

## SINEWS

(Collated by Michelle Wilkinson [www.movingnaturally.co.uk](http://www.movingnaturally.co.uk) )

**Sinews** are a form of firm connected tissue.

The **ligaments** and **tendons** of the human body can be referred to as sinews.

**Ligaments** are a band of connected tissue which connect various bones or cartilage. There are **ligaments** which hold internal organs together.

**Ligar** is the Latin word for bind.

**Ligaments** have very little blood supply and only a small amount of elasticity. This enables them to stretch a little as we move, while retaining strength to ensure joint stability and structural integrity.

**Tendons** are made of similar tissue to ligaments except they have a greater blood supply and flexibility.

The liver stores blood ready for muscle action. If the amount of blood there is deficient, the **tendons** are not nourished so easily damaged.

Repetitive strain injury is an example of deficient blood, a depletion created by over-use like eyes continually focused on a computer screen.

A **tendon** is a fibrous cord connecting muscle to bone. It confers strength and elasticity to the muscles and roots them to the bone.

When a muscle contracts, the resulting force is transferred through the **tendon** to move the bone which articulates at the joint.

A **tendon** also attaches muscle to other structures; for example, they attach muscles to the eyeballs.

Muscles such as the trapezius have multiple origin and insertion **tendon** points.

**Tendon** length appears to be genetically determined and signifies not only flexibility but potential muscle size.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the health of the **tendon** and **ligament** tissue is closely related to the wood element or spring energy within us. These are governed by the liver and gall bladder organs.

If the wood element or spring energy is out of balance the **tendons** and **ligaments** tend to be either too rigid or too flexible. Rigidity causes stiffness which limits movement while over-flexibility causes joint instability and weakness. In both contexts co-ordination and movement are affected.