

Workout of the week in Boulder: Rossiter System

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Silvana Busch, left, uses her feet to stretch the connective tissue in Gregg Lee's arm and

Silvana Busch, left, uses her feet to stretch the connective tissue in Gregg Lee's arm and shoulder at Body Balance Boulder, (Mark Leffingwell / Daily Camera).

Body Balance, 2747 Iris Ave., Boulder, 720-838-4009,
therossitersystem.com,bodybalanceboulder.com

Instructor: Silvana Busch, of Boulder, originally from Brazil. Busch has been teaching fitness classes since 1994. She also has experience in aerobics and trapeze and has taught yoga, been a personal trainer, massage therapist and performed various forms of bodywork, such as Thai massage, Shiatsu, yoga therapy and more.

She learned about Rossiter in 2013, when she was trying to relieve a shoulder injury stemming from overuse. She had tried yoga, Rolfing, acupuncture, deep-tissue massage, yoga and other methods, but nothing helped until she tried Rossiter. She says her pain was relieved 60-70 percent after the first session, 90 percent after the second and was gone after the third. She says it stayed away for about seven months, but with regular Rossiter, stretching and strengthening, she now can keep the pain away.

She learned how to perform the Rossiter techniques because, she says, "I was so amazed my pain was gone. I want everybody to feel the same way I felt."

Busch is the only registered practitioner in Boulder listed on the Rossiter website. There are three practitioners in Louisville, one in Lafayette and many others throughout Colorado. She is conducting training in a few weeks and expects to see it in many more gyms soon.

What is the workout? In short, Busch calls Rossiter "powerful, two-person stretching for pain relief, injury prevention and recovery that is completely natural — no drugs, shots or surgery."

Rossiter is deep-tissue stretching, using the practitioner's foot (heel) applied to specific parts of the fascia, while you move your body through various, specific range-of-motion exercises, which move the static pressure deeper and deeper into your connective tissue. This restores mobility, loosens deep tightness quickly and frees up space so your body can release and heal itself.

Pain often can be caused by shortened connective tissues, which decrease the space between muscle fibers, increasing irritation on nerve endings, according to Busch. Connective tissue might shorten from injury, overuse or age.

Healthy connective tissue is naturally loose, Rossiter teaches, which allows for plenty of blood circulation, oxygen and nutrients.

What's different? Most people feel pain relief immediately, Rossiter's website says. The harder you work during your treatment, the more results you will see; Rossiter is not passive, and it is not massage. Rossiter addresses deep connective tissues.

It is also different than Rolfing, in that practitioners use their feet instead of hands, arms and fingers and do not stay in a single area very long, and Rossiter is an actual workout. You must move, push hard, dig deep and be active. In fact, the practitioner holds a certain point on your body while you do all of the moving. This is different than Thai massage, which — although your body moves — is typically passive and relaxed.

Thai massage feels good. Rossiter hurts so good. It is very intense and challenging.

Also, because Rossiter practitioners use their feet, it's much easier on their bodies and they are equally as fresh at any time of the day.

Muscles are not squeezed. Weight is simply applied, without pushing.

How much does it cost? \$50-\$70, depending on length of session. Busch usually recommends two to three sessions.

Level: All levels, including pregnant women and people recovering from surgery or injury. Not recommended for people who have recently had a cortisone shot.

Typical clients have pain in their lower back, hips, knees, neck, shoulders, arms, feet or elbows. Busch says it can also help Restless Leg Syndrome, headaches, migraines, tight muscles and tendonitis. It's also commonly used to improve athletic performance and by CrossFit participants.

Athletes with asymmetry stemming from tightness are more likely to injure themselves, Rossiter advocates say.

When: By appointment. Sessions are typically 30-45 minutes.

Busch is conducting a partner workshop to teach couples how to do Rossiter techniques on each other 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, \$50 per person.

She is training Rossiter coaches Feb. 21-22.

I had two 45-minute sessions on my shoulders, one week apart. I did not need a third session because my problematic left shoulder was completely released and pain-free after two sessions, and weeks later it remains so.

What to prepare: You'll probably be on the ground, so wear comfortable clothes. Bring water to drink afterward.

Muscles worked: Rossiter works the deep, connective tissue closest to the joints, and you go deeper and deeper as you go.

It stretches and relieves the fascia, like a foam roller, except imagine that times 100.

What I loved: No massage is ever deep and hard enough for my shoulders. For years, I have felt this ache in my shoulders that needed relief, and it got worse and worse until I had constant rotator-cuff soreness and shortened mobility I and worse until I had constant rotator-cuff soreness and shortened mobility. I knew I did not need surgery, but I also knew it was getting worse, and I didn't know how to reverse that. I was sick of sitting around every night with a bag of frozen peas on my shoulder so I could numb it enough to fall asleep.

Rossiter is logical to me. Finally, someone dug deep enough to relieve the points that had been locked up. Combining this deep work with range-of-motion exercises was an effective way to access all dimensions of my tight fascia.

I loved the control I had; ultimately, I decided how hard to work. I am glad I didn't go to the doctor or get mixed up in pain pills.

Bottom line: It worked. I was able to measurably see my range of motion improve 20 degrees after one session.

What I didn't like: I'm not going to lie. There are times where this hurts. It's hard core. I definitely cursed at Busch a few times and I'm also pretty sure I threatened her life. But as soon as she stepped off, I was overwhelmed with a blissful rush of relief like I haven't felt in years. And that felt good enough to make me come back for more.

How I felt later: It took a few days and lots of water before the soreness went away. But now, my shoulders feel brand new.

I will absolutely keep this on my self-care list and return for maintenance if I feel the tightness returning. I am even interested in taking the partner class so I can do this at home.

Know of any interesting workouts? Tell us about them so we can check them out: heckela@dailycamera.com, 303-473-1359 or twitter.com/Aimeemay.