

Yamuna® Body Rolling Hands-On Table Treatment

Roll On to Better Sessions

by Yamuna Zake

A ball plus a table may seem like an unusual combination, but in fact, integrating a small ball into hands-on work benefits both client and practitioner.

In the Yamuna® Body Rolling (YBR) table treatment, we use four- to six-inch balls to lengthen and tone muscles, decompress joints and realign, or reorganize, the body. This approach eliminates painful pressure for the client, while minimizing stress on the practitioner's body.

This technique has three distinctive features:

1. We use our hands above and the ball below to work both sides of the body at once.
2. The ball acts as a fulcrum for applying sustained traction outward, away from the center of the body.
3. The combination of traction plus working both sides of the body at the same time results in equal release, front to back and side to side, bringing muscle groups into balance.

Mary Schroeder, a massage therapist in Miami, Florida, has incorporated YBR into her practice. "I'm a small person, and the YBR treatment makes working with larger clients much easier," she says. "I can give people deeper releases with relatively little effort and no strain on my hands or wrists.

"This brings my clients back for more," Schroeder continues. "I also find the treatment to be quite versatile. When clients need more range of motion in the hip or shoulder, I can add just those parts of the treatment to my regular routine."

Reorganizing the body

In YBR, we focus on aligning the body while we work on it. Over time, people's bodies develop various misalignments, to the point where they no longer know what it's like to be correctly aligned. The YBR table treatment corrects all of these misalignments by addressing soft tissue. More than simply aligning one bone to another, this work reorganizes the entire body, putting all the bones and muscles in their correct places so the body functions better.

The practitioner approaches a session with the goal of aligning and balancing the client's body so all the muscles—front, back and sides—have equal range of motion, length and tone. The intention is to answer this: "What's the condition of this body now, and what would it take to reorganize it from the feet to the head, so all the bones and muscles are in their correct places and the neuromuscular system works as it's meant to?"

I've learned when you give the body information in a way it understands, the body takes that information and uses it to function correctly. By holding joints in sustained traction, the YBR table work gives the neuromuscular system time to take in the information it needs about optimal length and proper alignment. When clients stand up after a session, they feel stronger and more aligned, and they have the muscle tone to maintain this alignment, and the associated improvement in function, without tensing or contracting.



Deep shoulder release. The ball makes it possible to work deep into the joint without any pain for the client.

Instead of using direct pressure or cross-fibering, we apply pressure from the upper surface of a body part down into the ball while holding that area in traction, working from bone out to tendon and then into muscle. The traction sets bone alignment and guides the muscle in its natural direction of release, so it takes its full length and conforms to the new alignment. Muscle tone increases as well.

The YBR table treatment is easy for any hands-on practitioner to do and can be combined with other modalities; for example, you can use it during a massage

prevented them from sitting or moving around on the ball. The adjustments enabled clients to do the routines and also gave them an experiential awareness of muscle release.

Realizing these adjustments were actually a therapeutic modality in themselves, I developed the YBR hands-on treatment. It was originally done on the floor, like YBR self-therapy. Then destination spa Canyon Ranch, which had integrated YBR into its programming, asked me to turn the hands-on work into a table treatment. I created a series of one-hour sessions targeting both the whole body and

This table treatment can be used for any part of the body.



Rocking the hip around the ball. We use four- to six-inch balls to lengthen and tone muscles, decompress joints and realign, or reorganize, the body.



Tractioning the head out from the neck. The YBR table treatment corrects misalignments by addressing soft tissue.

treatment specifically to decompress joints and increase mobility.

Development

The YBR hands-on treatment derives from the YBR self-therapy system, which provides a way for massage therapists to release the repetitive stress patterns they develop in their practices. In our YBR classes, we use hands-on adjustments to show people how to do the various routines. Often students lack a tactile, sensory awareness of how the work is supposed to feel, and we found applying hands-on pressure enabled them to experience this faster. So, we added hands-on adjustments to our YBR practitioner trainings.

YBR practitioners went on to use these teaching assists with clients whose restrictions or other body problems

specific parts: legs, hips, shoulders and arms. This table treatment, originally exclusive to Canyon Ranch, is now available to any practitioner. It can be used for any part of the body.

How it works

First, the client lies prone or supine on the table, with the ball placed under the body part being worked. If the practitioner is doing a complete YBR session, the client wears workout clothes. If a massage therapist is adding a part of the YBR treatment into a regular massage session, she can lift the sheet from the side of the table, wrap it around the client and do the treatment through it.

The therapist's hands work the upper side of that area, tractioning it away from the center of the body and down into and around the ball. This action stimulates the

tendons and begins to elongate and align that part. The general principle is to free all the muscles at each joint, then work the joint to realign it and create as much range of motion as possible.

In a whole-body session, we work in a specific order. First, we free the legs from the pelvis, placing the ball just below the ischium and then moving it down the thigh toward the knee. The pressure into the ball, together with sustained traction, allows the leg to unwind and creates length. We continue working down to the toes, observing what is needed to align each joint and create intra-articular space. At the knee, for example, we apply double traction, holding both above and below the joint and tractioning in opposite directions.

Once the leg muscles at the front, back and sides are all as balanced and elongated out of the hip as possible, we place the ball at the hip joint and work all around the hip. The ball makes it possible to work deep into the joint without any pain for the client; instead, the work feels good. Moreover, the therapist can easily rock the client's hip around the ball with no stress on the back, fingers or wrists. This technique frees the femur from every angle, creates great range of motion in the hip joint and aligns the leg correctly with the pelvis.

Turning the client face down, we place the ball under the abdomen. The goal here is to connect the abdominal and back muscles. Many people have low-back problems, and the general theory is a healthy low back requires strong abdominals. By working the muscles that support the spine while the ball is under the abdomen, the YBR treatment brings length and tone to both sides simultaneously.

Next, we move the ball up to the sternum and create a horizontal release by spreading the ribs away from the spine. This action also creates more upward length in the spine. When the ball is at the top of the sternum, we work out from the spine and sternum toward the shoulder joint, then free that joint and work down the arm. Working up the torso in this way connects front and back and creates length through the entire torso. By treating the front and back simultaneously, we show the neuromuscular system how the front and back muscles are supposed to work together to support the entire structure.

With the client now turned face up, we place the ball at the center of the sacrum and work the sacroiliac joints, aligning the pelvis correctly in relation to the sacrum, spine and legs. We then work the abdominals with the hands. The ball is then moved up the back, and when it is between the shoulder blades, we spread the ribs out from the sternum, then align the scapula, humerus and clavicle and release the shoulder joint. Lastly, we work the front, back and sides of the neck.

Working one muscle group, or just the front of the body,

does not tell the body how to integrate the part being worked into the function of the body as a whole. By contrast, when clients get off the table after the YBR treatment, they can feel that both front and back muscles have developed length and tone, and they sense how these areas naturally work together.

Benefits to your practice

We have found clients appreciate the YBR hands-on treatment. The work itself feels good, so the session is pleasurable and they experience immediate results.

Since freeing a joint that has been restricted for years releases a tremendous amount of energy, clients feel energized the moment they get off the table. The body feels lighter and moves more easily. For athletes, a YBR table treatment improves performance. Those who train for marathons and triathlons find the treatment prevents joint breakdown. Since it does not involve direct pressure but rather decompresses and aligns joints, it can be done both the day before and day after an event.

"I can accomplish a great deal in an hour, since the YBR treatment lets me work into more sensitive areas like the pubic bone," says YBR practitioner Megwyn White of New York City. "Many clients tell me they continue to feel releases happening for a week after a session. Because people know this work creates true structural change, my client retention has improved. People say, 'This makes sense to my body,' and they're inspired to keep up the work."

Maura Durkin, one of White's clients who has had many YBR sessions, says, "The YBR treatment feels blissful, like nothing I've experienced before. It's an integration of pleasurable and therapeutic experience. I feel as if my body has been repaired and rejuvenated."

When combined with the YBR self-therapy, the table treatment becomes a complete approach that empowers people to be active in their own healing. Teaching clients routines they can do at home will lock in the effects of a session and make the next one more effective.

Today, when so many people have financial restrictions and want to get the most out of a body treatment, being able to offer this value will increase your referrals.

Yamuna Zake has created five bodywork systems: Yamuna® Body Logic, her original hands-on treatment; the YBR Table Treatment; YBR self-therapy; Yamuna® Foot Fitness; and the Yamuna® Save Your Face self-therapy and hands-on treatment. She has developed professional trainings for practitioners of these systems and authored two books about YBR self-therapy. She owns the flagship Yamuna Studio in New York City and conducts trainings around the world. Contact her at www.yamunabodyrolling.com. 