

Fascia –Where is it?

“Fascia” is the Latin/medical name for the stretchy, fibrous material that makes up the structural support system of our bodies. Each cell is given its shape because of the fascial support system within it. The connection between each cell is fascia. Groups of cells are held together and supported by fascia. The organs of our body are surrounded by and supported by fascia. Fascia is everywhere within us and completely interconnected to itself. In short, our bodies are primarily a structure of fascia into which cells and organs and skin all fit together! We are primarily interested in the fascial component that surrounds muscles, hence the term “myo” (muscle) – fascial.

*I believe that the body
remembers everything that
ever happened to it.*
--John Barnes

Fascia – What is it?

Think of fascia as a very strong, very light, gauze-like material made of rubber bands!. It has both an elastic (stretchy) component and a collagen (strong fiber) component. This is why it is such a good support system. It can both hold tremendous amounts of pressure and stress while also

elastically flexing and stretching. Its two components will normally slide across each other, following the body positions and movements.

Fascia – What does it do?

Besides holding our bodies as a supporting network, fascia also “holds” memory. Almost like a cassette or video tape, all the events of our life are “recorded” or remembered in our fascia. If those events are in some way traumatic (accidents, surgeries, emotions, internal and external stresses, etc.), or our reactions to those events are such that we “freeze” or “hold onto” something, the fascia reads that holding pattern and itself becomes “stuck” in that way. At the collagen/elastin fibrous level, this is an actual “gluing” or “sticking” of the normally gliding and slippery fibers. This sticking can be exhibited in our bodies as pains, abnormal postures, tightness, soreness or other symptoms.

Myofascial Release

Myofascial release begins to impact on the root causes of these frozen places and patterns. It causes an “ungluing” of these “stuck” places in our fascia. Like warming up jello so that it will melt, the process of releasing causes the “glued” and tight places to become fluid once again so that the fibers can participate in their normal process of stretching and flexing. With that, the pains go away, the postures return to normal, the body moves back toward equilibrium and balance. Interestingly, the emotional and even spiritual reactions that were associated with the stickiness in the first place can also be released. People often experience new freedom of thought and mind and spirit as the memories of these old traumas find their way out of their fascia!

The process of releasing is very simply done. Just by holding in certain ways (like a warming effect) or by doing slow, easy, simple stretches of muscles, the fascia is given permission, even asks, to let go and find its renewed, original, position of flexibility and function. These holding and stretching techniques are very easily incorporated into any massage therapy session and provide a wonderful, nurturing component of assisting clients to become all that they are meant to be.

This is a new picture of physical structure. Here the [fascia] is the supportive aspect of the structure. Bones are spacers, serving to position and relate different areas of the [fascia]. Bones are not the supporting structures of the body; the [fascia] serves this function. Muscles, in this model, provide the source and direction of movement energy. Muscles execute movement.

--The Endless Web, p. 32



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*To use the orchestra analogy, the [fascia] is the score on which the notes are written; bone, muscle, and organ systems are the instruments...
....myofascia creates an informational whole of the living organism. It is the unifying factor in the movement system we call the body.*

--The Endless Web