

BE YOUR OWN BODY THERAPIST

Globally renowned healer and teacher of body sustainability, Yamuna Zake talks about her self-developed technique of 'body rolling' and how it helps one treat injuries on their own.

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

MAKE MY WAY TO ATTEND a Yamuna Body Rolling session at RESET Bengaluru. It's a rare opportunity since Yamuna Zake, the founder of 'body rolling', rarely conducts public masterclasses. A master of body sustainability, Zake developed her technique 40 years ago to minimise people's dependency on therapists. Now, she has over 450 certified Yamuna practitioners across the world and a client list that includes top athletes. Here are some excerpts from my conversation with the master:

Tell us about your philosophy.

I named my work 'body sustainability' because it's not just about fitness but includes keeping your body moving every day. It's about asking the right questions before you do anything with your body and knowing how it can keep making you feel good for the rest of your life. Body sustainability guides you to keep your body moving in a healthy and non-injurious way.

What does 'body rolling' mean?

I coined the term 'body rolling' many years ago. One uses a ball to directly stimulate bones, muscles, and other tissues in the body. I have hands-on therapy experience of over 40 years, where I have been treating injuries. At my studio in New York City, we used to help people with injuries when nobody else could. One day, I realised that there must be a way

Yamuna Zake (left)
is a Chicago-born
fitness pioneer.

of teaching people how to take care of their bodies instead of relying on therapists. I translated all the principles of therapy to a ball, and the ball became my hands as well as my therapist's hands. That's when we began teaching people.

What's the outcome of these techniques?

Well, first and foremost, the body gets aligned and you build muscle tone. The range of motions of joints increases, and the bones are stimulated. It's only after this that the muscles begin to work effectively.

How do you use the ball in your workout?

The ball helps you align your structure, as everyone has some misalignment.

How different is this from foam-rolling techniques?

We bring the order back to the body. We don't just randomly roll—we take the body to its natural order in which it moves, so the muscle becomes toned and regains its intelligence. We work with the anatomy, which most other rolling systems don't.

How can one learn your techniques?

All our work is online (yamunausa.com), and we have kits that include a ball, a pump, and a booklet to educate you on the process. We are currently operational in 38 countries and have over 2,000 certified practitioners around the world. We are also looking at certifying practitioners in India.

Tell us about your therapies for the feet.

The feet are the foundation of the body, and if you have issues in the feet, it will eventually cause problems in other body parts as well. A lot of people who seek our help have collapsed feet, dropped arches, plantar fasciitis, and weak ankles. We train the feet and focus on the part from where that problem could be affecting another part of the body. I am currently working on a book called *The Foot Fix*, which will empower you to get your feet functioning as they should—without any medical intervention. It will be out in January 2021.

What are your future plans?

I want to write more, give more lectures, and educate as many people as possible. I'm 65, and I still learn something new about the human body every day. +

COURTESY OF YAMUNA ZAKE