



241 Clarence St.  
Ottawa, ON K1N 5P9

(613) 302-3117

leeann@SolomonMassage.com

## MYOFASCIAL RELEASE OCTOBER 2006 NEWSLETTER

**Within** my first few months of the massage program at Algonquin College, I remember asking one of our teachers in frustration, "What the heck is fascia, anyway!?", as it was a term that was mentioned often during lectures. Now that I'm 3 years into the profession, I suspect that others may feel the same way when I use the same language, so here I shall attempt to explain and take the mystery out of "Myofascial Release" (pronounce as myo-fashial or fashia).

Fascia is primarily made up of collagen which is the most common protein found in the body. Fascia is the tissue that gives your body its structural shape, and there are several types or locations:

- Superficial fascia surrounds the whole body and can be described as a body suit.
- Subserous fascia are the "bags" in which your organs develop
- Periosteum is the fascia which covers bones, and to which muscles adhere to.
- Deep fascia envelops individual muscles and muscle groups.

I like to describe fascia as a tough connective tissue packaging which covers muscles and organs, and it is found in different strengths and thicknesses. Muscle cells are individually wrapped in fascia, bundled together in one muscle, which is then encased in a larger and thicker sheet of fascia. If an analogy helps, it's a similar idea to the many types of shrink wrap or plastic wrap on items you buy at the store, such as post-it-notes, candies, or tampons. Each unit is individually wrapped in plastic, bundled together in a box, and then the whole package is plastic wrapped again. "Myo" is a Greek prefix pertaining to muscle, and thus specifies which kind of fascia is being discussed, as fascia exists in many places in the body.

**"Okay, so now that I know what myofascia is, what's the "release" part all about?"** Wolff's Law, 1836 states: "*The body will mold itself based*

*on the forces applied to it*". When a muscle gets tight and short for a long enough period, the outer fascia surrounding it shrinks and tightens as well. This makes it difficult for the muscle within to stretch, contract and expand with ease. It's like stuffing yourself into a super tight pair of jeans ... you can't bend, squat, stretch or breathe without a heck of a lot of discomfort! Sometimes the fascial layers of separate muscles can get stuck to each other, and this creates pain and movement restrictions.

### Interesting facts...

**Fascial trauma and restrictions can reduce related muscle strength by 20%.**

**The tensile strength of fascia can be up to 2000 lbs per square inch!**

The idea behind myofascial release is to expand and stretch the fascia covering the muscle, and unsticking adhered layers. By freeing up the tissue, this helps the body to remold itself and allows it to realign in a more functional place in space.

**What's involved?** Little to no lotion is applied to the skin, therapist pressure is directed in a horizontal plane (as opposed to aiming for depth straight down into the muscle), and movement of the related body part is utilized. Because the nervous system is so intimately involved with the musculoskeletal system, it has been found to be very effective and powerful to ask the patient to make a specific active movement, which allows them to control the motion. It would be unrealistic, unethical, impossible and very painful to force fascia, considering the strength of this tissue! If you have any questions, or think you might benefit from this powerful technique, please feel free to contact me at [leeann@solomonmassage.com](mailto:leeann@solomonmassage.com)

Information sources:

*An Active Myofascial Treatment Approach.* Jenings Seminar Group, Barry Jenings.