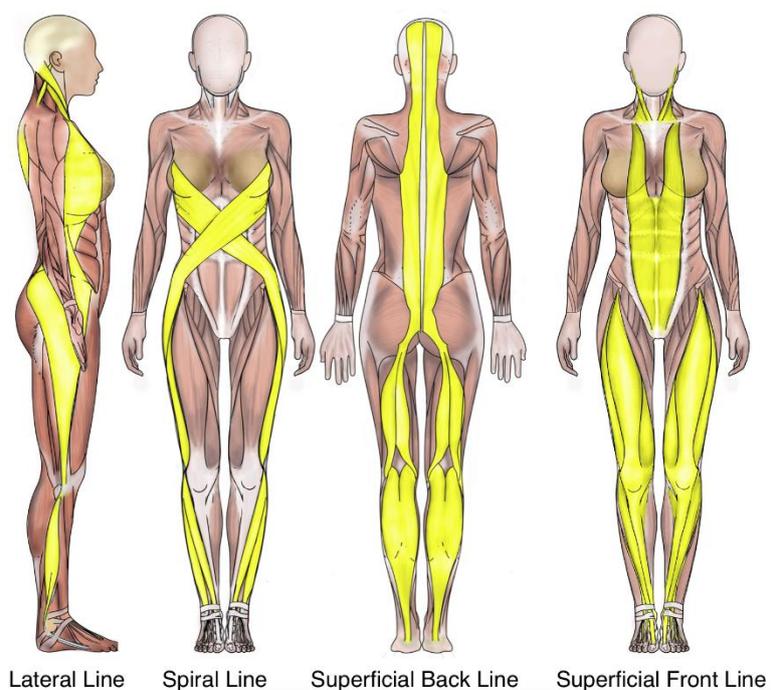


MODULE 4: THE SCIENCE OF BREATHING

LESSON 3: THE FASCIA

Our training of the anatomy as it relates to the breath would not be complete without the understanding of a little understood but vital structure of the body, the fascia.

The fascia is a matrix of connective tissue that attaches, encloses and connects all the muscles and organs of the body. It is densely woven, covering and interpenetrating every muscle, bone, nerve, artery and vein, as well as all the internal organs including the heart, lungs, brain and spinal cord. On close examination it resembles a spider's web and is one continuous structure that connects the head to the toe without interruption. In this way we can appreciate that each part of the entire body is connected to every other part.



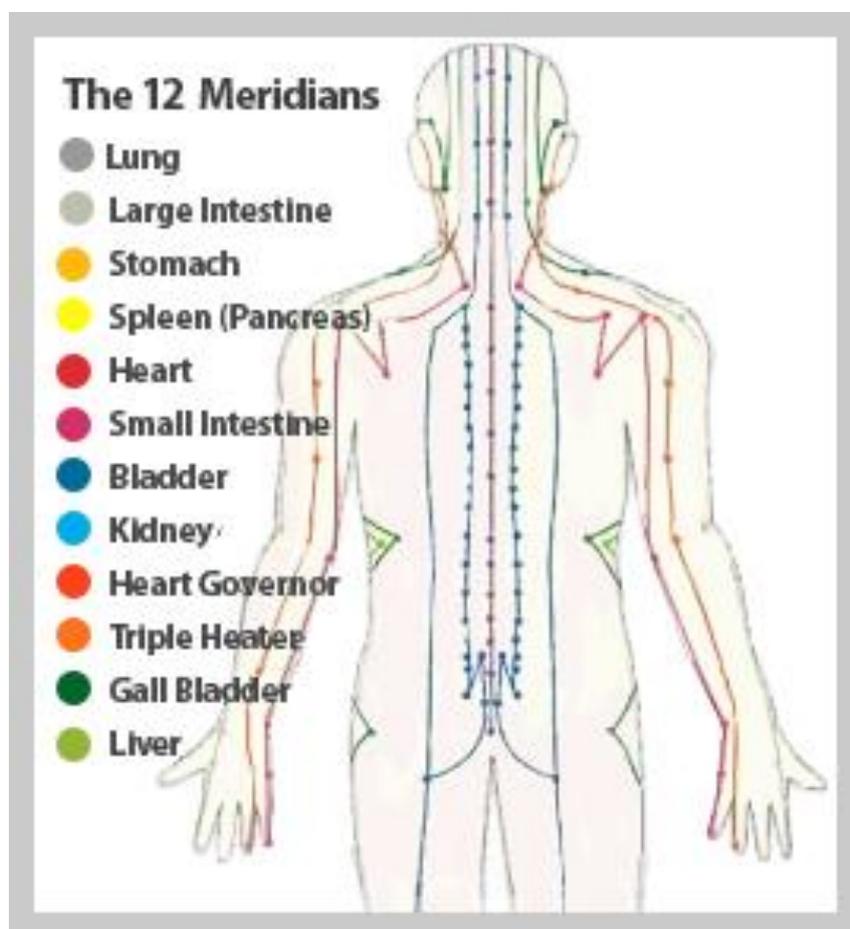
In the normal healthy state, fascia can stretch and move without restriction. When one experiences physical trauma, emotional trauma, scarring, or inflammation, however, the fascia becomes tight, restricted, and a source of tension to the rest of the body. Trauma, such as a fall, car accident, whiplash, surgery or just habitual poor posture and repetitive stress injuries has cumulative effects on the body. The changes trauma causes in the fascial system influences comfort and function of our body. Fascial restrictions can exert excessive pressure causing all kinds of symptoms producing pain, headaches or restriction of motion. Fascial restrictions affect our flexibility and stability, and are a determining factor in our ability to withstand stress and perform daily activities.

Much research has been done and is ongoing on the correlation between Traditional Chinese Medicine meridians and our fascial pathways.

'Meridians' are the pathways that life force energy (Chi) flow through in our bodies. There are 14 meridians and along each meridian are acupuncture points where Chi can be manipulated to restore balance, via acupuncture needles or acupoint pressure.

It has now been shown that most of the Qi points occur where fascia planes or networks converge. They showed that acupuncture points mostly lie along the fascia planes between muscles or between a muscle and tendon or bone. When an acupuncture needle pierces the skin, it penetrates through the dermis and subcutaneous tissue, then through deeper interstitial connective tissue. It has been hypothesised that a Chi blockage can be viewed as an alteration in the composition of the fascia and that needling, or acupressure may bring about cellular change in the fascia (Langevin & Yandow, 2002).

Breath energy or prana life force, travels through the energy pathways of the meridians, like the waters of a river. It makes sense that if the fascia is restricted, twisted, scarred or dehydrated, it would interfere with the natural flow of breath energy through the body and thus affect our general health and wellbeing.



As a breathwork practitioner it is helpful to be aware of these fascial tension patterns in your clients and to support the release of these patterns through body work like yoga and stretching. In some cases, getting your client to do some gentle stretches and movement is helpful to do before the session to support more breath energy flow.

In many cases, the catharsis of continued breathwork sessions will support the release of underlying fears and subconscious patterns that caused the fascial tension pattern in the first place.

Ultimately our role is to support the breather to deepen their body intelligence through supporting a strong supple physical body that facilitates optimum flow of life

force and consciousness and to use the breath as a tool that facilitates wholeness and connection to all aspects of our being.

Exercise:

Watch the deep front line dissection

Do the fascial stretch exercise with Dylan Werner: <https://youtu.be/DxiBlwmqjvE>

Notice how the breath has changed after the session

References:

www.myofascialrelease.com

<https://www.anatomytrains.com>

<https://ashleyblackguru.com/>

Yu Bai, Jun Wang, Jin-peng Wu, et al., "Review of Evidence Suggesting That the Fascia Network Could Be the Anatomical Basis for Acupoints and Meridians in the Human Body," Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, vol. 2011, Article ID 260510, 6 pages, 2011. doi:10.1155/2011/260510