

FASCIA

(Collated by Michelle Wilkinson www.movingnaturally.co.uk)

Fascia is neither a firm or liquid connective tissue and makes up most of the body's connective tissue.

A visual example of fascia is the whitish membrane between the muscle and fat on a leg of meat or the substance underneath chicken skin.

In Latin fascia means 'binding'. Therefore, fascia is a form of sheath and usually created in thin sheets.

These sheaths act as envelopes which enclose bones, muscles, blood vessels, organs and nerves. It lines the thoracic and abdominal cavities.

The fascia surrounding bone is called the periosteum and is the skin of the bone to which ligaments attach.

A muscle is composed of muscle fibre and fascia. Each muscle fibre is wrapped in its own individual fascia sheath. Bundles of fascia-wrapped muscle fibre are then wrapped in a separate fascia wrapping creating a whole bundle of bundles to become the red meat of the muscle. Around all of this is a thicker fascia layer named investing fascia.

If the bones, muscles, organs, blood vessels and nerves were removed it would leave the covering fascia in a labyrinth-like, three-dimensional framework with holes where the anatomical structures would have been. The remaining fascia forms an interconnected pathway for whole body communication.

It is through fascia that electro-magnetic signals are conveyed.

Underneath human skin is the superficial fascia which creates a defensive barrier against harmful foreign invaders.

One of the main elements of fascia is collagen. Collagen is a body protein molecule and makes up around one third of all proteins in the body. There are at least 16 types of collagens most of which have densely packed fibres.

The healthy state for fascia is a fine elastic, semi-fluid membrane made up of thin elastic-fluidity sheets which facilitate the movement of the different body parts and systems.

When unhealthy due to tension, rigidity and compression the fascia loses elastic fluidity and degenerates to become dry. It can take on the consistency of glue whereby one part of the body is glued to another. As such the range of bodily movement deteriorates causing the rigidity and pain that is often associated with the aging process.

Fascia along with ligaments and tendons accumulates tension which can be released through appropriate massage.