



241 Clarence St.
Ottawa, ON K1N 5P9

(613) 302-3117

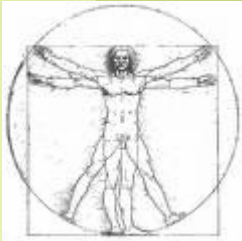
leeann@SolomonMassage.com

MUSCLE IMBALANCES AUGUST 2006 NEWSLETTER

Often people tell me that their bodies are sore just “from living” and “being human”. Do you feel this way? Would you like to have more energy and less pain? Before this time last year, I was constantly and miserably achey and tight in my upper back, neck and shoulders because of the work I do as a therapist. A heating pad on and tennis ball in my back were also constants in my life! I’ll tell you how I got beyond it, even if it does put me out of work as a massage therapist. First, some information ...

Bones are the body’s building blocks piled on top of each other, like stones in an inukshuk. They are connected by ligaments and fascia, while muscles stabilize and move the bones. There must be relative symmetry in length & strength as well as good joint mobility to have full and proper function of the musculoskeletal system. All body movement starts from the very center – our core, torso, or “pillar”. The “pillar” is the structural center of movement and life, and consists specifically of the core, hip, and shoulder stability. The way we maintain our pillar’s alignment and function directly affects organ health and the rest of our body.

Envision the Vitruvian Man by DaVinci ... the body as a wheel, where the pillar represents the hub and the limbs represent the spokes. If the hub is perfectly aligned, we can draw energy from it and transfer that energy effectively throughout the body ... thus moving more efficiently and reducing wear and tear. Unfortunately, there are some things that work against us, such as: gravity, occupational postures, and a tendency to lead sedentary lives. (There are also other factors that may come into play, such as old injuries, structural changes, and illness).



Muscles are composed of two main types of fibers:

1. Slow twitch, which fatigue slowly (after several hundred contractions), and respond to disuse or stress by shortening. These are usually found in postural muscles which maintain our upright posture and require endurance ie: hamstrings, hip flexors, pecs, biceps and upper traps.

2. Fast twitch, which fatigue quickly, sometimes after only a few contractions. These are found in muscles typically responsible for movement and thus speed, and respond to stress or disuse by weakening. Examples are glutes, triceps, middle and lower traps, abdominals, and some of the quads in the leg.

Patterns of tightness and weakness are evidenced not only by pain, but are actually visible to the eye over time ... shoulders rolled forward, a humping of the upper back, neck and head are thrust forward, one shoulder is lower than the other, etc.

We need to actively combat and reverse these factors through strengthening. Strengthening is the number one thing I’ve found that helps people the most, including myself. I’m talking about very specific exercises that can be done with your own body weight, a physio ball, and some free weights. If you’re interested and motivated, check out www.coreperformance.com, or the book by the same name. This is the program I’ve been following for a year now, and *I’ve never felt more balanced, pain free, and strong.*

This is also an opportunity to highlight a college friend of mine who just launched her business as a mobile personal fitness trainer. Having won several awards in body building competitions, Danielle Cardinal of FitFleet Fitness is dynamic, authentic, well traveled, personable, and eager to help you “fit in” fitness. Check out her site at <http://www.daniellecardinal.com/>, or you can call her at 613-882-4678.

Food for Thought: In the course of evolution and standing upright on two legs, we have ultimately exposed all of our vulnerable areas to the world: throat, belly, vital organs and genitals.

Information resources for this newsletter:
[Core Performance](#), Mark Verstegen
[Clinical Massage Therapy](#), Fiona Rattray and Linda Ludwig