





# DOES YOUR BODY NEED AN MOT?

World-renowned osteopath, performance coach and recovery specialist **James Davies** employs a 360-degree holistic approach to heal bodies and help clients perform at their best. In an extract from his new book *Body*, he explains the importance of regularly resetting with a Monthly Overhaul Treatment (MOT)

**T**o remain in the best condition, we need to spend some time every month releasing all the tension held in our body. This is a gift to ourselves. It is a time when we give ourselves permission to do something relaxing and enjoyable, which also benefits our body. A Monthly Overhaul Treatment (MOT) is a time to reset your body and reward yourself. You

might have a massage once a year on holiday, but why leave it at that? Maybe you cannot afford to and, if that's the case, I've devised an introduction to all the skills you'll need to ease the strains on your body from the previous month.

If you can afford a treatment every month, then consider seeing a massage therapist, osteopath or chiropractor for a restorative

session. They can help reset your body, and you could alternate it with a sauna or ice bath at a spa. By seeing a therapist or going through the below practices, you can tease out stresses and strains you've accumulated in the previous month and reset yourself for the coming weeks. This will help reduce injuries, lower stress levels and leave you feeling more energised.

## MASSAGE GUNS

In recent years, massage guns have become very popular. This is partly because you can use them by yourself on most areas of your body. They have also become very portable. Now you can get wireless ones that weigh well under a kilogram. Their cost varies widely, but if you are going to be using it a lot, then you should invest in a more expensive massage gun as the cheaper ones tend to break. The expensive ones are also quieter. They usually come with several interchangeable attachments that vibrate at a high frequency. You should only use the massage gun on an area for a maximum of one to two minutes, but you can come back to the same area later. You can either use it on yourself or ask a friend or family member to help.

## MASSAGE BALLS

Using a small, hard ball such as a tennis ball, lacrosse ball, softball or baseball is a cheaper alternative to a massage gun. This is something you can do by yourself to target areas of muscle that are tight. You need to place the ball between yourself and either a wall or the floor. When you roll the ball around an area of your body you should try to notice any tender areas. If you find somewhere that is tender, you should concentrate on moving the ball around there with as much pressure as you can tolerate for 10 seconds, to see if the muscle will release. Then move on to another area before returning to the earlier one to check if it is still tight.





### FOAM ROLLERS

Foam rollers are another cheaper option than a massage gun. I recommend them to clients when a muscle feels tight. You can also use them before, during and after exercise. It's a quick, effective way of releasing a muscle and, once you've bought a foam roller, they last for years. Because there is an element of balance to using a foam roller, they are also good for strengthening your core muscles. There are several different ways that you can use a foam roller, but the following are three of my favourites that should each be done for two minutes at a time.

- **Glutes**

Sit on the foam roller at an angle to allow maximum contact between the muscles and the roller. Use a hand

### ASSISTED STRETCHES

Assisted stretches are something that you can do with a family member or friend, and you can take it in turns to help each other. Assisted stretches reinforce the stretches you do by yourself. Communication is key with assisted stretches. The person who is receiving them should let the other person know when they feel the stretch, and then the stretch should be held at that point for 20 seconds to prevent any of the muscles being overstretched. Here are a few of my favourite assisted stretches.

- **Glutes**

Lie on your back and lift one leg up and bend it at the knee. The other person will then gently push your knee inwards and upwards in the direction of your shoulder. Repeat on the other leg.



- **Hamstrings**

Lie down and raise your leg. The other person will place one hand on your foot, the other around your knee, and gently press the leg towards the chest. They should also loop their foot over your lying leg to prevent it from rising.



- **Chest**

Sit down and lift up your arms. Keep your head straight. The other person should kneel behind you and pull your arms backwards at the elbow so you can feel a stretch across your chest.





behind you for stability and move the roller by bending and straightening your knee.

• **Quads**

Face the floor and place the foam roller between your thighs and the floor. Put your hands on the floor in a press-up position and let them take your weight. Use your arms to push the roller forwards and backwards.

• **Back**

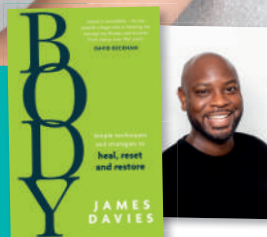
Lie down on the foam roller with it placed at the top of your back. Interlink your fingers behind your head to support your neck. Bend and straighten your knees to move the roller up and down your back. After you have done this for two minutes, move the foam roller to your lower back and repeat.

**MASSAGE**

I have shown many clients simple massage techniques that they can use on a partner or friend. There are so many different ways that you can massage and, as you grow more confident in the basics, you can begin to learn more techniques. When massaging, your aim is to relax the muscles while also feeling for any particularly tight areas or knots. Work on a tight muscle or knot for 10 seconds before moving on to another area, and then later return to it if you need to. Use your body weight to apply the pressure rather than using the grip from your hands as this will prevent any strained muscles or tendons in your hands. 📌



Photography: Shutterstock



*Body: Easy Techniques and Strategies to heal, reset and restore* by James Davies is published by HQ (£20 in hardback). It's also available as an eBook and Audio.