



DERSWERK

Fascia

My training and background of study are in assessing and easing fascial restrictions throughout the human structure.

Broadly defined, "fascia" encompasses all soft, fibrous connective tissues that permeate the human body (Findley, Schleip, 2009.). The fascial system is one interconnected, tensional network that adapts its fiber arrangement and density according to local, tensional demands (Findley, Schleip, 2009.). It suspends and encases every cell of every physiological system, including musculature. The word "myofascial" is an adjective describing muscle fascia. There are numerous studies showing the crucial role in which fascia plays holding structure, and dictating physiological function.

Dr. Ida P. Rolf (1896-1979), a Manhattanite biochemist, developed Structural Integration from the mid-20s into the mid-40s, and it has since taken many forms. One of these many forms is that of my teacher, Tom Myers, author of Anatomy Trains. Tom studied directly under Dr. Rolf, and taught anatomy at the Rolf Institute® in Boulder, CO. He developed a teaching approach to anatomy which was quite uniquely his own: the Anatomy Trains, his designated tracking of "muscle straps" spanning their various fascial planes.

The Recipe

Structural Integration is a sequential process of postural re-alignment which capitalizes on the manipulation of fascia through touch and movement. It is usually done in either 10, 11 or 12 sessions, once weekly. Anatomy Trains Structural Integration (ATSI) has a 12-series recipe, based around these longitudinal, functional connections between muscle groups in the body, described above.

How it's applied

One important mantra of the Structural Integration approach is to "put it where it belongs, and call for movement," and it has also been called "a conversation between two intelligent systems," ie: your human complex and mine. While we are working through myofascia, I maintain contact and grip with the tissues, and you keep reciprocal contact while moving through a range of motion. We feel out where optimal easing occurs together and adjust accordingly.

Through the course of a session, we will assess our progress. I will ask you to stand, walk, or move in certain ways to gauge and solidify the changes we make, as we go. We always take a standing postural analysis at the beginning and end of each appointment.

Why it's applied this way

Adaptations in our fascial web happen every day, out of every movement, experience, and emotion we feel, and this web communicates information via tension. Here, we simply communicate something new to this system, and it responds accordingly. We do this based off of the available resources, support, and where structural imbalances manifest within your fascial system.

In structural assessment, we will compare relationships *within* the structure, and never to outside standards, lines, or perceived ideals. We always compare *you* to *you*.

Away from the literal, Structural Integration bestows restorative opportunity of our authentic sense of self. Our limitations are set by, and contained within, our body, that which also contains the mind. "Sit up straight!" says your mother, or "put your shoulders down!" you mutter to yourself at work. Behavior begets the structure, though behavior is inaccessible to the mind without first harnessing ease of the structure which restrains it.

An intervention as dramatic as SI is not something that we do indefinitely. Fascia takes weeks to months to years to adapt to a new pattern, including the ones we train through the series. Because of this, the body needs the period away from bodywork to continue to make changes, and to *become* the structure we've painted.

What it feels like

This is generally a slow, patient, and meticulous process. Unbearable pain is not necessary, though discomfort can occur. Ideally, this would feel like a "deep stretch," and may also be accompanied by sensations of hot/cold in the treated area, easier and more fluid movement, sensations of lightness or heaviness, as well as [frisson](#) or a dissipating, tingling sensation. This sensation should not be confused with electric "funny bone" nerve pain, as we aim to avoid pinning down nerves. If this should happen, a simple re-adjustment is all that's needed.

The effects of the series will vary from person-to-person, depending on their needs and what is learned by us through the process. Sometimes we can feel very relaxed after a session, but what of the patient who does not need to relax? What if this relaxation is sabotaging their healing process? These varying needs are anticipated in the principles of Structural Integration, and are customized to every unique process.

In the weeks and months following my first series, I felt compelled to make decisions based on my true identify and sense of self, which had been blurred by my protective layering for years. Not only was my pain permanently changed, but I was liberated from the weight of my life's armor.

The 12 Series

The 12-Series has a beginning, middle and an end- an end in which the body's structural holding patterns (posture) can naturally reset, emerging anew, and can continue to embody those changes in the many years to come. The mechanism by

which this is achieved, is the very same mechanism by which our insidious, day-to-day postural imbalances are permitted; it is the science of fascial plasticity.

The early sessions of the series use this innate adaptation of our body to cultivate an environment of support in the fascial system, before diving deeper to sequentially release the firmly-held patterns in the core body. Each pattern is completely unique to us as individuals, and each stipulates a customized strategy within the series.

The most crucial distinction between SI and other forms of myofascial release is epitomized by this. While more piecemeal and indirect approaches can swiftly release the deeper issues that pull the strings behind the curtains, my contention is that they keep us enslaved to our trauma by neglecting the implicit principle of support for the rest of the structure. As a result, the unique pattern your body has created can only let go in one physical dimension, while the rest of the fascial system is left operating from this very same, dysfunctional support position. When all of your symptoms return in a week, this could be why.

Thus, we remain dependent on endless treatment and therapy which cannot effectively touch our issue. We search aimlessly for answers within the harness of our already depleted vitality, arbitrarily oscillating between throwing the kitchen sink at our healing, or retreating somehow into dissociation. Putting on my "Peter Levine hat," this cycle is mere traumatic reenactment, sabotaging true renegotiation of trauma of which we yearn for on a soul level.

One-offs, two-offs; "fix-it" work

The techniques described above can be done piecemeal, though this is not Structural Integration, nor is indefinite manual therapy cost-effective for authentic, permanent change.

Very rarely is there only one issue pertaining to your symptoms; most often, there is an organization of fascial culprits perpetuating dysfunction in a systematic manner. Anything requiring over 2 sessions, and I will recommend a series to develop an effective treatment plan with attainable goals.

After your body has integrated the changes from our series, we can talk about follow-up if it's necessary.

The 3 Series

The 3-series "Structural Strategies" package is excellent as a followup to a 12-series. It functions as a 3-session "reminder" for what new patterns the body may have developed in the months to years following integration.

It can be also provided as a "taste" of what this work can do for you, if you are unsure about the full 12.

It's my sincere pleasure to be facilitating this process with you.

Thank You

