What is Fascia?

by Tom Myers,
Author of Anatomy Trains
Director, Kinesis
Sailor & musician
Student of Ida Rolf, Moshe Feldenkrais, & Buckminster Fuller

“Success is the ability to go from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm” - Winston Churchill

Webinar in association with Ben Benjamin

The rediscovery of fascia

From the “Cinderella of body tissues” into center stage attention

Medline papers on ‘fascia’
What is the Fascia (and why is it important)?

Fascia is the organ system that mediates how we relate to space:
- stability
- organization
- development
- growth
- perception
Our Vascular System mediates our relationship to biochemistry via our fluids - and to how we feel, our emotions.

Our Nervous System mediates our relationship to Time - and to ‘whassup?’ in the game.
Our Fascial System manages forces - gravity, thermodynamics, muscular force and pressure from within, environmental forces from without.

But is this the fascial system? The fibrous body? No - this is the muscular system. This is only one of the elements of our locomotor system.
What is fascia?

When a doctor says 'fascia', what she means is: Certain layers and sheets of biological fabric (like the thoracolumbar fascia or plantar fascia).

When we say 'fascia' what we mean is: The entire ExtraCellular Matrix (ECM) i.e. everything in your body that isn't a cell.

= the environment your cells live in

"When one part moves, the body as a whole responds. Functionally the only tissue that can mediate such responsiveness is the connective tissue." - Shultz, The Endless Web.

Fascia is: the medium of movement
New terminology: Fascia = all collagenous soft connective tissues

Connective tissue / Fascia has four components:

- Cells (fibroblasts, mast cells)
- Water (bound and unbound)
- Fibers (collagen, elastin, reticulin)
- Ground substance (GAGs, mucopolysaccharides like heparin, hyaluronic acid, chondroitin, fibronectin)

All connective tissues - from blood to bone - combine these four elements in different proportions.
Sponge-like property of fascia

- The majority of the volume of fascial tissues consists of water.

- Most of that water is not "free water", but "bound water" in which the water molecules are oriented like a "liquid crystal" in an orderly fashion along the surface of sugar-protein fibrils within the ground substance.
This 'neuro-myo-fascial web' is one seamless medium but for analysis soft-tissue can be divided into:

- The visceral sacs and strings (ventral cavity)
- The meninges and perineuria (dorsal cavity)
- The bones ligaments and joint capsules (inner bag)
- The parietal myofasciae (outer bag)
The fascial webbing as a system:

- Is continuous & interconnected.
- Distributes strain.
- Is the tissue of shape.
- Holds compensations.
- Is our richest sensory organ.
Tensegrity = tension + integrity

Islands of compression floating in a balanced sea of tension

The Path to Structural Compensation

- Experimentation becomes gesture.
- Posture becomes habit.
- Posture becomes structure.
- Gesture becomes habit.
- Structural Compensation

Habit becomes posture.
The Golden Rule: The body responds to demand.

Fascia as a sensory organ

Histological documentation of fascial enervation

- Stilwell 1957
- Sakada 1974
- Vshivtseva 1988
- van der Wal 1988
- Yahia 1992
- Stecco 2006
- Mense 2008

www.fasciaresearch.com
Fascia = the extracellular matrix (ECM) plus the cells that create it

Myofascia = muscle and fascia biomechanically linked together = endomysium, perimysium, and epimysium

Anatomy Trains = Common force transmission pathways through the myofascia

Anatomy Trains = Common Myofascial Pathways for transmitting stability, strain, and response
Because of a European ‘mistake’ 470 years ago

Anatomy Trains

What if most of what learned about muscles is mostly Wrong!

Does the body ‘think’ in terms of individual muscles?

Or did we just divide the body that way with a blade?
What happens if we turn the scalpel sideways? And think in terms of Connection!

The Superficial Back Arm Line

Superficial Back Line

- Slow twitch, endurance
- Tends to shift upward
- Creates primary and secondary curves
- Linked to maturity and vision
Epicranial fascia

Supraorbital ridge

Nuchal line

Erector spinae

Sacrum

Sacrotuberous ligament

Ischial Tuberosity

Hamstrings

Heel

Triceps surae

Toes

Plantar fascia
Questions?
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