



## A COMPETITIVE EDGE: ROLFING FOR ATHLETES

Posted by: Brad Jones February 3, 2014 in Running

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I work with recreational, competitive, and professional athletes to further their performance, aide in injury recovery and help reduce the wear and tear of training. This approach varies from individual sessions to approaches that span a competitive season. Many clients use Roling to manage acute and chronic pain associated with past injuries. These approaches may not require the completion of a full series of sessions and can be tailored to each client's needs.

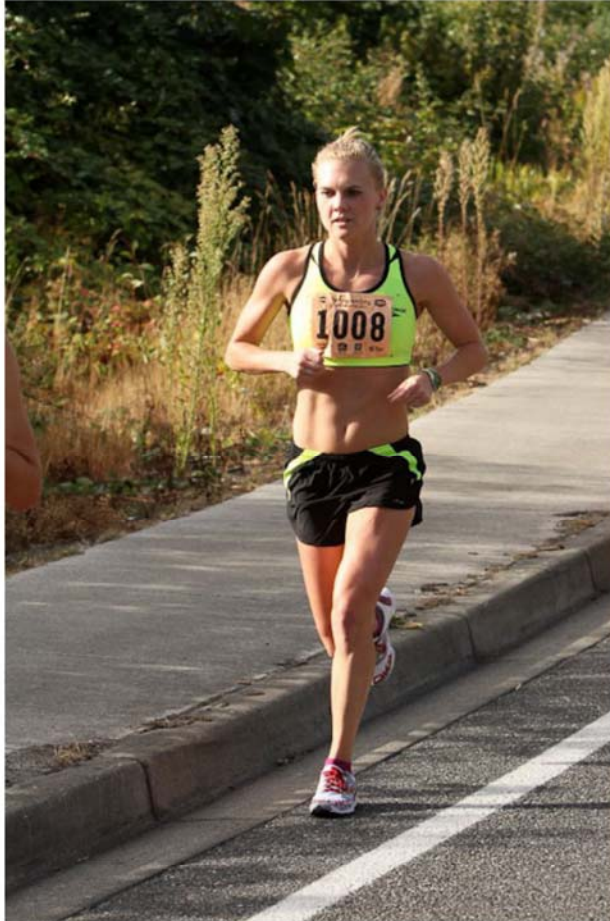
An important part of that tailoring is to gather as much information as possible about the demands of that athlete's sport and how it relates to what the athlete is experiencing in his or her body. Watching the athlete in action, either live or on video, is extremely helpful in collecting important diagnostic facts. For example, while working with world record paddler Brandon Nelson, I gained a great deal of knowledge watching a video of



Brandon Nelson

Brandon paddling in a race. This information helped me understand how his physical structure had adapted to the very specific, repetitive movements of endurance paddling. What I see and feel in the athlete's structure plus the movements and demands of the athlete's sport are all pieces of a puzzle.

Prior to beginning the “hands on” portion of a session, I analyze the athlete’s physical structure while standing and moving. A series of functional movement screens provide me with invaluable information about range of motion and restrictions. After reviewing the results I can more easily make structural or “hardware” changes to an athlete’s body by working fascia, ligaments, tendons and bones. When the “software” of the central nervous system/brain maps changes, the effects of Roling become long lasting. The moment an athlete develops an awareness of their unconscious movement patterns things start to click. The structural work during the sessions allows them to feel things differently within their body. As soon as it is easy for them to realize and make changes to movement patterns, the athlete becomes an active participant in the process of healing. A true golden moment.



Kristen Carter (photo courtesy of TMitchellPhoto.com)

I have been fortunate to help elite Bellingham runners Amber Morrison and Kristen Carter prepare for major events – Amber prior to the Boston Marathon and Kristen prior to the Columbus and Boston Marathons. For both, I worked small biomechanical issues and structural patterns in order to keep their bodies tuned up and feeling fresh during their important training time. My detail-oriented sessions with runners like Amber and Kristen, who often log close to 100 miles per week, focused on maintaining structural alignment and fluid movement, something quite different than massage.

Athletic clients often tell me that Roling helps them find their center of balance which gives them a competitive advantage, both mentally and physically. Roling profoundly affects an athlete’s range of motion as well as breathing capacity. When the ribcage is freed, ribs move in six directions: up, down, right, left, front and back. The entire body system becomes a sort of bellows. Without shortness in chest and back restricting the ability to breath, the ribs are able to fully flex.

Although I love working with clients from all walks of life, I especially enjoy working with athletes because they are truly motivated to meet goals and stay healthy. They understand that our work together is a process and they need to be involved in that work. It may be subtle work for them, but it is very important. They usually understand the importance of being proactive with their bodies, instead of waiting for an injury to occur before coming in for a session. It is extremely rewarding for me to be a small part in helping my clients to achieve success and reach their goals.



Amber Morrison

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