and calves when they pedal their bike, you can bet there will be many trigger points in these muscles!

How to foam roll

1. Find an area where you have some room to breathe, won't be in the way, and are comfortable moving around in.
2. Use a yoga mat or other forgiving surface underneath your body.
3. Pick a foam roller density that gives you enough pressure, but doesn't cause your eyes to water from the pain. Usually the darker the roller the more dense it is.
4. Start from the top and work your way down. So, upper back -> lower back -> hips, etc.
5. Spend a few minutes rolling each individual muscle group and always start with less time initially. Once you have some practice rolling, you can spend more time on the muscles that are more of a problem for you and less time on the muscles that aren't as tight for greater efficiency.
6. When you find those pesky trigger points, work each one individually for 20-30 seconds and move on. You can either hold direct pressure, or perform quick back and forth and/or rocking over them to release them.
7. Smile at how good you feel and how loose those muscles are afterwards!

Thoracic / Cervical Spine Mobility

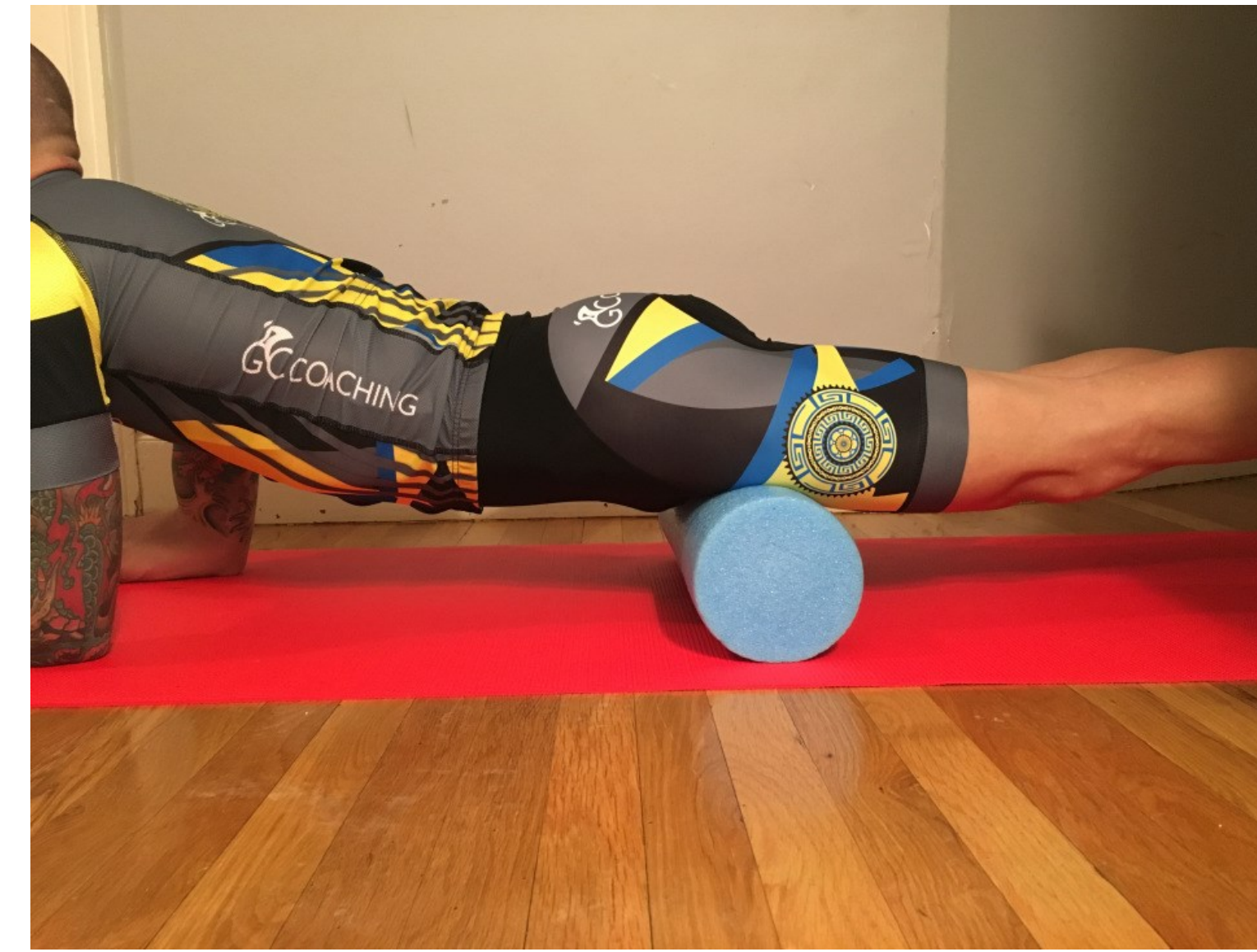


Starting Position

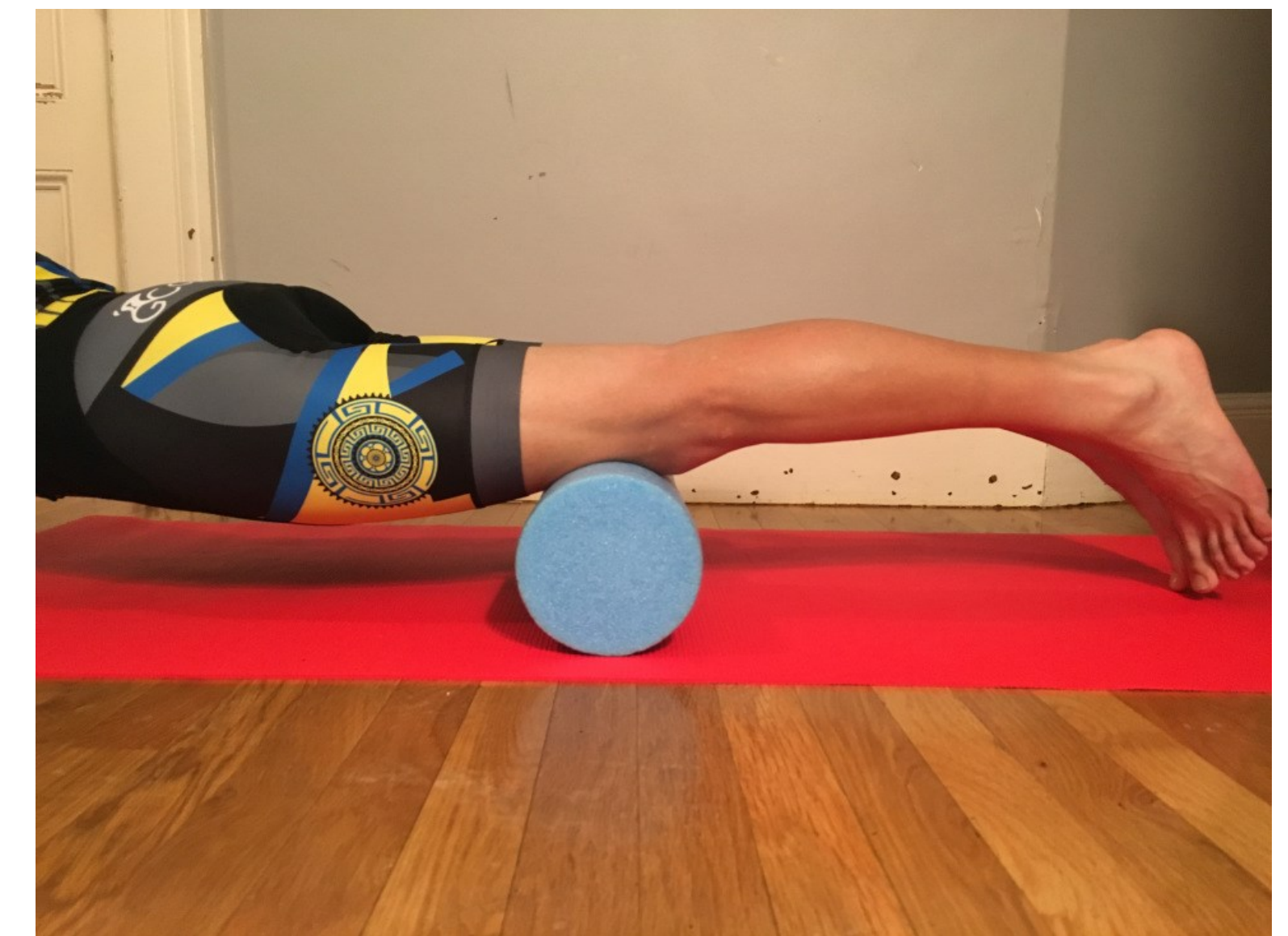


Ending Position

Quadriceps



Starting Position



Ending Position

Piriformis / Glutes



Starting Position



Ending Position

Iliotibial Band

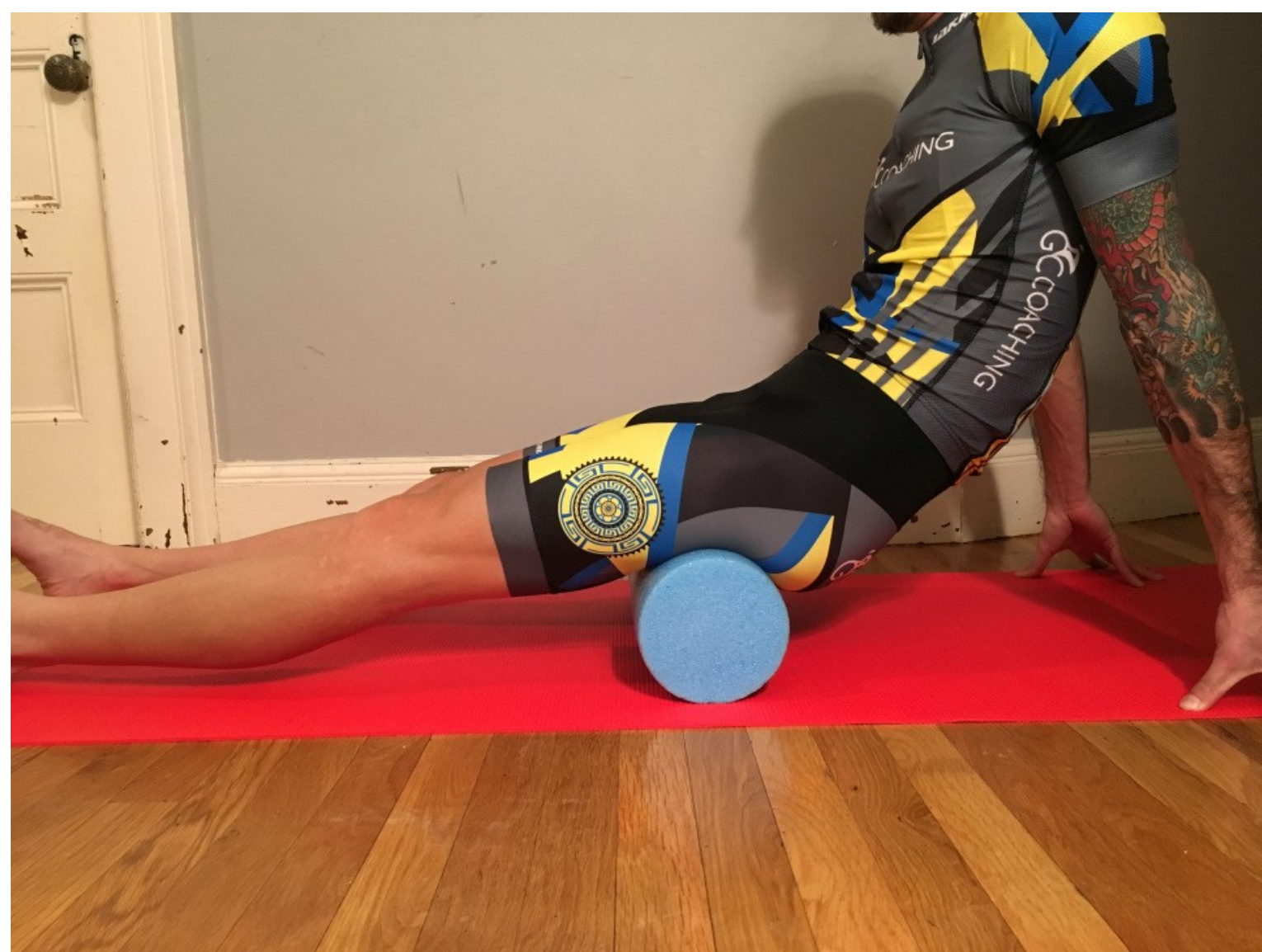


Starting Position

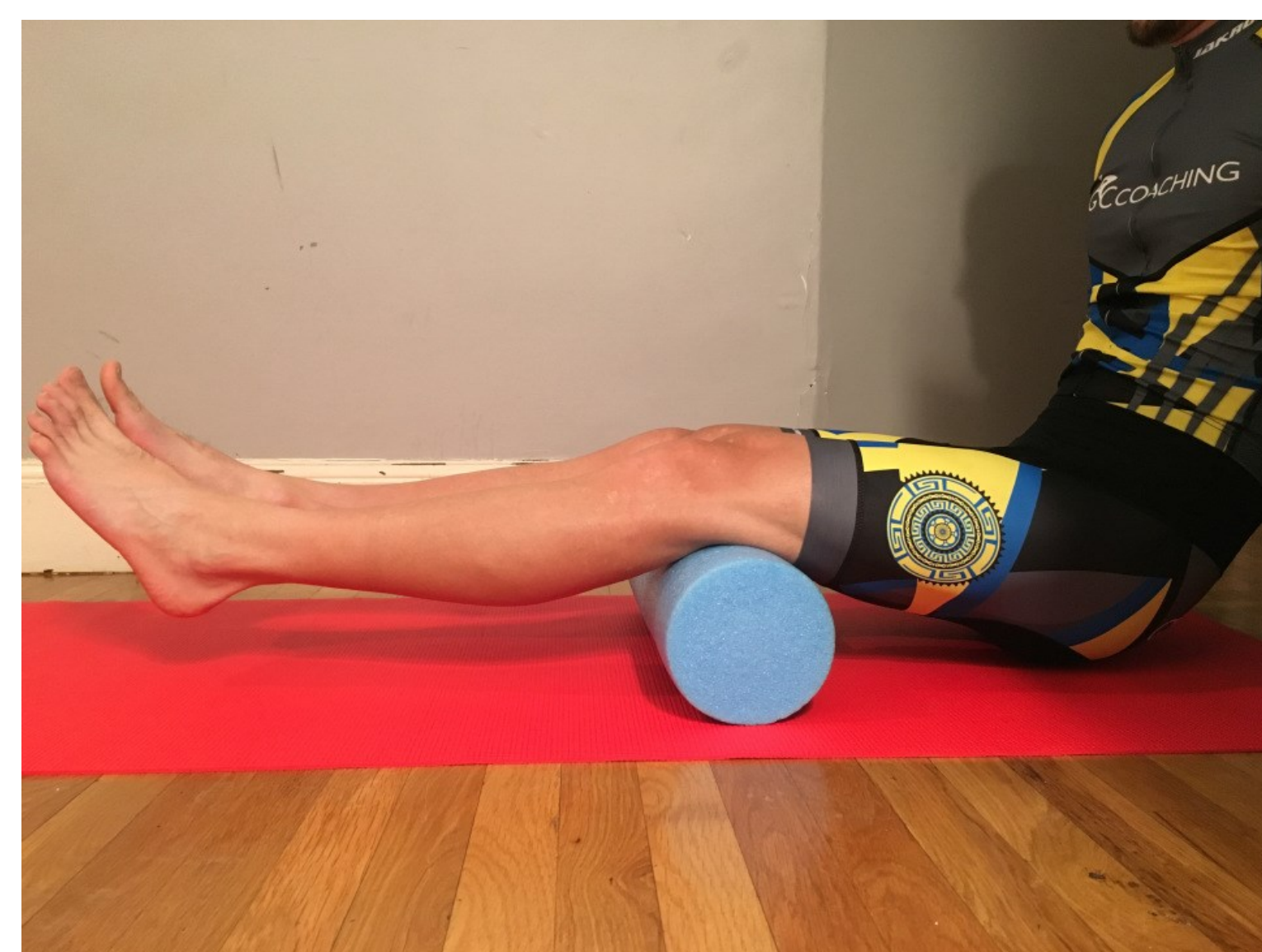


Ending Position

Hamstrings



Starting Position



Ending Position

Calves



Starting Position



Ending Position