

Marco Montanari

# FASCIAL INTEGRATION BODY WORK

CHARACTER  
POSTURE  
EMOTIONS

For health workers  
psychotherapists  
movement practitioners  
and well-being



integrazione fasciale®  
carattere postura emozioni

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For health workers, psychotherapist, movement  
practitioners and well-being

Marco Montanari

Fascial Integration International communication

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## **Content of the book**

Fascial Integration is a synthesis of several models: Postural Integration, Rolfing, Myofascial Meridians, Bioenergetics, Gestalt and Psychosynthesis. With the aim of improving proprioception and posture while transforming the individual's attitudinal and distinctive traits, the models considered here offer a complete technical and theoretical terminology. Each model, applied to various cases, has its own specific function. Their combined properties are fundamental in rebalancing the most important physiological and personal functions. Understanding the role of the fascia in movements, imbalances and personal levels offers a point of contact for experts from diverse disciplines who aim to broaden their intervention assessment.

This book is a tool to understand how to apply fascial work specifically to each type of person, acting not only on physical tensions and postural imbalances, but on the various forces that, at a deep level, contribute to maintaining physical problems and discomforts. and mental. The model makes a fundamental contribution to every bodywork discipline and practice, becoming a useful and relevant complement.

## **Author**

Dr. Marco Montanari

Psychologist and psychotherapist, free researcher, for many years he has devoted himself to body work. After a long course of study with Jack Painter, he knew and experimented the most important somatic intervention methods such as Rolfing, Bioenergetics, Psychosynthesis, the existential phenomenological approach, Gestalt therapy and the Craniosacral. In 2006 he created fascial integration school, an approach that combines intervention on the body, posture and attitudinal traits of the person. He is now engaged in private activity and he is teaching fascial integration methods in Italy and abroad.





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# INTRODUCTION

Fascial Integration is a synthesis of several models: Postural Integration, Rolfing, Myofascial Meridians, Bioenergetics, Gestalt and Psychosynthesis. With the aim of improving proprioception and posture while transforming the individual's attitudinal and distinctive traits, the models considered here offer a complete technical and theoretical terminology. Each model, applied to various cases, has its own specific function. Their combined properties are fundamental in rebalancing the most important physiological and personal functions. Understanding the role of the fascia in movements, imbalances and personal levels offers a point of contact for experts from diverse disciplines who aim to broaden their intervention assessment.

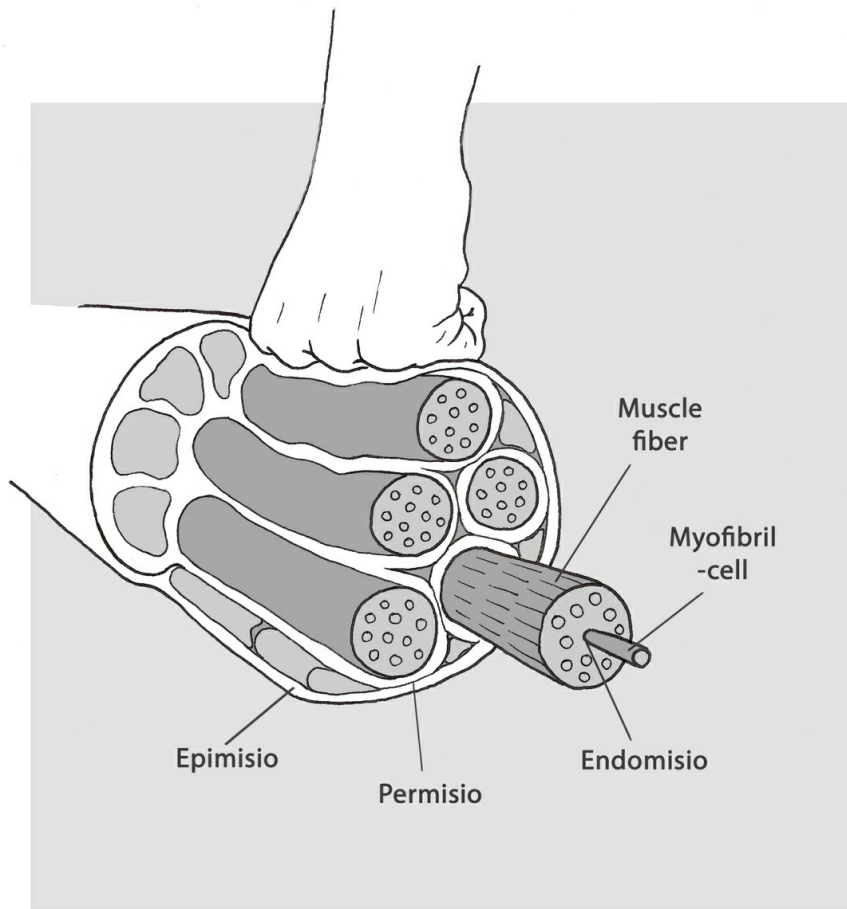
# **Chapter 1. FASCIAL INTEGRATION MANEUVERS ON CONNECTIVE TISSUES**

By placing anything that weighs more than a feather on the body, there is an effect on the connective tissue even if it is minimal. Unlike the type of pressure and intention, the practitioner intervenes on the most superficial to the deepest layers of the human body. The art of connective manipulation is a powerful tool for change that has effects on cells, internal organization, posture and specific problems, to the point of transforming the person's attitudes.

The most common theme in bodywork is work on muscles. When performing a connective maneuver, the first thought is to work on the muscles which, like wires, are responsible for the balance and imbalance of body segments, leading to the persistence of a problem, a limit in movement, breathing and general well-being or malaise. Each muscle is made up of fibres that extend like small ropes. Each fiber is formed by a membrane with several nuclei and thousands of internal filaments, called myofibrils, which receive motor impulses thanks to sarcomere, contractile units.

To simplify, pressure on muscles acts on fibers, myofibrils and sarcomeres.





Work on the muscle penetrates deeply into the body and passes through the various forms of the connective tissue that envelop deeper and deeper layers (Epimysio Perimysio Endomysio).

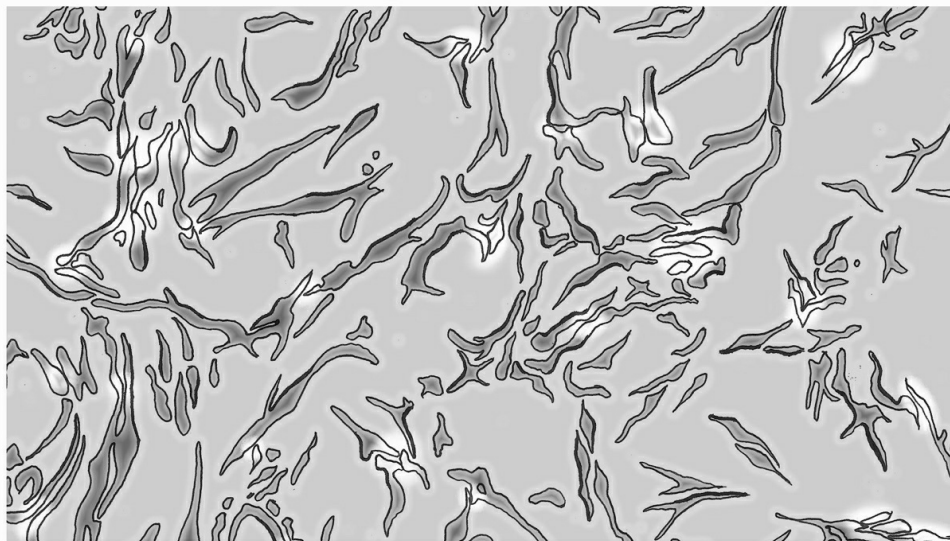
Like a widespread network, connective tissue surrounds the muscles, but it is also the matrix within which organs, cells, and almost all human body parts are suspended.

A distinction must be made between fascia and connective tissue. Fascia is the layered membrane that extends throughout the body, from under the skin to the deepest parts, and has the function of connecting, coordinating and synchronizing the action of each part with the whole.

Fascia is the inseparable nature of muscle tissue in its most varied forms and expressions. Connective tissue, on the other hand, is the specific structure of the fascia, its origin, the elements that compose it. This distinction must be made because connective tissue is everywhere, even in our blood: blood is connective, the aqueous humor of the eye is

connective, but in these cases it cannot be properly considered as fascia. Therefore, working on a muscle means influencing the fascia but also the connective tissue, consequently reaching the most specific, intimate parts of the human body.

Connective tissue, omnipresent in various forms and consistencies, from the hardest tendons to the spongy structures of the lungs, is formed by an extracellular matrix that has a liquid or fibrous consistency. Its state depends on the cells that compose it, which include the extremely important fibroblasts. Imagine this matrix as a sort of yogurt that passes through the blood until it penetrates the bones. Far from being firm and stable, it has a particular plasticity, it is a substance full of life, a really active and dynamic apparatus and an organ of shape. In a video that Robert Schleip<sup>[1]</sup> showed in 2009 at the International Fascia Congress in Amsterdam, fibroblast cells are observed moving in an aspecific, neutral matrix. Over time, they begin to orient themselves, moving in specific directions and alignments, as if they were actual communicating, biological units. They pass visibly luminescent information, called Gap Junctions, between themselves, which allow the fibers to adapt, change direction, organize and increase in number until they form a real community. The internal exchange of signals likens them to brain neurons because they are socially alive and pulsate with a shared intelligence.



Fibroblast cells exchanging information, the points of contact (in the clearest image) are called Gap Junction.

Manipulating fascial tissues creates conditions that increase the communication between the fibroblasts and favors the transmission of energy throughout the connective tissue. In this way, gestures, attitudes, movements and expressions become more graceful, natural, fluid and harmonious.

In the past, anatomists dissected the body into separate entities. It was thought that a muscle could be anatomically extracted or isolated without effecting anything else, a bit like opening a present and throwing away the paper or the box: in fact, the Greek *ana-temnein* means to cut, dissect, and refers to the method of investigation by dissection.

There was no interest in connective tissue, which is now in the spotlight thanks to international congresses and numerous studies that year after year increase knowledge and experimentation.

For example, it has been shown that the state of connective cells can facilitate the functioning of the immune system (monocytes, lymphocytes, macrophages, etc..). It has been established that osteopathic treatments on the fascia affect immunoglobulin function, therefore the ability of the body to increase its defensive and reactive actions. The very substance of connective tissue is a real laboratory in which the immune system multiplies and acts.

The body can independently produce very powerful immunomodulators that increase immune barriers. Neurotransmitters that the brain can produce with thoughts or mental images have been identified. Some of these are more potent painkillers than morphine. In our body, we have a complete, exclusive and effective pharmacy from which it is easier to benefit, also thanks to fascial work. Lisa M. Hoge<sup>[2]</sup>, a professor at North Texas University, conducted an experiment to verify what happens to the lymphatic system when a fascia is manipulated. The lymphatic system is closely connected to the immune system and therefore to the health of an individual. The lymphatic system is the main channel through which the immune system moves, communicates and acts. She verified that pumping on the chest for 4 minutes created an immediate effect the immune system, generating about 100 million cells that act and enter into lymphatic circulation.

Each individual has specific connective tissues with adaptive and reactive properties. If we consider the movements of a young dancer compared to those of an old man, we see two different cell densities and

two different connective organizations. In general, regardless of age or engagement in sports, the activity of the fascia makes movement more fluid and free. One of the most important effects of bodywork is to reduce the effort produced by friction between structural parts. Although it may be imperceptible to us, in our small, daily movements, body parts rub together and produce stress, for example in knee cartilage.

A contracted muscle, before fulfilling its function, compresses its own fibers and creates a state of stress. The connective tissue penetrates the individual fibers acting as a pad to cushion the friction and rubbing. Fascial maneuvers that promote the action of the connective tissue thus reduce inertia and waste of energy.

In addition, connective tissue is the main agent for intra-tissue fluid circulation in the body, composed of more than 80% water, and modulates the sliding of the fascial layers between them.

This can be seen in the act of walking, which involves a spiral line (see Thomas Myers, *Myofascial Meridians*). The tensor of the lateral fascia moves in harmony with the inner and outer obliques, a movement that involves the upper body, arms and shoulder blades through the serratus and the rhomboids. When we walk, leg and arm movements activate potential energy and subsequently release kinetic energy. Working on the spiral line, for example, is a way to "oil" the fascia and create greater plasticity and dynamism in the connective tissue, cushioning and reducing energy consumption.

The elasticity and harmony produced by the function of the connective tissue make each gesture freer and more natural. In addition to coordinating movements, it has the fundamental function of supporting and connecting each part to the whole. It allows each organ, for example, to remain suspended in the ventral cavity, favoring its mobility. The phrenicopericardial ligament connects the diaphragm to the heart, the esophagus is connected to the diaphragm by the phrenicoesophageal ligament and the phrenicocolic ligament connects the diaphragm to the corner of the colon. Each organ is thus connected to the others and moves synchronously with the whole.

The role of arteries and venous vessels is primary in distributing blood and nutrients that the body needs. Where there are arteries, there is life, and pathways are created within connective tissue for the passage of nerves, blood vessels and oxygen, therefore its elasticity improves

blood circulation and the oxygenation of organs. The fascial practitioner who improves connective tissue efficiency promotes the good functioning of macro and micro circulation. This is why the body, after treatment, appears reddish in color.

After treatment, one cannot help but notice a general increase in the client's vitality: the eyes become brighter, as if a patina that suffocated the senses was dissolved. This is because connective tissue has an adjuvant action in the distribution of blood and nutrients within the body.

[Jean Claude Guimberteau](#)<sup>[3]</sup>, a French surgeon specialized in finger flexor surgery, has shown that during the post-operative repair phase, the absence of connective tissue from the limb increases recovery time, while the presence of connective tissue speeds it up. Some of his videos show four layers of connective tissue that move the blood on different planes exerting a hemodynamic action: that is, they generate a greater flow of blood where necessary. It is an adjuvant action for the blood, and favors return circulation. Connective tissue, in fact, wrapping itself around the fibers in a spiral, acts as a tourniquet that favors venous return towards the heart. Many people with multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophies or serious circulation problems can greatly benefit from fascial treatments.

Often after a session circulation improves, and clients feel more present, with sharpened vision, improved hearing and smell.

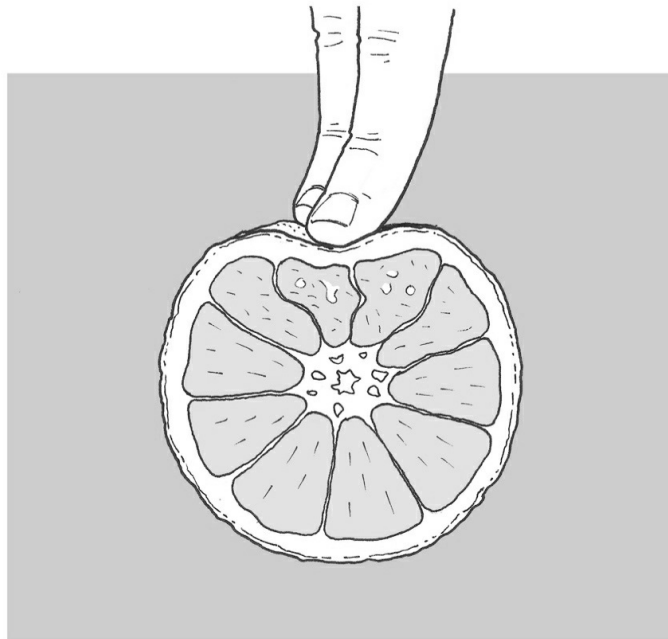
[Jean Claude Guimberteau](#) was one of the first to use the electron microscope to closely observe connective tissue and movement under the epidermis. In his videos, presented at the Fascia Congress, he showed the microvascular collagen in different fascial layers and how its polygonal shape favors local circulation.

He highlights how, under the skin, there is a response to the forces applied by manipulation, generating a real tensegrity that optimally uses space, osmotic pressure, cell adhesion and gravity. Similar to a set of sticky spheres, connective tissue adapts to any stress, pressure or articulated movement. It is like seeing many soap bubbles rolling and rubbing each other, helping the tissues to be alive and vascularized.

The range of fascial treatment interventions on the body and the person have a much broader horizon than simple actions on the muscles.

The muscle certainly stretches, its matter, under pressure, produces heat by changing its shape. The perception of the practitioner is to "spread" the fibers by distributing them in space and changing their state of fixity. The most fitting example, often repeated in Rolfing's books, is to think of a lemon or orange that, under the pressure of a hand, breaks the internal structures in which their liquid is contained. The spillage of the juice changes the consistency and shape of the fruit, so the effect on the tissues moves the fibers, deconstructing the thick and hardened structures that contain them, changing the shape.

Keleman writes that humans organize themselves around a series of spaces and these spaces allow liquids to flow. Nothing is truer.



Like with an orange, pressure deconstructs the internal wrappers containing the liquid, also inside the muscle, the opening of the fascial wrappers takes place.

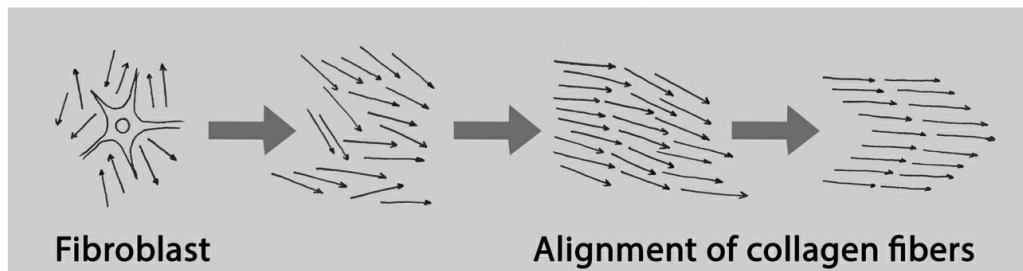
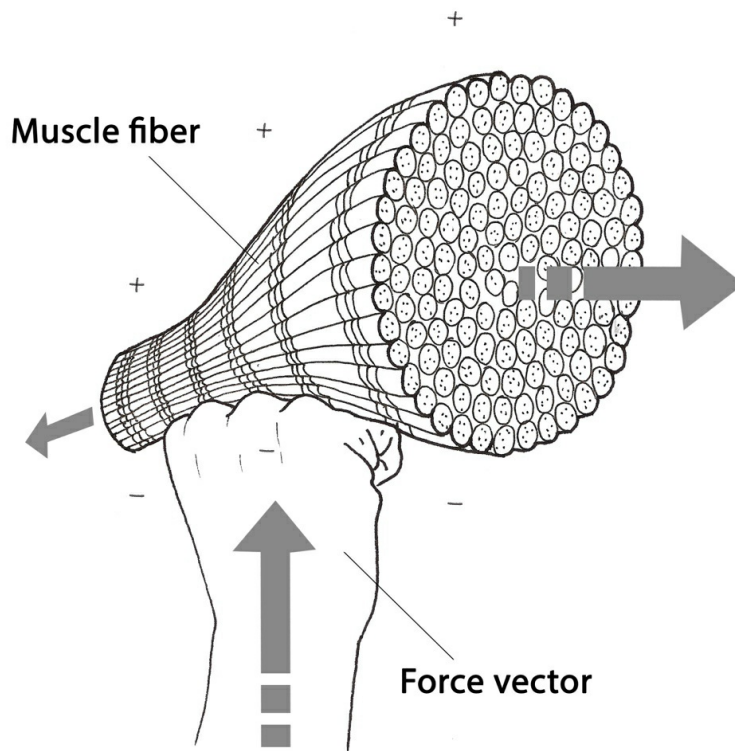
In addition, most body tissues, when pressed or stretched, generate electric fields from the forces produced in them. The function of these piezoelectric or bioelectric currents is to influence the shape of the body.

Fibroblast cells, for example, orient themselves in relation to these forces and, because of their structure, behave like semiconductors, so the flow of electrons crosses their surface like diodes. When collagen fibers are stressed by pressure, mechanical forces produce a signal by charging



electrically.

One of the most important actions of this system is the ability to generate repair and regeneration processes. These play a role in increasing or decreasing bone thickness for example, muscles and bones change shape and thickness under the inductions of piezoelectric currents.



The pressure from the maneuvers produce electric currents and forces that pass through the bundle fibers, orienting the direction of the fibroblasts and producing a change in body shape.

It has been shown that myofibroblasts have a regular contraction of 8/12 cycles per minute, more or less the same contraction of the cranio-sacral rhythm, connected to the vitality and cadence of vital movements in the body<sup>[4]</sup>. The same connective tissue favors the circulation of the cerebrospinal fluid within the dura mater, organizing the rhythmic pulsation that osteopaths define as primary breath. These and numerous other findings highlight the importance of fascial bodywork for the health and well-being of people.

A fascial practitioner is always connected to the vitality of the client, they can always recognize and perceive the breadth of the rhythms, the elasticity of the fasciae, the expansion and flexibility of the body. The fascial practitioner acts on those tensions that regulate the rhythm of vital movements and brings the body back into harmony with its natural flows.

To summarize, fascial maneuvers generate the following effects in the human body:

1. They generate tissue transformation, promote opening and produce a change in shape.
2. They restore the flow of fluids, blood circulation and cellular metabolic functioning.
3. They contribute to the general biological, nervous and psychic system balance of the organism.
4. They increase the immune action and establish a balance between the circulatory, respiratory, hormonal and immune systems.
5. They rebalance the function of individual muscles or muscle groups connected to the motor system.
6. They relieve main forces that generate friction in the structure.
7. They restore postural balance.
8. They contribute to the modification of personal attitudes while remaining exclusively in the field of bodywork.

the cerebrospinal fluid within the dura mater, organizing the rhythmic pulsation that osteopaths define as primary breath. These and numerous other findings highlight the importance of fascial bodywork for the health and well-being of people.

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## **Chapter 2. WARMING IN FASCIAL INTEGRATION**

We discussed how important it is to produce heat when exerting pressure on connective tissues, just as it is essential to heat each tissue region before treatment.

During this initial phase, the practitioner makes first contact, assessing the overall quality of the body and perceiving it three-dimensionally before intervening. After posture analysis, while the client is supine, the practitioner performs a palpatory examination that not only confirms, but adds to and enriches the information about the postural evaluation in the erect position.

The client also begins to perceive his/her body under the practitioner's hands and becomes aware of the most rigid and sensitive areas.

Some people who are not familiar with their bodies may perceive this initial phase as somewhat invasive, which is why gradualness is important.

The term coined by fascial integration to indicate tissue warming, "charging and discharging", comes from Jack Painter's postural integration techniques and serves to prepare the fascia during the session.

The phases are accompanied by breathing and movements, maintaining the client-practitioner relationship. Fascial integration is a non-passive intervention, also because if the client remains passive, they would not know the intrinsic resource of their strengths and potential. "Charging and discharging" is also a useful technique to promote client awareness, so that the person does not get distracted or fall asleep.

We know the importance of breathing, its relationship to the heartbeat and its role in supplying energy to the body. For this reason, most fascial integration techniques aim to increase the capacity of the thoracic cage in order to enhance respiratory activity.

Short, fragmented or compressed breathing causes specific physical and mental limitations and influences the emotional state of the person. Just observing the breath gives us a lot of information about the general state of health of the client.

The aim of fascial work, which begins with the warm-up phase, is to balance the breath and restore sufficient blood flow to organs and muscles. It has been proven possible to voluntarily control breathing by influencing the autonomic nervous system. In everyday life, by blowing, laughing, sucking and coughing, we modify our internal rhythms and our state. Understanding the interdependence between circulation and breathing is the basis of good health. With fast, repeated breaths and pressing movements, for example, we can induce sympathetic activity in the body, while a slow and regular respiratory cycle produces vagotonia.

It is very important to create a state of sympathetic activation in the client before any maneuver. This makes them more responsive to the stimuli by the practitioner and the vagotonic state also makes them more peaceful. Vladimir Janda<sup>[5]</sup> wrote that there is a correlation between sympathetic activation and activation of TGF-BETA-1, which activates the immune system and modifies the production of fibroblasts. Therefore, by generating sympathetic activation in the body, it is possible to impact the fibroblasts more incisively.

Activating the sympathetic nervous system is also useful for the client in order to emerge from immobility and "wake up" the body.<sup>[6]</sup>

While the charging phase focuses practitioner and client on the area to be treated, the discharging phase sees both involved in working on specific musculature to facilitate release. With this technique, the body enters a state of contraction and expansion and increases its vibratory state.

Levine talks about pendulation to indicate the primitive rhythm manifested in the body by contraction and expansion. After each expansion, the body may return to a state of contraction, but with a greater predisposition towards expansion.

Balance in the body is created by these contractions and expansions that occur on all levels, up to the smallest systems. Constant compressions and expansions in the human body serve to maintain or move spaces, in order to generate new forms.

Where this harmonic fluctuation is compromised, chronic tensions and illnesses may arise. The unique way of each person to expand and contract, to feel the body empty or full, to feel the excitement or sensations of fatigue, deep or shallow breathing, generates well-being or

malaise, a sense of freedom or limitation.

The practitioner's job is to train the client to consciously get in touch with the neuro-vegetative system, by taking charge of some important bodily activities.

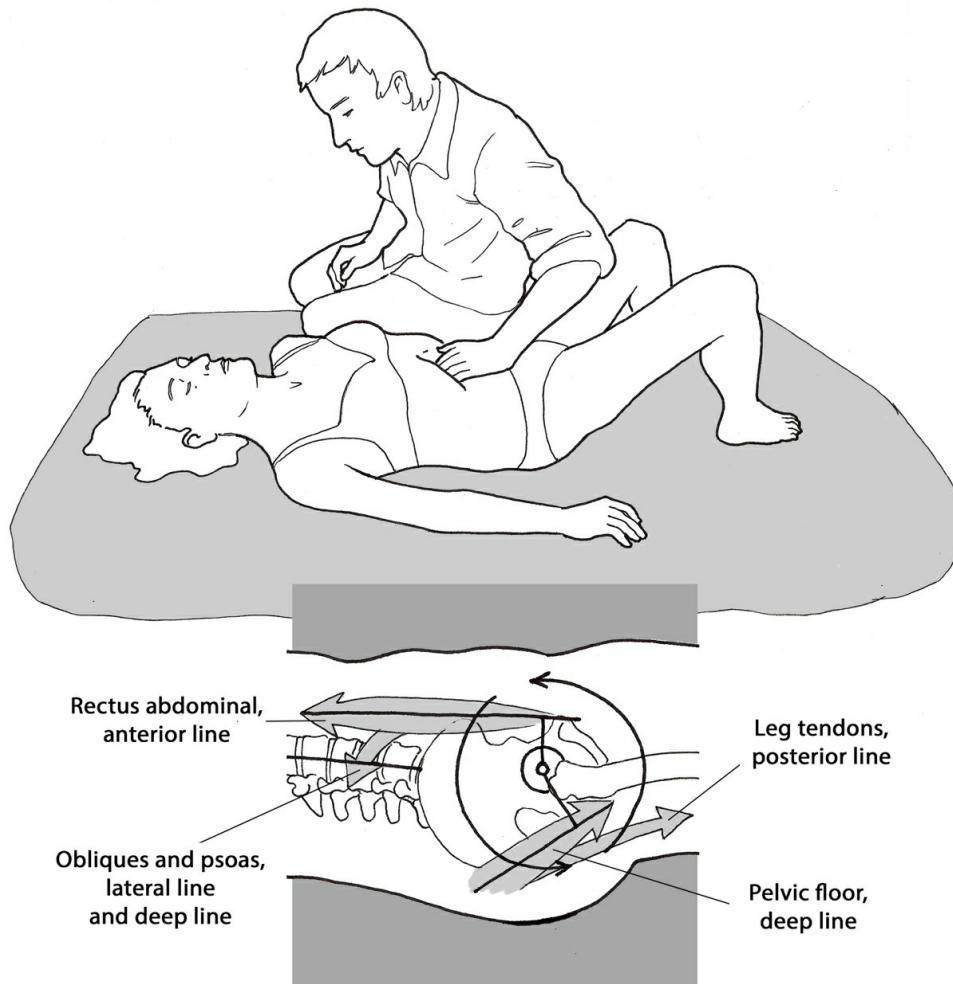
It is necessary to respect the rhythm of the client, both in breathing and in the time necessary for fascial release. In order for the practitioner's interventions to be accepted, they must recognize the moments when a profound change is taking place. All this is possible if the practitioner is serene and confident and acts in a state of presence, competence and inner trust.

Every perceptive change, every psychological or emotional change, every physiological and organic change, is instantly echoed in the nervous and respiratory activity. At this level, the body changes its rhythms and adapts behavior to the situation. A state of well-being in the organism is not a condition which one arrives at, a goal to be reached or a situation to be preserved, it is rather a positive and dynamic adaptation to various circumstances and daily conditions.

The purpose of warming is to induce flexibility during organismic activation in a conscious way, to better respond to external and internal stresses.

During the preparation and charging phase, the practitioner touches the client's skin, inviting them to tilt their pelvis back in order to stimulate circulation in that specific area to facilitate the dilation of blood vessels. The client is invited to breathe in deeply, increasing breaths and the heartbeat, bringing more oxygen to the heart which, with strong pulsations, distributes it to the muscles thanks greater blood flow, raising the internal temperatures of the fibers and increasing sensitivity. The capillaries that were closed when resting open and there is less friction between the muscles, now ready for maneuvers. The heat produces smoothness between the articular surfaces, reducing friction.





The client's position is observed during the charging phase, when inhalation is emphasized and the pelvis tilts back and then returns to its resting position.

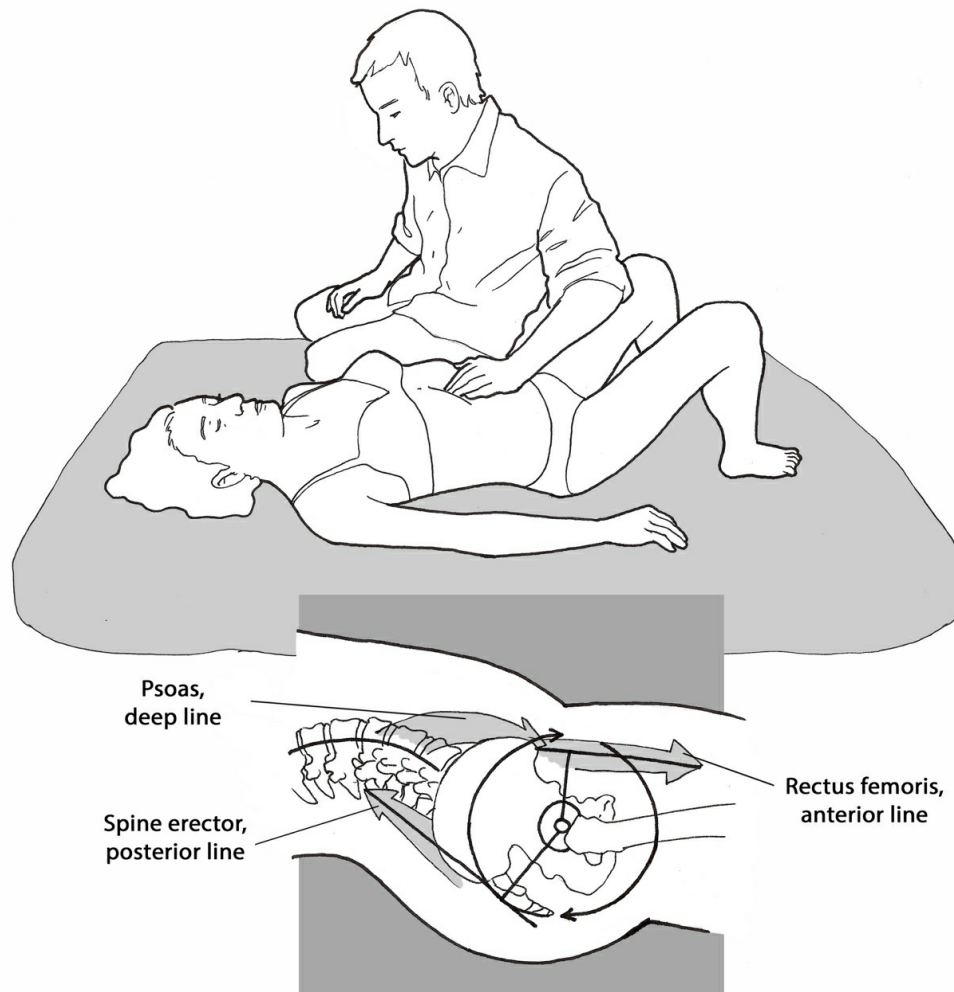
The movement of the pelvis moves all the posterior lateral and deep fascial anterior planes, generating a connection between the treated areas and the rest of the body.

This also facilitates biochemical mechanisms that occur within the muscle: a faster oxygen-hemoglobin dissociation results in a greater supply of energy and greater receptor sensitivity.

In fact, a "cold" or poorly heated muscle is not elastic and more prone to injury than a "hot" muscle.

The discharge phase places greater emphasis on exhalation,

accompanied by the movement of the pelvis that goes from anti- to retroversion: this is the most effective time to act on the fascia. The most evident reactions during warming are tingling, redness and vibrations.



The client's position in the discharge phase, when exhalation is emphasized and the movement of the pelvis from a normal position tilts forward and then returns to its resting position. The movement of the pelvis moves all the posterior lateral and deep fascial anterior planes, generating a connection between the treated areas and the rest of the body.

The use of warming is not limited to the initial phase of the session, but becomes a tool that guides the process. When, for example, some areas of the body are lacking in tone or not very vital, intensifying the breath and movement nourishes and sharpens proprioception. On the

contrary, regarding excessively charged and resistant parts, emphasizing discharge favors a return towards vagotonia. Remember that when the connective tissue is touched, the client's feelings, thoughts, emotions, all the dimensions of their ego and identity are touched. Whenever intimate and personal experiences emerge, charging and discharging techniques allow the practitioner to always be in connection with the emerging experience, regulating the activation of the organism according to the process in progress.

The main effects of the above techniques are summarized below:

1. An increase in blood flow to the muscle.
2. An increase in the internal temperature of the muscle.
3. A greater awareness of the muscle proprioceptors, which facilitates the emergence of memories and increases the speed of transmission of the nervous impulse.
4. Faster oxygen-hemoglobin dissociation, resulting in a better oxygen supply to the muscle;
5. Faster splitting of ATP resulting in a better energy supply;
6. Less friction between the muscle fibers, and therefore greater smoothness between them that facilitates the release of tension.

#### THE LEVELS OF ACTION OF WARMING IN FASCIAL WORK

ORGANIC LEVEL	MUSCLE LEVEL	NERVOUS LEVEL
<p>Activating the cardiovascular and respiratory systems allows to change the heart and respiratory rate to get into work and perform connective maneuvers at best</p>	<p>Increasing body temperature the flow of blood and therefore oxygen nourishes muscles, prepares the fibers for release and reduces internal frictions</p>	<p>The involvement of the central and peripheral nervous system improves the expressions of muscle reactions and traumatic memories</p>

Heating action levels in fascial work

# **Chapter 3. THE TRANSFORMATION OF MULTIPLE ASPECTS OF THE HUMAN BEING BASED ON STRUCTURE**

CHAPTER WRITTEN WITH DR. RICCARDO NAZZARO:  
PHYSICIST, SPECIALIZED IN STRUCTURE OF MATTER. EXPERT IN AUTOMATION SYSTEMS.

In this chapter, we consider the elements of structure from a human point of view. Often fascial bodywork is seen as something purely biomechanical and functional, as if body structure, like a machine, only needs to be adjusted or improved in its functioning. Here we want to consider some aspects specific to human beings, whose corporeity is influenced by forces including individual beliefs, intrinsic vitality and personal history, as opposed to static, inert matter.

We have said that anything that weighs more than a feather acts on connective tissue and influences its shape and contents by exerting a direct action on all the most important cells. Any contact, therefore, affects the individual biological units and their structural organizations. Physics shows us that structure and information are closely connected and when we act on a structure, we modify the information contained in it.

Connective tissue is primarily responsible for the shape of the body, the main container of information regarding the history of a person. It varies under the influence of manual manipulation and changes its functional properties, from the most macroscopic parts to the smallest units, such as cells and proteins.

Hands, fingertips, fingers enter the connective tissue and infuse a force capable of modifying the internal environment. This variation corresponds to a change in the information contained. Contact has several consequences: under the effect of light pressure or traumatic impact, our connective tissue can relax, contract, vitalize, or even suffer injury.

Fascial integration has raised many questions over time about how to effectively intervene on the structure and how to solve imbalances and problems in a long-lasting way.

Adequate and convincing answers can be found only if we abandon the classic mechanistic vision of the human body in favor of a new vision, widespread in recent decades, based on the dynamic integration of the physical, biological and psychological dimensions.

## THE INTEGRATED VISION OF THE HUMAN BODY

The main assumption of systemic/integrated thinking is clearly described by the physicist Fritjof Capra in his book *The web of Life*<sup>[7]</sup>. Basically, he says that in all fields, when we observe phenomena, we must not think of a world made up of objects, but of a world made up of relationships and processes. Ecosystems and organisms are also important to understand in terms of cellular networks and relational chemical processes. The vision of connections and relationships is important, a way of seeing life and phenomena in all fields.

It is difficult to grasp the properties and dynamic functions of the human body if they are not considered in the context where they are found, in history, and in relationships.

No organism, from the cell to the individual organs, can exist autonomously. The continuous relationship with the environment generates infinite responses that not only produce structural changes, but also modify future behaviors.

In other words, a living system in relationship to the environment is a system that learns and has a written memory in its structure: each fiber carries within it the history of past interactions and contingent attitudes.

Unlike explicit memory, which regards the history or narration of a lived experience that is recalled by episodic memory, fascial bodywork activates implicit memory, closer to the non-verbal aspects of the experience.

A tremor, a snap, a sudden smell, more commonly described as knots in the throat or constrictions in the chest, are relationships corresponding to somatic memories, sometimes long past and significant.

How are these memories formed? How are attitudes consolidated in the body? Let's take the example of a child who, while playing animatedly, is limited by the family environment in which he lives. In time he will learn to recognize his enthusiasm as something wrong. He will adjust his movements to be less spontaneous, taking a compressed breath for example, generating muscle contractions and tendencies that he will bring with him in future interactions. He thus begins to create the forms of his body, imprinting, like a hard disk, particular information in the structure. Consolidation subsequently influences proprioception,

natural movements and the alignment of individual segments. Curved shoulders, limited breath and tension in the trapezoids correspond to a state of frustration and resignation, the curved back in particular recalls the posture of those who bow, prostrate themselves, feel the weight of life.

It has been shown that the tendency to perceive danger can cause particular muscle groups in the body to lack tone or become hypersensitive, so alignments, functionality and anatomical forms are always related to the history and distinctive traits of a person.

The evolution of the study of anatomy, from analyzing individual parts as if muscles and organs could be considered singly or in isolation, now embraces a more systemic vision and structural tension. The tensile structure introduced by Buckminster Fuller<sup>[8]</sup> recognizes that connective tissue is a facilitator in the transmission of forces and in the harmonic organization of the parts. There are questions to be asked: What are these forces? How do they really change or maintain a form? Are they purely mechanical, or related to levels that depend on individual existence?

Structure, as the spatial organization of matter, has a certain order whose arrangement reflects the content of the information. From a physical point of view, information is shape, it determines the shape and the reactions of shape.<sup>[9]</sup>

We must always keep in mind that, far from being inert matter, the body is a reality crossed by the breath of life, and the maneuvers always act on different interconnected planes: physical, biological and psychic.

If we fold a metal object- for example a spoon, it bends and takes on an imprinted form permanently. The human body, however much you try to shape it, changes permanently only if the manipulations are integrated by the person. Hence the importance of the term *integration*: a phenomenon in which a new homeostatic balance emerges on the bodily and relational level. The information is therefore not closely linked to the matter, but to the life of the individual.

If we observe the impact of fascial maneuvers, we recognize how the breath influences the metabolic balance, the nervous system and personal self-perception. Dialogue during work allows the person to verbally define emerging processes, sensations and emotions, integrating



new information with change.

The symptom, rather than being eliminated or removed, is an element to be related to the structure in a different way than before, thus changing the consciousness of the person, and consequently the shape.

It is therefore not a question of healing the symptoms but of understanding their function and transforming the assumptions according to which they were formed.

Ida Rolf stated that when the force of gravity manages to flow harmoniously, the body is able to heal itself spontaneously<sup>[10]</sup>. This is a very important and true concept, but the senses, emotions and ideas, which also act as forces on well-being and balance, must be added to gravitational forces.

Ultimately, when an individual works on herself, she becomes aware of the bodily phenomena and the forces that pass through her, she comes into contact with them and achieves greater fullness and vitality. To do this, she integrates emerging information, whether it comes from metabolic, biochemical and gravitational processes, or from emotional or cognitive factors. The individual is in harmony with a biological intelligence that brings all these phenomena together, aspects that in a unitary way are responsible for the organization and form of the structure.

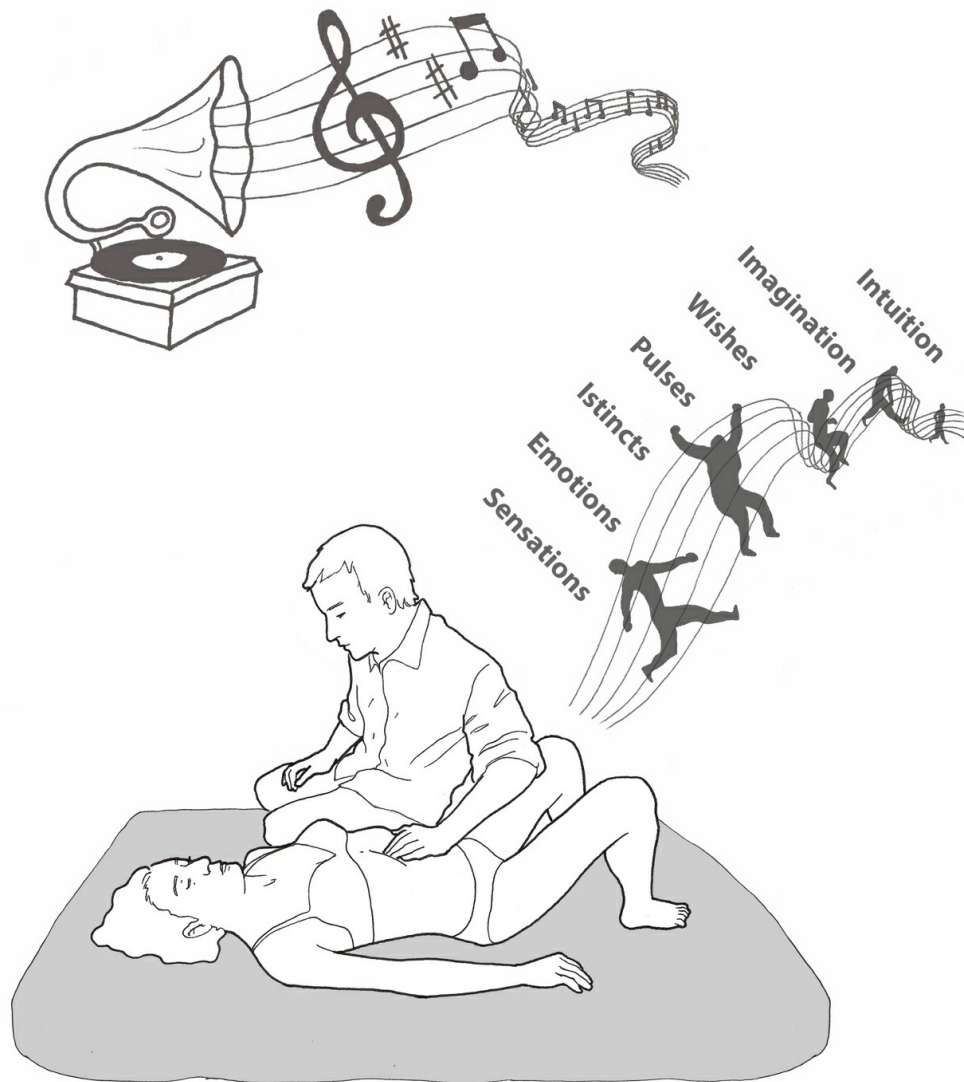
An example can help us to better understand the link between form and information. The body can store information in the same way that music is encoded on a record. The sounds of the instruments, with all their nuances, are recorded and transformed into grooves with different profiles and continuities.

The memory of an event is thus engraved on a material support, and the information becomes shape.

But it is not yet accessible, it is not yet sound. Holding the record in our hands, in fact, we can feel the shape of the recordings, but not the music. Only the stylus of a turntable can extract information, i.e. the sound from the form.

What we verify in the human body is very similar: from the form we can guess the information, the evaluation of postural observation is based on this, but only fascial bodywork can act on it. The practitioner's hands and the bodywork setting, like the turntable stylus, are the means that "make the body sound" and allow the information, together with all

its meaning, to re-emerge.



In the grooves of a record, music rich in nuances can be memorized and this information can be recovered by the needle that turns the grooves back into music. Likewise, every part of our organism, in particular the connective tissue, incorporates information stored during its existence into its structure. It can re-emerge thanks to the action of maneuvers in the form of experiences, like music from the grooves of a record.

But how do we use the information that emerged? What do we do with it in practice? Is it enough to get it out or do we need an extra step? We know that it is not stable, but it varies in relation to the environment, since the organism or posture never have a definite configuration over time. Information is proportional to order: the more a structure is

ordered, harmonious and vital, the richer it is in information exchanged with the outside world. The more the structure tends towards disorder, fragmentation, blocks or is not harmonic, the less information it contains and manages to exchange [\[11\]](#).

Another important point, access to information, touches on the important concept of homeostasis.

The neurobiologist Antonio Damasio [\[12\]](#) in his book “Il Se viene alla Mente: la costruzione del cervello cosciente”, identifies the mechanism of homeostasis as the fundamental basis of physiology. Homeostasis means acting in relation to a purpose and it is closely connected to the maintenance of physical and biological balances. The individual uses information and masters complex psychic phenomena to do this. I would add that homeostasis also applies to psychic balance. Most psychic sufferings are due to hyperfocusing on the personal sphere. When we do not elaborate on and exchange some of our experiences, it is easy for them to appear as obsessions and compulsion. They therefore represent physical and psychic hypertrophies of matter and muscle groups, closures and lack of balance in exchanges with the environment.

In Damasio's words, homeostasis is the mechanism through which organisms identify imbalances within themselves and act to compensate for them.

For example, to keep body temperature at 37°C, the body regulates itself by increasing the blood supply, and if this is not enough, we move or look for a warm place.

To keep our homes at a suitable temperature, boilers are equipped with sensors that, like our sense organs, check the thermal state of the environment and activate or deactivate accordingly.

In addition to the sense organs, we have a very important function we use to regulate ourselves: our ability to imagine ourselves. The nerve network spread in every part of our bodies transforms information into sensations and images [\[13\]](#). The production of images has a precise physiological sense, it helps us to know the state we are in and to organize ourselves with respect to the environment.

Thus, it is clear that the correct perception of the shape of the body or of the state of activation in which we find ourselves is fundamental for maintaining balance. For each individual, the perception of one's own

arousal, that temporary condition of internal activation in response to stimuli, is important in the regulation of behavior. We have to keep in mind that our motor sense influences cognitions, emotions, and ideas of ourselves. Vice versa, cognitive and emotional elaborations strongly condition the body.

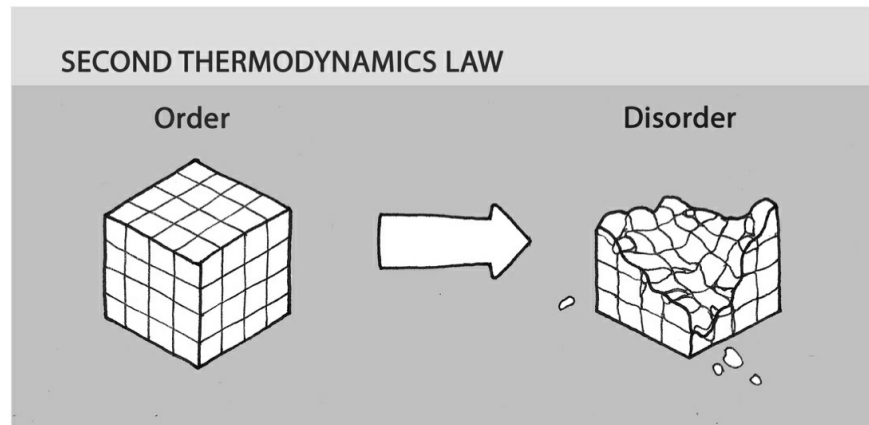
According to the biologist and philosopher Umberto Maturana, one of the distinctive features of living beings is their ability to use information to manage physiological processes<sup>[14]</sup>.

We can thus understand the importance of focusing fascial bodywork on a particular area of the body, on the sensations generated by the pressure on the connective tissue and on the new knowledge that emerges. From this work, images very often emerge during significant moments of the bodywork session. These perceptions and ideas are not only important mediators of change, but activators of new attitudes.

## SELF-REGULATION AND ENERGY BALANCE

So far we have talked about the concept of order and balance: bodywork accesses body information, activates processes of exchange within the structure and leads to greater balance.

But what does the structure need in order to activate these processes since it naturally tends to lose its stability and harmony? We refer to the second principle of thermodynamics, where environmental stresses lead organisms to a condition of lesser order and greater entropy<sup>[15]</sup>. This process is irreversible unless the structure is able to supply itself with energy. In order to maintain order and counteract the natural tendency towards degradation, we must therefore supply ourselves with and use energy<sup>[16]</sup>.



Each structure is naturally brought from a state of order to a state of disorder if it is unable to supply itself with energy.

Inert structures are not able to take energy from the environment and use it for themselves. For this reason, they can only offer passive resistance to decomposition, which is inevitable in a defined time. Structures such as the human body, on the other hand, are capable of supplying themselves with energy to maintain or increase their degree of order [\[17\]](#).

This ability (called metabolism) is what distinguishes living from non-living structures. When we talk about energy, we are not referring to something esoteric, but rather to a potential phenomenon, the power to do work, for example. Energy has to do with the processes of exchange between organisms that, through these processes, transform themselves.

The body is crossed by energy flows in order to maintain its internal stability, essentially a self-regulating process associated with active life. One of our main flows is the breath: we constantly use the oxygen that enters the body, generating chemical reactions and producing energy and waste elements which are in turn expelled and used by other organisms.

During fascial integration maneuvers, the metabolism is directly involved through the breath. As it increases, it also elevates heart rate and more oxygen is distributed in the vessels.

The oxygen-enriched blood flow reaches the muscles and raises their internal temperature, making them more sensitive and preparing them

for deeper work. The general body charge acts on the sympathetic activation of the nervous system.

Energy can therefore be stored, released or exchanged. From the point of view of physics, we can think of energy as a flow that crosses the body over time. Energy is contained in nutrients, air, light waves, sounds, electromagnetic frequencies or any other visible or invisible stimulus with which we come into contact. It can be released, transformed, stored in our tissues and used to keep them active or promote vital processes.

Biologically, every day we need a high level of energy to renew ourselves. Just think of tissue repair where billions of cells are consumed, die and are replaced. The entire lining of our intestines changes every 72 hours, and maintaining this continuous exchange requires a considerable amount of energy.

With fascial bodywork, we try to restore the energy balance in the body. The flow that passes through us must be kept in equilibrium: if there is balance, the energy that enters, the charge, is equal to the one that leaves, the discharge, otherwise the body is either too loaded or too empty.

It is a bit like what happens with food: if we eat more than what we use, the excess food is stored in the form of fat deposits that affect the functioning of the organs, but if we use more food than we ingest, our body will lose mass.

When incoming energy is greater than outgoing, it gets trapped and tensions are generated in the body. Viceversa, if we discharge more energy than we use, our vital processes do not have enough strength to function and they collapse.

In the processes induced by bodywork, there are times when the body's charge increases through contact, the stimulation of circulation in a specific area or deep breathing, other times the discharge is emphasized with greater exhalation and specific work on contracted areas.

If, on the one hand, we use bodywork to unblock energy, on the other hand, it is a way to put it back into circulation to support the development of the organism.

One of the most immediate ways in which the human body can produce or discharge energy is by moving and breathing. Unlike inanimate objects that are consumed through movement or wear, like a



machine or tool, the human body responds to a principle similar to that of flint: motion creates greater communication and contact between membranes, producing energy and putting it into circulation.

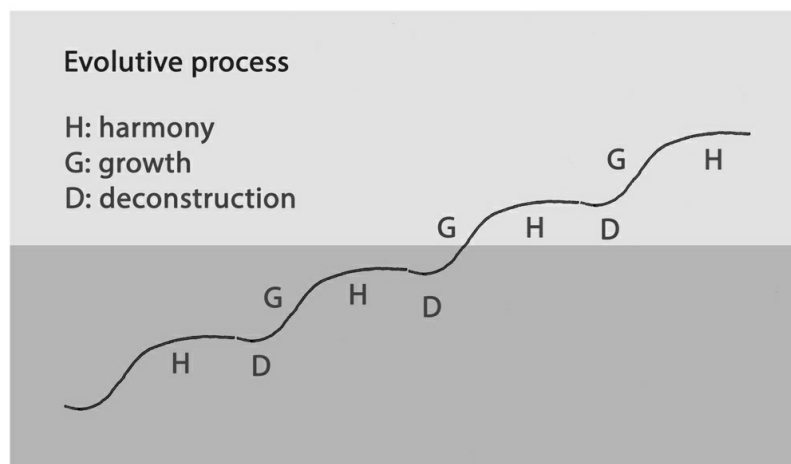
In conclusion, we can say that the power to change metabolic processes and dynamic relations between cells, modify the activation or deactivation of the nervous system, both globally and locally, allows the structure to move from a state of fixity to a new state.

## INFORMATION, GROWTH, EVOLUTION

By growth, we do not mean an increase in size, but in the action on the cycle of instability and stability in the organism. Each of us goes through this progression: our body is deconstructed and continually restructured. This happens from a small wound up to consistent traumas where a lot of time passes before normal functioning is restored.

The onset of blockages and dysfunctions leads us to lose contact with the body or to develop distorted perceptions. Connective tissue densifies according to precise armour, its energy economy stops as well as growth processes.

When the body is fragmented, blocked, rigid, disconnected, too loaded or too empty, it disturbs the exchange processes. The internal and external connections are interrupted at points of fragmentation or blockage, it is no longer in a healthy and harmonious state, but rather in a mode of protection and defense.



The evolutionary process is a phenomenon of continuous growth where we go from a phase of relative harmony and stability to one of deconstruction and then return to a phase of relative adjustment

and harmony. If these steps are directed and accompanied by an evolutive and conscious process, then growth takes place.

The Dominant character type, for example, usually maintains a contraction in the diaphragm and tension in the trapezoids and the anterior respiratory muscles, with a globally very charged structure. The fibers are active and nervous, blood flow is strong, internal currents are intense, and the body is blocked in activation. The influence of fascial bodywork releases the muscles to discharge the body at the tension points and when the level of charge drops, the exchange processes are restored. Growth is thus achieved by an initial disorganization in favor of a new reorganization.

Tissues and organs in a protective state inhibit their ability to participate in these important steps. When a body protects itself, it essentially uses energy for protection and removes it from growth processes. We cannot defend ourselves and develop at the same time, we cannot be withdrawn and open, rigid and flexible at the same time<sup>[18]</sup>. The state of defence occurs during symptomatic reactions and illness. Working on the tissues revives entire areas of connective tissue that are in a defensive state. The term "revive" refers to the intention of the practitioner and manipulation becomes a stimulus that has the power to awaken the intrinsic vitality of the organism and its growth.

During fascial integration bodywork, contact reactivates perception, allowing the person to become aware of their internal phenomena, recognize their blocks, access the information contained.

The structure is invited to disorganize in order to reorganize itself at a higher level of maturation, passing through a moment of fragmentation towards a new adjustment and balance in which the information takes on a new order and a new synthesis, different from before.

During this transition, the ability to imagine oneself and access, through the senses, new bodily images is fundamental. The development of new images favors the transformation and stabilization of change.

In most cases this is a gradual process, but there may be cases where the transaction is immediate.

## PROPRIOCEPTION, IMAGE AND CHOICES:

There is one last point to be discussed: the usefulness and practicality in every day life of bodywork. To understand this, we must explain how fascial bodywork on connective can directly affect choices.

Damasio explains that "somatic markers", that is, the information that comes from the body, are the most influential references for cognitive decisions because of the speed with which thoughts and actions are formulated<sup>[19]</sup>.

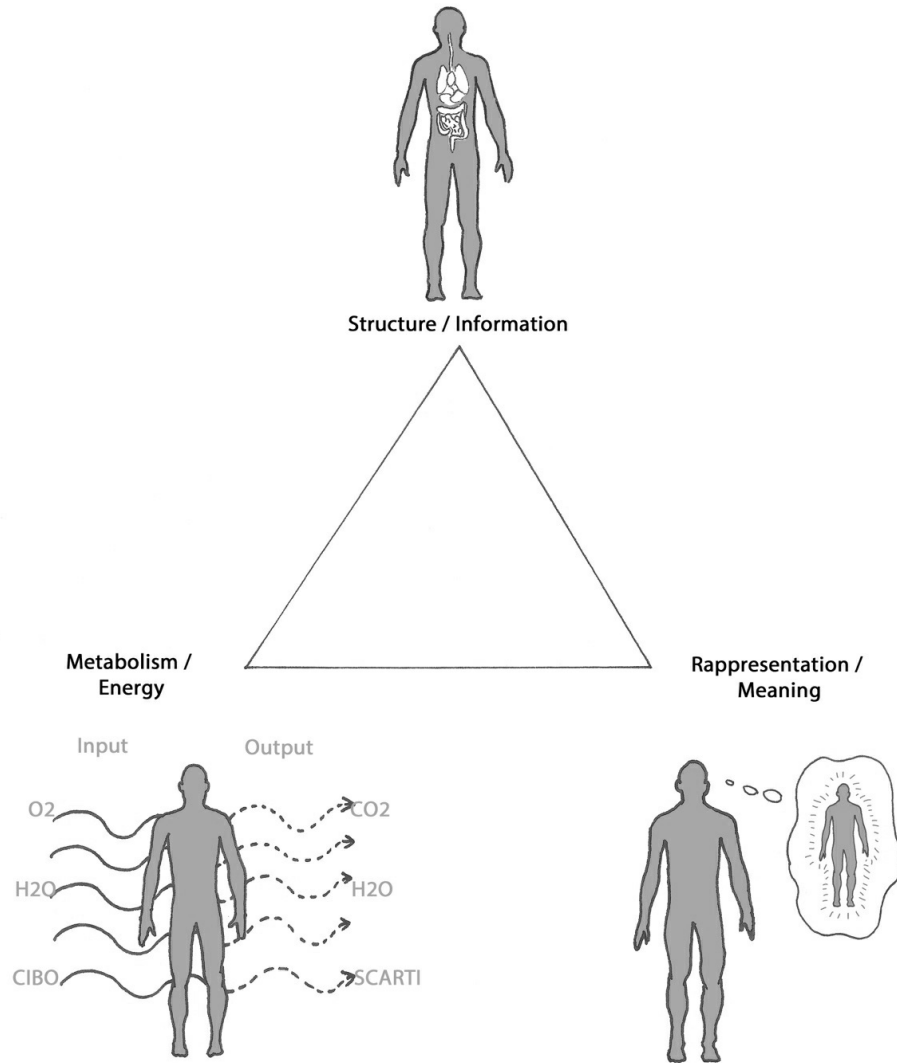
Our sense organs lead us directly to pleasure or pain. With touch, sight, hearing, taste and smell we perceive ourselves and the world. But to the five traditional senses, we must add the vestibular receptors, the proprioceptors of muscles, joints, the representative mode of one's field in space, the balance of exertion, and others<sup>[20]</sup>. There is a broad discussion of how the brain probes receptors and adjusts their sensitivity by combining information. No function is localized in a single brain area, everything is the result of cooperation where neuronal activities and sensations act sequentially.

Certainly the ability to self-represent ourselves or to cognitively process what is happening in the body has a decisive influence on our choices and the direction we take.

Neural and cognitive mechanisms allow us to perceive ourselves and the environment and move accordingly. This imagining ourselves makes us move, since the brain circuits used for mental actions are the same as those used for physical actions.<sup>[21]</sup>

Many choices are not mere instincts, but depend on the predictive abilities of the mechanisms of reward and punishment, the expectation of certain events and strategies for reproducing reality.

## Energy, structure and representation



The information that the body uses is stored in the structure of the body itself. The metabolism processes are guided so as to keep us alive by accessing this information. The body, through the nervous system, continuously generates a multimedia representation of itself through the senses. To monitor these processes, it generates meanings both consciously and unconsciously, and regulates the metabolism that keeps us alive.

Everything that manifests itself in the body as internal movements-intestinal, respiratory, circulatory, biochemical or nervous changes-produces sensations. Charles Bell in the early 1800s and later William James in 1889, called the ability to be aware of this information and give

it a cognitive meaning the "sixth sense"[\[22\]](#). Surely both the sense organs that project us into the environment and internal sensations contribute to regulating our behavior and our choices.

It is therefore essential that we be aware of our structure, our internal and external inputs and that we master this information.

The better the image of ourselves and the world, the greater the probability of harmonizing with the environment and understanding what direction to move in.

Bodywork, in particular on connective tissues, directly affects our sense organs and internal and external body sensations. It can often happen during the fascial bodywork process that a person finds themselves changing in many aspects of their life without necessarily having to stop and think or elaborate too much on the actions to be taken. They then begin to trust their senses and the insights that come from the body and put them into practice. We attribute this phenomenon to the effect of manipulations on the entire proprioceptive system.

## HOW FASCIAL INTEGRATION WORKS

(destructuring/restructuring, energy profiles, proprioception and consciousness.)

Below we summarize the relationships between the principles mentioned above and fascial integration bodywork. The topics we have examined are fundamental concepts on which the whole model is based.

## SHAPE ORGANIZATION AND INFORMATION.

We have said that the maneuvers act on the structure, allowing access to new information and perceptions.

Fascial integration is a path that deconstructs the organization of the body to make room for a new organization on a more evolved level. The fascia change their order and release the old information contained in them. During bodywork, perceptions expand, the person knows and uses the information that emerges, organizing it in a better and more harmonious relationship with the body and the environment. This is growth. Trauma or pathologies can, for a period of time, interrupt or block the growth process of each organism. Bodywork is an opportunity

to become aware of the current state and activate an evolutive change. During the integration process, the structure breaks down and recomposes itself at a higher level of maturation, passing through a moment of fragmentation, in the search for a new adjustment and balance.

## CHARGING AND DISCHARGING PROCESSES AND ENERGY INCREASE IN THE BODY

We have said that every structure naturally goes towards a condition of lesser order and greater entropy unless it is able to reactivate exchange processes and supply itself with energy. In order to maintain the best degree of order and counteract the natural tendency towards deterioration, the structure supplies itself with and uses energy. Energy increases during fascial bodywork, when the practitioner contacts the connective tissue, stimulates circulation in a specific area and invites the client to breathe deeply. At this stage, the heart rate increases together with oxygen. This is the charging phase (see the chapter "Warming in Fascial Integration"): the blood flow and oxygen reach the muscle, raising its internal temperature and nourishing organs such as the stomach, pancreas, liver and all cells. Charging enhances the energy supply and changes the overall state of the body.

## PROPRIOCEPTION AND SELF-REPRESENTATION: THE POWER OVER CHOICES.

The fascial integration process helps people to perceive their bodies differently from the very first sessions. For example, where the muscles are discharged, lacking tone, and the breath is blocked during exhalation, the first sessions aim to revitalize the connective tissue in those areas. The intervention will allow the person to have new sensations in their body, to breathe better and to feel more toned and stronger, consequently changing their attitudes. Freeing the body and activating the senses generates greater possibilities for reaction, changes internal activation and promotes expressiveness. It is possible to notice the body's reflexes and reactive patterns with greater clarity, the moments when strength is lost or a blockage is generated. One can also become aware of the situations that provoke a state of tension.

Fascial integration therefore modifies the structure, not only by acting on the blocks, but by offering the possibility of imagining oneself differently and mastering several personal aspects.

In this new, more extensive capacity for self-representation, a relationship is established between the organization of the structure, the energy processes and the ability to act on changes and choices.



## Chapter 4. BODY AND EMOTIONS

People have a fundamental, intrinsic and natural need to express themselves. Expression is part of human nature and the wide range of expressive nuances offers the possibility for realization and knowledge. Completing a task or an experience often makes us feel full, in the same way living an emotion fully is a source of integrity and identity in the body. Every obstacle to expressiveness, every physical or mental constraint, contributes to involution, possible illness and physical blockage.

Bodywork activates many sensations that are not directly linked to emotions but can be transformed into emotional states. For example, we can feel pain, heat, tingling in the body, and this can be more or less pleasant or unpleasant, but not necessarily lead to emotional activation. On the contrary, when we get excited, a related body sensation is always generated. The body emotional sounding board that resonates like vibrating wood amplifies the sound of guitar strings. When anger is activated, for example, a particular area of the body may change: the jaw may begin to stretch and tension may spread to the abdomen or chest.

The clear distinction between emotion and sensation is important in order to understand and interpret purely physical changes to the structure from those that involve more personal spheres.

Bodywork also aims at finding new meanings for what happens to us during the process, to allow for the elaboration of those expressions that have been interrupted.

Posture evaluation, which seems purely technical, has a deep connection with emotions. The proprioceptive and kinesthetic feedback of the arrangement of body segments and balances goes directly to our brain, involving the medial prefrontal cortex, the only area capable of altering the limbic system and emotional states.

Body tensions and the perception of postural imbalance are experienced by us directly as moods and emotional states.

Some tensions are so consolidated that they are linked to cultural or ethical attitudes, to personal or educational limitations. On the one hand, restrictive or castrating educational choices may have blocked our full individual expressiveness, on the other hand, exaggerated morality,

attachment to form or civic sense may also repress the spontaneity of the body. The problem arises when certain personal limits have strong repercussions on the physical level and on actions, specifically on reactions, situations which put us to the test every day. Sometimes, when faced with an event, a particular behavior, a choice, a precise stance or the possibility of setting a boundary, we are blocked and do not find the ideal expression, the right model and appropriate action for the situation.

We end up, therefore, being subjected to events and remaining inhibited in the impossibility of dissolving certain energy accumulations which should be at the service, as some biologists would say, of the evolution or the conservation of our species. Instead, they remain in the body. Henry Laborit (1979) [\[23\]](#) made an important contribution in this regard. In his theory on the mechanism of inhibition of action, he asserted that anything that cannot be expressed can turn into a pervasive and chronic blockage, with adverse repercussions on the body and on health.

Anything that is materially deposited and remains in the body causes an explicit and serious limitation. The body, however, is often not the first to speak and be heard, the first warning comes from the mind, thoughts, and intellectual confusion.

Fixed ideas and small fixations are the litmus test, in raw form, of our discomfort and what remains unexpressed. Often following a situation where we could not speak or act as we wanted, persistent thoughts and images of the event remain.

Sleep disorders, with all the physical accumulation that comes with them, are often indicators of the failure to complete a task, the sign of an unresolved situation.

Otherwise we could abandon ourselves to exhaustion with the same satisfaction that a craftsman feels in front of a job well done.

According to Jerome Liss [\[24\]](#), discharging and fully experiencing emotions requires a good connection between the limbic system and the hypothalamus. This happens if we manage to follow the emotional cycle of intensification, expression and diminution of emotion, which involves the synchronized alternation of the sympathetic and parasympathetic components of the autonomic nervous system.

It is necessary to repossess and direct certain forces that remain accumulated within the body which sometimes increase under stress due to social roles and rhythms. Fascial bodywork can be, as a whole, an important key that allows these interrupted parts to express themselves quickly, a means that also acts on psychic manifestations that become chronic states of anxiety, recurring thoughts and insomnia, without crossing over into the field of psychotherapy. Integration is also useful for treating disorders where the recurrent conception completely separates the person from the body. Wataru Ohashi [25] asserts that there are no positive or negative emotions but incomplete and complete emotions. In every circumstance, we are masters of experimenting a wide range of expressive tonalities, be they joyful or dramatic.

If this does not happen, the malaise will no longer be caused by the contingency that moved us, but by persistent body blockage.

It is always physical matter that becomes the intermediary for resolving these entanglements. It is not by chance that at the end of a work session clients confirm that they feel their body is freer, they perceive an "empty head", as if they were ready to lie down.

The most delicate part concerns the expression of intense emotions, because sometimes their intensity frightens clients, but this also regards the practitioner who finds themselves dealing with an unknown field. All emotions involve risk, even the most beautiful emotions such as love or joy can be frightening if they present themselves in an excessive, sudden, and unmanageable way.

Emotions are biological representations of our organism, sometimes impetuous and unexpected. No one learns to be sad or angry, it is a reaction that we have from the beginning of life, so we discharge our nervous system according to a consistent relationship with the stimulus. The connective tissue of a newborn, not yet compromised, does not interfere in this process. Emotions are a natural response to situations, they follow their own logic, they are an organismic statement. Of a different nature are the feelings, which we can see in a simplified way, as a continuous set of emotions in relation to others. While the emotion of pleasure or anger can be dispelled in a relatively short time, a feeling cannot be elaborated quickly.

Feelings like friendship or love are a set of many emotions that make up the relationship between us and the world and between us and

others. Fascial integration acts more on the biological aspect of emotion, on the possibility of restoring a correct relationship with the stimulus. It acts on those unfinished responses, sedimented in the body, that have been interrupted in the relational context.

As Luciano Marchino<sup>[26]</sup> recalls and specifies, the body and our existence are basically characterized by two types of tensions: one based on trait and one on state. State tensions are those that depend on contingent events, while trait tensions are related to the history of the individual, his/her traumas and unconscious sedimentation. Acting on the former is relatively easier than acting on the latter.

The bodily approach that we practice creates the conditions for the person to become aware of the tensions of state, the contingent ones, created by the mutual interaction between the person and his/her environment. The examination of the unconscious dynamics (where contingent expression is not enough to transform the discomfort) must be faced later, in a more verbal and analytical approach, with or without the help of a professional in the field.

Emotions in fascial bodywork are immediate, as William James pointed out at the end of the nineteenth century. We feel distressed because we cry, angry because we hit someone or frightened because we tremble, not the contrary<sup>[27]</sup>. The body sometimes produces sudden, uncontrollable emotions, as if they did not belong to us.

William James's thought differed from that of Walter Cannon<sup>[28]</sup>, his contemporary. For Cannon, emotions are generated at the cortical level and then manifested in the organism.

Today we know that both theories are valid, especially in light of recent discoveries in psychoneuroimmunology, a field that studies the relationship between the nervous, endocrine and immune systems. Our body develops a series of chemical substances called neuropeptides that bind to the cells of the body through specific receptors and activate emotional memories all over. From the point of view of emotions, therefore, the brain and the body are the same thing.

The contribution of the researcher Candace B. Pert has been precious. Pert, in the late nineties, found a high concentration of neuropeptides between the nerves and bundles of cells, called ganglia, distributed not only along the spinal cord, where all incoming body sensations are

filtered, but also along the paths that led to internal organs, on the very surface of our skin to the muscle fascia.

In turn, the immune system also produces neuropeptides: the whole body is therefore a dynamic organism that communicates and is moved in its entirety.

Fascial bodywork, which modifies the physiological activity of the body, also has an important impact on the personal sphere. During a bodywork session, it is possible to bring the client into intimate contact with themselves and create an intense relationship with their emotions.

Sometimes the difficulty is to experience an intense emotion in the body, which is why fascial bodywork tries to deal with the aspects of intimacy and intensity gradually.

The supine or prone position during a session is by nature a regressive position. The person sometimes regresses and lets themselves be guided: the session becomes a ritual, a journey that lessens the state of vigilance, to reach a gradual and consensual "destructuring" of the physical framework and mental control.

The body has defended itself to not feel, it has controlled itself and it is necessary to start from these protections. Therefore breath, pressure and movement of the limbs allow access to the emotions contained in the armor and to express them.

One of the most important aspects of fascial bodywork is to create the conditions for the person to develop the ability to recognize and process their experiences.

True success is when people master their intense emotional states without being overwhelmed. The effectiveness of the integration process brings greater vitality to and vibration in the body, increasing the possibility of containing intense emotions and expressing them more effectively in the here and now.

## CHAPTER 5. BODYWORK AND THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

In his novel "The Talent Code", Daniel Coyle presents the result of some research on nervous circuits. Every human movement, thought or emotion, he writes, is a precise electrical signal that flows through neuronal cells. This signal increases as the fibers increase the myelin that surrounds them. Myelin is nothing more than a multi-lamellar whitish substance with the precise task of isolating, like electrical cables, and promoting the transmission of signals, thus increasing the strength, speed and precision of the nervous impulse. Muscle memory travels in unison with the activation of nerve circuits. The accuracy of a particular gesture, the possibility of improving or changing it, depends on the nerve pathways that light up and change as directional inputs. The more we turn on these circuits, the more our sensations, emotions and actions become clear and precise. The more myelin is created around the nerve fibers, the stronger, more alive, faster and more accurate the signal becomes. [\[29\]](#)

Myelin therefore plays a fundamental role in the formation and reinforcement of synaptic pathways. It is the main way to transform and change mental predispositions and learning. Let us consider how facial bodywork, which acts on both the sense organs and the receptors present in different layers of the connective tissue, can strengthen these circuits. The sensations that develop during the session and all the activations during the process become the attitudinal basis for a change that continues, even outside the setting.

The development and closure of a bodywork session changes the myelin contribution to our fibers. We must think of bodywork as an educational and formative moment for the attitudinal and personal state. Coyle shows that different personalities and different personal motivations can produce different neuronal responses. He calls this principle "ignition": the union between personal motivation and induction that comes from outside. The attitude of the fascial practitioner who directs the session is therefore equally important, as his/her influence has a very powerful and evocative effect, crucial for the outcome of the treatment.

But what role does the nervous system play in maintaining tension, exacerbating symptoms, intensifying and lengthening the persistence of physical or mental pain? And how to intervene fascially to direct or change these activations?

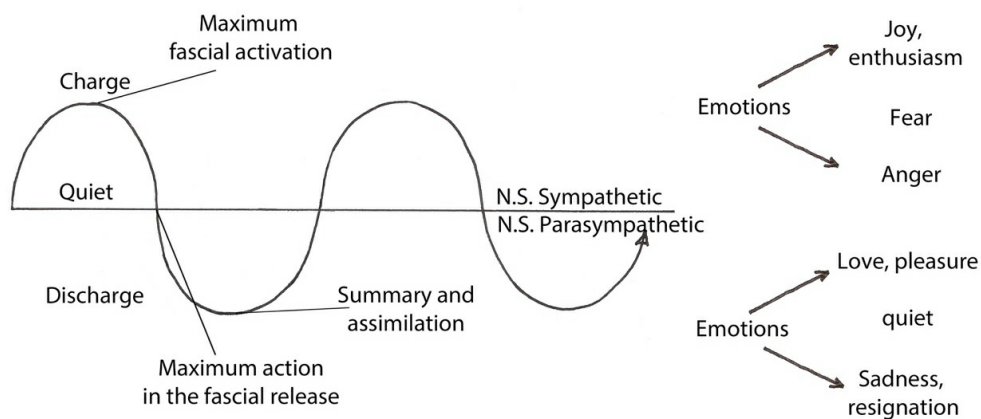
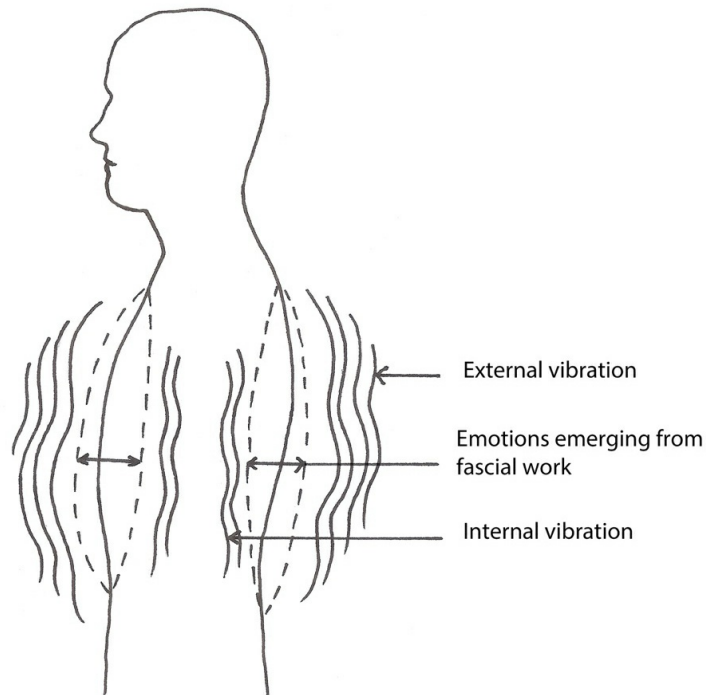
We assume that most of our discomforts are generated by a lack of appropriate bodily responses to stimuli, a lack of coordination between environmental inputs and our consequent reactions. When our reactions are not very fluid and coherent, for example when they are inhibited, they contribute to the persistence of a traumatic, involuntal condition. Sensory stimulation, sometimes defined by the term "exteroception", is extremely complex. An infinite number of inputs come from the environment, the body and the mind. Our way of filtering information determines the focus of our attention or what should be ignored in organizing resulting behavior. The interpretation of stimuli and the coordination of responses becomes the basis for what is a large part of identity and health for each of us. While some responses are conscious and voluntary, others act at a deeper, unconscious, automatic level. Automatic and physiological movements, such as peristaltic activations, heartbeat, breathing, besides keeping us alive, are part of the regulation of environmental responses. The way we breathe or increase our heartbeat prepares our activations towards the environment. Our equilibrium is created by the alternation between the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. Sympathetic dynamism acts on the efficacy of the organs, favors the extension of the bronchi, stimulates the adrenal glands, the dilation of the pupils, increases the heartbeat and the attack and flight response in the case of danger, while parasympathetic activity, on the contrary, inhibits and induces the organism towards a condition of rest and assimilation.

Emotions are also involved: while the sympathetic system activates emotions of fear or joy in the body, peristaltic relaxation and slow contractions are associated with states such as security or pleasure. It is not difficult to intuit the systematic influence of emotions on nerve activations and vice versa. The systems are mutually influential: organs, muscles, peristalsis, impressions and emotions travel in unison. An emotion activates the nervous system like a Gaussian wave, reaches its peak and fades. For example, when we cry or grieve, our body activates and vibrates and then returns to a state of calm. Emotions are the



expression of our active striving towards the world or of our defending ourselves. When we feel enthusiasm, we expand our body and take deep, vibrant breaths; when we are sad or afraid, we can perceive our body withdrawing, slowing down its rhythms or stopping. At the nervous level, sympathetic activation is related to "positive" emotions such as joy, enthusiasm, and "negative" emotions such as anger, rage, frustration, while parasympathetic activation creates the conditions for "positive" emotions such as love and fusional pleasure, or "negative" emotions such as sadness, fear, shame, guilt.

## Emotions and nervous system



In fascial bodywork there are very precise phases for the activation, release and assimilation of the work on the muscles, as well as very precise phases for the activation of the nervous system connected to the emergence of different emotions. On the basis of these principles and schemes, the practitioner orients him/herself during the various phases of the process in order to conduct the sessions according to a precise intention.

Fascial integration bodywork tries to help the person express the emotional blocks that froze at a certain stage of activation. Unexpressed

anger locked in sympathetic activation for example, can be reactivated through breathing, movement and manipulation. It is important to recover what has not been expressed. Health and well-being are expanded when we fully and spontaneously experience any unexpressed emotion. When we manage to communicate emotionally, in the most complete and authentic way, this favors the harmonious passage from one system to another in a continuous, vital flow. Emotions underlie intention, they are markers of character, they generate body shapes and are the main cause of fascial densities. By getting angry and defending ourselves, we harden and thicken; by feeling sad, we droop. These conditions may persist beyond a specific circumstance or stimulus when an emotion takes over. Some states of activation may become chronic over time. Sadness or depression/helplessness may decrease the pulse, slow down peristaltic rhythms, and take root in the body. Alain Berthoz, in his masterpiece "The Brain's Sense of Movement" recalls that one of the most important properties of our nervous system is adaptability. When the system is overloaded with permanent signals, it stops producing them. If we wear a backpack while walking, we forget that we have it on our shoulders. This is because the contact receptors cease to activate if pressure is maintained over time. Motor neuron membranes have adaptive properties that, thanks to many neuromediators, decrease discharge frequency in the presence of continuous stimuli.[\[30\]](#)

In the same way, we adapt to an incorrect posture or a chronic emotional state. Our body segments suffer a strong shock in stressful conditions and after strong emotions, but over time they adapt. Some tensions or moods are so chronic that we can forget we have them, they become such an integral part of our posture and person that we no longer feel the need to get rid of them, like when one wears a cast for a long time and limb sensitivity disappears.

But these imbalances are formed gradually. The fibers that contract and stretch implicate the adaptive properties of our nervous system. Incorrect posture is due, at the beginning, to gravity, but over time the pain decreases. In the same way, we get used to blocked breath, even though we are far from the situation that generated it. Where there is an imbalance or a chronic emotion, there is also an adaptation of the nervous system and a decrease in synaptic frequency. During fascial bodywork sessions, the fibers are brought back to their optimal

condition, and the receptor properties that have ceased to function over time are activated again. For this reason, after fascial work there is an initial phase of hypersensitivity and hyper-reactivity. The adaptive property is restored when, under the effect of tissue manipulation, primary connections are recreated. It acts on the specific perineural network that envelops the nerves and promotes the mediation of connective tissue between the skeletal, lymphatic, nervous, immune and vascular muscle systems. It is a bridge that not only makes these systems more practicable, but makes the overall structure more adaptable. Wilhelm Reich pointed out that good health depends on the ability to activate the parasympathetic system. He sustained that there was a close relationship between the strong activation of the sympathetic nervous system and physical and emotional disorders.

In 1967 Ernst Gellhorn wrote that not only was parasympathetic activation important, but so was the balance and alternation between the two systems<sup>[31]</sup>. The excitement, enthusiasm, anger of the sympathetic system must be followed by the rest, recovery and assimilation of the parasympathetic system. This vital balance depends on the alternation of these systems. An emotion of anger in fascial bodywork can discharge and help the nervous system to move towards vagotonia, on the contrary sadness can become stronger and more rhythmical. Balance is not a static but a dynamic process, in which the active nervous system can be set in motion or slowed down and move on to another state. In her book *Le Quaranta Porte*, Elif Shafak quotes the poet Rumi. He says that our essence is an alternating movement of minimal contractions and expansions, two balanced and coordinated movements, like the wings of a bird.<sup>[32]</sup> It can happen that the body stops in one of these stages, our actions can be inhibited or the resting phases altered. Sometimes the parasympathetic and the sympathetic interfere with each other or overlap and the cycle between action and rest becomes fragmented, losing intensity and effectiveness. Peter Levine explained these chronic blocks with the example of animal immobilization. When a cheetah catches an impala, the prey falls to the ground at the moment of contact and freezes as if it apparently dead, similar to what happens when the accelerator and the brake are pressed at the same time in a car. The antagonism between the internal motion of the nervous system (motor)

and the immobility of the body (brake) produces strong internal agitation similar to a storm.<sup>[33]</sup> Only when the animal feels out of danger can it discharge all its energy and adjust its nervous system again. This is something that man is often unable to do, remaining stuck at the frozen level. People who have suffered traumas or shocks and receive strong shocks to the nervous system and can no longer regulate activation and relaxation properly.

Dr. Hooshang Hooshmand, neurologist and author of the book "Chronic Pain"<sup>[34]</sup>, states that in the presence of a trauma at the nervous level, a phenomenon called "island of turbulence" is created. If the trauma has involved the body, in the specific area where the nerves were disconnected, it is not always possible to fully restore previous functionality, and there is not always an immediacy in the message between one fiber and another or in the communication between one part of the body and another. In the connective tissue, there are billions of nerve cells close to each other, travelling at 400 km per hour and communicating instantly with one another. Each part of the body works in harmony with everything else, as if it knew what was happening at the opposite end, like a single unit.

Integration, as the term itself suggests, acts at the nervous level to promote this communication, carrying out reparative, assimilative actions, as in the case where there has been a split or a trauma. During each session, we try to go through both phases of sympathetic and parasympathetic activation, in order to allow for the gradual awareness of body sensations and internal activations.

We often talk about relaxation, meditation or specific training to act on body tensions. But in my opinion, many practices may not take into account the primary need of the body to reactivate itself at the sympathetic level before moving into vagotonia, especially when some unresolved traumatic experiences remain as hotbeds within the body. In my opinion, the more alive and responsive the senses are, the more possible it is to engage in practices of mental presence in the best possible way. If the nervous system is blocked, there is a great risk of limiting meditative activity to a purely mental, imaginative sphere, cutting off most of the body's sensations.

Tense, excessively "stressed" muscle tone often remains active for a

long time and weakens its function until it is newly activated. It is necessary to work on the internal metabolism, increase the amount of oxygen available, for example, to promote vagotonia. The higher one goes, the further one falls, therefore, as a rule, each system is better/more effectively activated if it is preceded by its antagonist. The study of personality types and body armor takes into account both emotional-respiratory blocks and the particular state of activation of the nervous system. The Oral character type, for example, who has a short respiratory pattern and is mainly blocked at a parasympathetic level, is activated to reach a higher level of presence/awareness. The Dominant or Aggressive type, on the other hand, who has blocked inhalation and is mainly overcharged, needs to be helped towards entering vagotonia. Fascial bodywork in these cases favors the rebalance of the systems, acting on what Alain Berthoz calls a "change of strategy". In everyday life, we are used to responding to different environmental stimuli and activating different areas of the nervous system connected to the fascial planes. If, for example, we find ourselves driving a car slowly, we activate fewer areas of the nervous system and muscles than when we forcefully press the brake to stop in the face of imminent danger. Connective manipulations involve large areas of muscles and the nervous system. This work thus increases our reactivity and dynamism to stimuli. Muscle and skeletal responses that were not formerly called into question are activated, and previously unknown responses to the environment are produced.

## **Chapter 6. INTRODUCTION TO CHARACTER TYPES:**

A principle that distinguishes fascial integration from other disciplines is that it takes the relationship between body shape and personality into account, in order to evaluate the dynamics that contribute to generating and maintaining them.

By personality we mean the distinctive traits of a person, attitudes and trends that are directly related to body shapes. These principles are the basis for evaluations and interventions, in order to completely transform physical and attitudinal elements in a person.

This intervention does not have to do with analysis or psychotherapy, but starting from fascial bodywork on the various body levels, we look for changes that directly affect the traits of the person which cause discomfort. The basic assumption is that body balance leads to psychic balance.

One of the most frequently asked questions at international conferences is why the same treatment on different patients has different effects or why the same treatment, performed by different practitioners on the same person, has such divergent results. The conviction has now been reached that fascial bodywork brings several interpersonal factors into play that go beyond the standardized application of a model.

In the practitioner-client encounter, forces pass that act on the individual and mental sphere, not only on the organism. It is important for us to begin to establish clear and concrete paradigms that describe these aspects, to have more transparency regarding the type of treatment to be administered and the standardization of results.

I believe that a clear reading of the information that passes between the practitioner and the client is necessary: within the relationship, it is important to understand the intention of the maneuvers, the type of pressure, the direction of work and the effects, taking emerging needs into account. These are the basic prerequisites for starting work with awareness and professionalism.

The intention of the practitioner and the participative and emotional emphasis transmitted are very important components that act on the



outcome of the treatments. The fascial system and the body structure react to information and change based on a synthesis between new forces put in place and those that already exist.

Depending on the quality of the tissues and the state of activation of the system, a different alteration of the structure can be generated in the relationship between the practitioner's intention and the force transmitted.

Most failures or abrupt interruptions in treatment, once enacted in a technically correct way, are due to a series of problems at the relational level. It is possible that the practitioner does not take the implicit needs that emerged during the sessions into account. These needs are not expressed openly in words but are observed in the (sometimes implicit) results.

Often the mistake is to conduct the session according to a standard protocol, ignoring many details that could change the efficacy of the treatment, be it an intervention on posture, the resolution of a specific dysfunctions, or well-being in general.

Learning how to recognize various types of body shapes or physiological activation allows one to have preventive knowledge about possible client reactions, and this is a necessary professional enrichment for any expert in bodywork.

In fascial integration, a widespread evaluation tool, known as "character types", is used to observe body shape: the types are from the map by Wilhelm Reich, later revised by Alexander Lowen, and are used extensively in bioenergetic bodywork.

Each of our identities is closely related to the quality of body sensations that are in turn responsible for the shape. Feelings and sensations, internal movements and conflicts, inhibited actions and vital impulses not fully expressed, generating form and structure.

In this chapter, the properties of the distinctive traits of the person, based on the experience of thousands of cases are explained. Pure classifications are difficult to find, but in the same person, parts of the body belonging to different types can be diagnosed, although one type is always predominant over the others.

Character types are evaluated based on tissue texture, skin color, the tone of the deep layers of the fascia, the distribution of dense and charged areas, the type of gaze and the freedom with which the body or

the breath moves.

Working on the distinctive traits of the person does not necessarily mean "cleaning up", rebalancing, adjusting a position or moving joints, bones and tendons, but rather trying to recognize why a structure lacks harmony, observing the organization.

For some types, the need is to discharge the body and excess activation, sometimes limited to a certain surface; others need to fill it, develop strength, make it active and present or reach a state of abandonment.

Starting from this assumption, we can see how each intervention changes in relation to the state of activation.

It is important to understand how to move and lead forces through the fascial layers. Cross maneuvers are also used with character types where the practitioner's limbs act in opposite directions to create more space and, unlike a single maneuver, work and connect over a larger part. Specific maneuvers are combined with specific movements that have their own expressive qualities.

Combined maneuvers are not random but associated with a particular need regarding the body armor. For certain segments, it is necessary to charge, discharge or decompress particular surfaces of the connective tissue.

The practitioner must therefore become a good interpreter of the client's body and the organismic feedback. They learn to recognize the configurations and types of tissues, from this information he/she understands how to intervene on the person's need, predicting the type of reaction and knowing how to direct the work.

The body character type does not lie, the person absorbs it biologically and if they take charge, it represents their natural evolution in the world, it is their personal history.

Evaluating these elements, the practitioner adapts the maneuvers. Suffice it to say that some types experience pleasure under the effect of strong interventions, others close at minimum pressure, some instead need containment after the session rather than metabolizing the process immediately.

Connective work aimed only at stretching a muscle or relaxing a tension is reductive. In our vision, charging and discharging parts of the body, modifying nervous system activations and working on expressive

processes are all necessary steps for deep release. They are the basis for the most relevant physiological changes. The contact itself generates a message: the communication of vigorous contact coordinated with strong breathing is different from gentle contact with deep breaths.

Applying these principles, we see how different types of touch and messages have the power to produce different activations and results in bodywork.

Contact is one of the most important aspects of our identity, the main means of communication starting from the embryo. The effect generated by meaningful contacts established the primordial sense of boundary and belonging, determines the shape of tissues and organs.

Fascial integration acts directly at these levels. The practitioner has the power to generate new directions and proprioceptive changes throughout the entire body.

Physiological activation in each of us passes through personal interpretations and meanings relating to contact. This is why we cannot predict the effect of pressure in terms of excessively defined variables. For example, the perception of a color activates the same area of the temporal cortex in two different people, but different physiological and behavioral responses. In the same way, contact leads to sometimes diametrically opposed reactions. Something happens at the level of the meaning that each person attributes to the contact, rather than considering it as a simple receptor signal.

"Synesthesia" is the particular perceptual process that is activated when a stimulus not only involves the primary sensory apparatus, but also other channels simultaneously. Advertising messages, for example, leverage the synesthetic process by associating images with sounds, colors or smells to go beyond conscious attention. During fascial work, the practitioner involves several channels, guiding the person to focus simultaneously on images, sounds and movements. By increasing the strength of contact, the practitioner can say: "Feel this area of your body and try to visualize the fibers as they expand under the pressure of my fingers" or: "You can breathe by bringing the intention to where the contact occurs by moving that limb, feel how the release increases through the breath and your movement". Finally: "Let an image associated with your feelings emerge if it's there". Each channel activated at the same time as the contact facilitates penetration into the tissues

and their change of state.

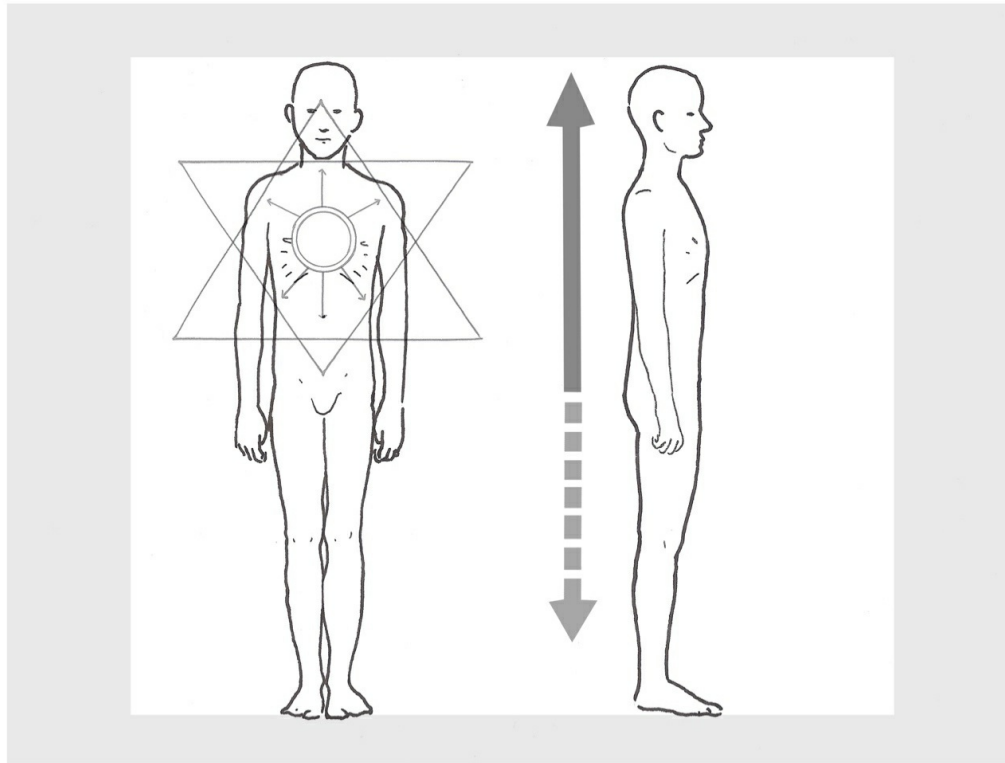
Fascial integration intervention differs from other techniques because during the maneuvers vibrations are generated in the muscle fibers. Segments, muscle groups or individual muscles are worked on with alternating pressures and vibrations that reach deep levels, starting from the most superficial layers. These techniques on the one hand "wake up" and activate the muscle receptors, on the other hand they quickly restore the functionality of myofibrils involving the underlying structures. To reach hidden muscles that are difficult to get to, such as the pericardium that surrounds the heart which is accessed from the sternum, vibrational maneuvers are very effective.

In the thoracic cavity, we can use vibratory pressure also to change posture. Winged scapula, for example, in addition to being caused by tension in the small and large pectorals and serratus anterior muscle that brings the shoulder girdle forward, are kept unbalanced by an insufficiently expanded thoracic cavity. Vibratory maneuvers aimed at generating chest expansion can modify both the anterior and posterior shape of the thoracic cavity over time, creating a solid position for the shoulder blades.

In conclusion, this particular work is a tool that facilitates the properties of the connective tissue itself: to connect and harmonize. One no longer thinks in terms of muscles, but imagines the fascial layers and the forces that are part of them as concrete, present elements of the system.

## Chapter 7. SCHIZOID CHARACTER TYPE

Schizoid



### ORIGINS AND RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS:

The most tragic condition for a newborn in the first months of life is if their needs are not met and the most tragic consequence of this is that they reach such a high level of frustration that they no longer ask. They stop complaining and begin to close themselves off.

A child's crying reflects need, fear, suffering, when they are unheard, their cries can fade and cease without the underlying need being satisfied, because the child anesthetizes themselves and thus stops feeling in order to survive.

A parent's inappropriate response to any need of a newborn in the first months of life becomes a real sign of rejection and influences the child's perception of themselves, others and their body, even to the point of no longer giving credit to their emotions, getting rid of or eliminating

them, thus avoiding any new risk of being hurt and rejected. Over time they prefer to create a coldness around themselves, which can become hostility and diplomacy in future adult relationships.

Their caretakers often have poor parenting skills, giving the minimum of care necessary and favoring well-being by imposing limits: affection and attention are rationed.

Far from being reassuring, parents are perceived as hostile and potentially dangerous.

This is the origin of *autos*, the child's attitude based on autonomy, self-management and autarky. This is not synonymous with strength and independence, but only a reaction to a threat, an instinct for primary survival in the face of powerlessness. This instinct develops during the first months of life and over time, leading the child to develop a shy, introverted, contemptuous and snobbish personality as an adult.

Underlying their haughty attitude is mistrust and fear towards others. The other is always someone to defend themselves from and in front of whom they cannot expose their own needs. The obvious consequence of the lack of human warmth is the development of distrust towards others.

The Schizoid character type, from the Greek *schizo*, divided, tends to be wary and sniff out danger and to be perpetually apprehensive about strange and ambiguous settings and situations beyond control and rational understanding.

They have difficulty in feeling their own deep movements, lack emotional language, using their mind to try to frame every experience under logical and intellectual aspects. In this way they learn to dominate their feelings, the body and others. In some individuals, this tendency can become an element of arrogance and sadism, a pretext for making one's way in life.

In the Oral character, a complacent and functional attitude for receiving love becomes, in the Schizoid character type, a closure to love in order to defend themselves from the possibility of being hurt. The fear of rejection erases all trust in love and leads the person to close themselves off from intimacy, even before experiencing it. The Schizoid character type rejects close relationships because they can lose themselves and lose control, hence the tendency to distance themselves from intimate ties, through cynical attitudes, contemptuousness, deliberately ironizing any manifestation of affection.

In a group and with peers, Schizoid character types are often quiet and reserved, they do not create problems or disturb. They are often lost in their imaginary world, created specifically to go beyond loneliness, wounds and avoid suffering. This defense, like a self-fulfilling prophecy, leads them more and more towards loneliness and continues to confirm their belief that no one wants or understands them and that everyone rejects them.

Over time, this distance and coldness damages bonds, pushes people away and confirms the seemingly insuperable condition of loneliness, which is the source of their original wound.

There is thus a conflict between stand-offish, independent behavior and an underlying fragile and insecure emotionality.

The personality and body of the Schizoid character type are rigid and enigmatic, armored and adapted to carrying out dangerous professions and activities, extreme sports or business where the risk is always high. Thanks to their ability to control and anaesthetize strong emotions, the Schizoid character type is at times unique and special in playing reckless roles, in their deliberate search for those adrenaline highs to feel alive.

### APPEARANCE AND IMBALANCES IN THE BODY:

The immediate reaction to rejection is closure, putting oneself aside, disappearing, becoming invisible. The body shape of the Schizoid character type expresses the quintessence of these principles. A narrow silhouette occupies as little space as possible, appearing firm and frozen, with slender limbs, as if they blocked at a specific time during development.

The body is often "skin and bones" and the epidermis, together with the muscles, become more tense the deeper the wound of rejection.

Derma, connective tissue, muscular fibers and bones join together forming a strong barrier against the world in their density and temper.

The immobility and rigidity of the connective tissue express the same manifestation of the personality. Rigid tissue corresponds to an attitude that is inflexible and closed. The Schizoid character type holds energies back due to fear of hurting or getting hurt, putting lots of energy into play with others.

Poor circulation in the body and the absence of vibration and heat also



help to limit sensory experiences, increasing the difficulty in hearing the messages from the body and forming a personal perceptual vocabulary in relation to their own physicality. Even the skin itself, very sensitive to erythema, psoriasis or allergies, reveals their hardship in sustaining contact, irritation is caused by proximity and the violation of boundaries.

The difficulty in getting involved in relationships and moving through space in a relaxed way is accentuated by reduced articular elasticity, a lack of harmony in joints and body segments. They appear rigid and spastic, revealing their problems in expressing emotions in relationships, such as reaching out affectionately with one's arms, giving and receiving affection.

The segmentation and fragmentation of the body is perceptible in every single daily gesture and in the organization of actions in space.

The body appears held back, reluctant to expand, afraid to decide and activate, fearful of the risk of falling apart or fragmenting.

The arduousness of flowing movements in space and the limits in relationships lead them to consolidate an apparent insensitivity, a lack of empathy and resonance towards human beings and the environment. This insensitivity anaesthetizes personal perceptions and every intrinsic message from the body.

In fact, the inability to feel specific emotions or changes in the body sometimes causes them to react with amazement and alarm to any strong symptom, leading to hypochondriac fixations.

Fear, originating in the lack of knowledge and the absence of a vocabulary for internal perceptions, is always present in the background. This character type is always at the limit between closing up and sinking into a state of bewilderment, between being confused and feeling rejected. In the body, apprehension is accompanied by short, fragmented breaths. The chest is contracted and not very elastic and does not bring enough oxygen to the limbs and other parts of the body, which are often cold and detached. We can deduce the reason for the weak emission of the voice, which is often dull and feeble. A similar sound can also be found in the Oral character type.

A particularly important job for the fascial practitioner is to restore vitality and presence in the body, being careful not to provoke exaggerated and alarming sensations, which would be counterproductive. Not knowing their body, in fact, the Schizoid

character type can be overwhelmed by intense reactions that they not only fail to process, but which can lead to further closure. This could mean an increase in mistrust and a failure of bodywork from the start.

Fear and anger both compromise mental lucidity and reasoning. This is why every contact or maneuver must be accompanied by explanations, so that the person understands both perceptually and rationally what they are doing.

The Schizoid character type always filters every experience through their mind and rational understanding, it takes a long time to enter bodywork. Part of the session must be dedicated to verbal clarifications of the processes.

There can be a lot of tension in the cervical area, in the sub-occipital muscles, in the area that runs between the atlanto-epistropheus vertebra. This can interfere with the flow of cerebral pulsations. Moreover, tension in the esophagus and pharynx can compromise the optimal functioning of the afferent cranial nerves, which can also explain eye tensions.

Just as limbs and joints have a limited range and are not functional to particular emotional impulses, the same limit is manifested by the eye segment. The Schizoid character type's gaze is absent and vitreous, as if it were elsewhere, constantly shifting attention.

Wilhelm Reich asserts that the eyes show the degree of presence, contact with oneself and with the world.

All visual disturbances can be related to relationship problems. The eyes can present themselves in many ways, with a strong charge, stiffness, or be discharged, lost, empty.

The coldness of the Schizoid character type's gaze is supported by the tensions around the ocular segment that wraps horizontally around the skull up to the occipital area. The Schizoid type seems to be wearing a mask on their head, where most of the body energy is located.

The eyes can be small, embedded in a triangular, thin face, the angle of which is cut by a thin mouth.

Often, the more the energy is frozen in the eyes and in the other parts of the body, the more impossible it is to achieve any pleasant sensation. Tensions in the head and eyes sometimes fail to descend to the lower limbs and hold the entire structure in check.

A specific target of bodywork is to create a preferential channel

through the connective tissue that allows the tensions to be lowered, in order to redistribute them harmoniously throughout the body.

## FASCIAL BODYWORK:

In the case of body fragmentation, treatment focuses on the individual limbs and joints: neck, shoulders, arms, elbows, wrists, pelvis, legs, knees and ankles. The practitioner aims to loosen the joints and join the segments together, facilitating the communication of all parts.

It is very important to start the treatment in a calm way, creating a relaxing atmosphere. This initial phase is crucial to helping the person connect to the body's breathing and sensations more deeply. We cannot stress enough how important it is to establish a good level of confidence and trust at the beginning for this character type in particular.

For this reason, while respecting confidentiality, the client can choose whether to undress or not, exposing parts of the body that may be a cause of embarrassment, especially during the first few sessions. The initial sessions can also be carried out without removing clothes, although this limits postural evaluation and fascial treatment.

While the Oral character type needs to be rooted in the ground, with the legs solid and well placed, in the Schizoid character type, the bodywork initially re-establishes a rootedness in the muscle fasciae, so the grounding is mainly with the body. This helps the client to focus attention and consciousness on all movements and energies that come from within. Sometimes this work requires a great deal of patience and proves to be a real educational process.

Contact slowly alternates on every part of the body, letting the person listen to and perceive the emerging sensations: beats, pulsations, tingling, heat. The aim is to regain possession of the unique complexity of the sensations and movements of each body segment.

The brain attributes a value to sensory information based on the general state of the organism. Our cortex receives information on the state of the muscles and interprets the information regarding displacement and activation. In the Schizoid type, through fascial work, these processes are often acquired as if for the first time.

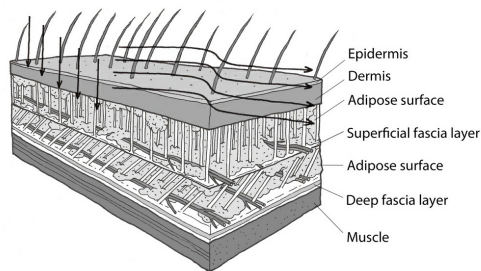
Starting from the upper parts and gradually descending downwards helps to ease mental overload little by little.

It is important to re-establish the relationship between the head and chest, the stiffness of the neck and the articulation of the arms.

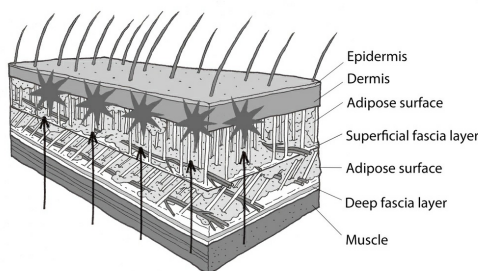
An important assessment can be made when the client is supine by slightly lifting the head off the floor and assessing the degree of stiffness of the neck. If the neck is very stiff then the work will focus on this segment, trying to re-establish the connection between the skull and the rest of the body through the cervical spine. Bodywork on the Schizoid character type involves the expression of two polarities: fear and presence. If the person feels fear splitting their presence, the body is detached and tries to rationalize the experience. Thanks to the path of integration, new bodily perception can emerge where the person can feel fear but not necessarily avoid it, thus blocking bodily sensations. The balance between what they perceive in the body and the containment of the organismic arousal is the primary objective of integration.

Schizoid

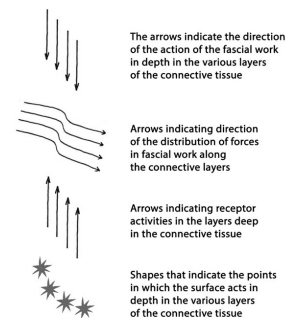
Light surface pressure



The receptor properties of the superficial fascia are reactivated and strength and presence are distributed in the body



The proprioception is activated superficially and the receptor activities of the deeper layers are recalled



Work on the character depends on the type of contact, pressure level and depth reached in the various fascial layers. Each pressure has a quality that causes precise receptor activation and a direction for the distribution of forces and energies within the connective tissue. All these variables determine the outcome of the bodywork and the change in character.

## TECHNIQUE

The specific work on musculature aims to bring out new emotions of vitality and presence where they are lacking. It is therefore necessary to pay attention to the areas where the body withdraws, the coldest and most insensitive parts that are recognizable to the touch. It should be remembered that the person is often unable to describe or verbalize what is happening to them or does so with an impersonal tone.

### IN THE SUPINE POSITION:

The main work in this position is on the ocular segment. The focus is on the musculature around the orbits which are responsible for the immobility of the gaze and the rigidity of the eye movements. The orbital ring wraps horizontally around the skull until it reaches the back of the sub-occipital muscles. Deep work on the sub-occipital muscles reopens visual perception and is the starting point for subsequent work on neck and shoulder tensions.

A second, deeper work on the ocular segment is on the orbital margins. This in-depth work indirectly releases the lateral and upper medial rectus of the orbit muscles. The upper orbital margin of the frontal bone, the lateral margin of the zygomatic bone and the medial margin of the maxillary bone are all worked on. It is very delicate and invasive work that can cause discomfort and fear.

Other important work in this position involves applying non-invasive pressure to other parts of the body. The person is invited to breathe deeply and, starting from eye contact, descends to the chest. Then the practitioner positions herself laterally to the client and, putting one hand on the chest and one on the belly and with gradual pumping, connects chest and belly and distributes, during exhalation, pressure on the arms, the pectoralis major, the coracoid process, the biceps, the wrists, the soft muscles of the hands, asking the client to make fists. As if distributing a fluid, the practitioner's hands carry presence and contact throughout the fascial tissue. The same work is done with the legs, starting from the superior antero-iliac spine, continuing on to the femoral quadriceps, the anterior tibial and finally to the ankle joint. One of the most important interventions is on the coccyx and the sacrum. Ida Rolf [\[35\]](#) states that the lumbo-sacral joint, of which the coccyx and the sacrum are part, is

the seat of the soul. When energy flows freely through this center, the person enters the material world more and lives in harmony with the earth. The frequency of energy absorbed by this part of the body is among the lowest in the body.

If the sacral center is not balanced or alive, the amount of energy absorbed will be scarce and this will cause insecurity and difficulty in giving and receiving.

The work on the coccyx descends onto the buttocks, which is generally connected by cross-maneuvers to the serratus posterior inferior and along the entire posterior line until it reaches the sub-occipital muscles.

A final, very deep intervention is on the zygomatic muscle and inside the nasal septum. These maneuvers are recommended only when you have acquired good manual skill and sensitivity. The client must already have a good relationship with their body and there must be a relationship of trust in the bodywork setting.

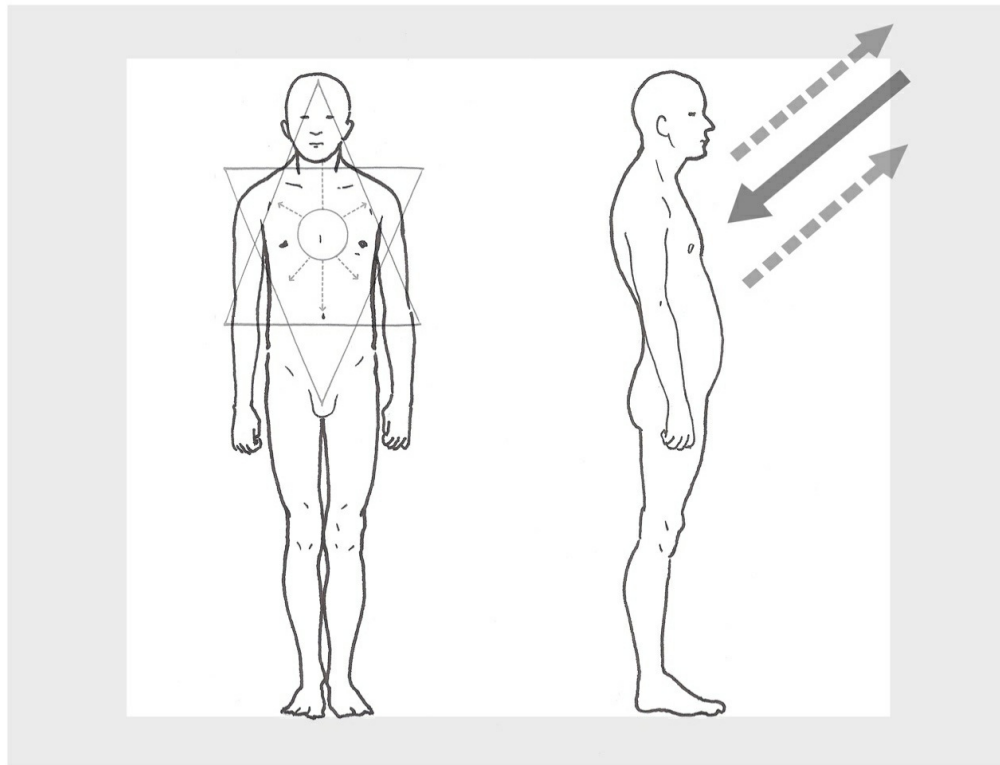
#### IN THE PRONE POSITION:

In the same way that bodywork has been carried out on the front, pressure is also distributed on the back. The work starts from the erector spinae up to the buttocks and from the bottom of the buttocks along the tendons of the leg and the posterior crural.

Bodywork on the cranial fontanelles is reserved for this character type. This work can be done in both supine and prone positions, depending on the fontanelle being treated. The work on the fontanelles is very useful for moving all the tensions accumulated in the head superficially, to the galea aponerotica and to the subcutaneous areas.

## Chapter 8. ORAL CHARACTER TYPE

Oral



### ORIGIN AND RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS:

The term "oral" indicates the segment of the mouth, the part of the body we eat with and use to explore the environment during the first months of life. It is where the relationship with things and people originates, thanks to the possibility to feed ourselves and discover the world.

The mouth, lips and tongue are sensitive to pleasure, frustration, gratification, disgust or rejection. These early stages determine our level of attachment, our need to continue feeding and receiving or rejecting and detaching ourselves. Separation at birth is a traumatic moment in the first place. Afterwards, any future detachment, any change or loss, can be experienced in a painful way: this circumstance gives rise to the first wound of abandonment in the Oral character type. In family history, parents are absent and insufficient or too oppressive and overprotective.

Both excesses form the basis for a fragile, insecure, and uninitiated ego. The most disabling consequence is the development of a passive attitude in the Oral character type. They remain gregarious spectators or live by reflection without putting personal initiatives into practice, thus living a life of renunciation and the repression of their desires. In the Oral character type, therefore, a void remains. The need to take, feed, receive and the other become necessary, essential supports in order to survive and face the world. This generates the role of victim and victimhood, which the Oral type assumes to engage with others in order to receive help or continuous attention and protection. In the background there may be greed (orality), which comes from the need to feed their need for affection. Paradoxically, the greatest desire of the Oral type is to take but it is also, at the same time, it is their greatest difficulty.

In fact, their need to receive is never satisfied and this insatiability is always mediated by a mask that at a young age presents as the good child and as an adult as the good person, whose kindness and availability always imply a request.

They have, in spite of everything, a great capacity for empathic participation. This quality, which sometimes makes them feel indispensable or become apprehensive towards others, reignites their fear of abandonment. Thus they accept roles of servility and submission and are often involved in relationships based on sadomasochism and exploitation. Hence the term "negative nourishment", that is to say when one "feeds" on what one does not really want and creates conditions for subordination that are far from one's desires. They rarely contradict others or manage to say no. Their illusion is that they will not be abandoned or that they are special, but at the same time they cannot self-affirm and they risk not listening to themselves. In bodywork on the oral segment, it is possible that disgust emerges, caused precisely by negative nourishment: that which, in compromising with others, has not really been accepted and therefore is badly digested.

## APPEARANCE AND IMBALANCES IN THE BODY:

The Oral character type lacks muscle tone, with a thin body, a small pelvis and weak legs.

Their posture seems to collapse, specific parts of the body are weak



and droopy, including the cheeks, breasts, buttocks and shoulders.

Each slack tissue produces attitudes and feelings of discouragement and impotence. The stagnation in their anatomy corresponds with mathematical precision to their behavior. Muscle walls, the spinal cord and fibers are affected by this weakness and help generate the shape of a withdrawn organism.

The pelvic floor does not support the viscera, brought forward by the psoas that pushes the abdomen outward.

The knees are hyper-extended and create tension in the legs. They seem to stay in balance without fully supporting the weight of the body. Therefore they lack grounding and stability, each segment hangs like a falling tower, moving along the axis with respect to the segment below.

Their muscles do not seem to join the segments together, creating a kyphosis back, the head slips forward and the chest blocks in exhalation, the pelvis tilting back.

Contraction during exhalation evokes emotions of anguish and impotence. This is not difficult to try: just exhale completely and stay there for a while to get an idea. When oxygen is scarce there is no mobility and vitality in the body, organs, limbs and the whole organism. This state can cause persisting emotions of defeat, weakness and inferiority.

In the Oral character type, the chest does not expand and there are no vibrations. This lack of expansion prevents access to wider and stronger expressive states such as anger, excitement or pleasure.

The result is a subdued, infantile, sometimes melancholic and whimpering tone of voice. They seem whiny, their requests are expressed with a dramatic and sometimes catastrophic inflection.

The Oral character type, in most cases, is thin and minute, in rare cases they can present with a round body, or be sporadically overweight.

In any case, their large, damp, sad and imploring eyes ask like those of a child. Their limbs and pelvis are small, seeming to belong to a person of a younger age, as if they had halted in their development.

We all show signs of old age in the body, some express it more slowly, others suddenly and well in advance.

We cannot help but notice that some parts of the body appear to be of a different age from others. A person may have the body of a 20-year-old

but the face of a 40-year-old, or fragile, unstable legs and toned, vigorous shoulders.

In the Oral type these differences are notable, especially in some parts. The body does not retreat or disappear like in the Schizoid type, but enters the world slowly, almost as if asking permission. The skinny body with tense, hard fasciae of the Schizoid type become hypotonic and tired in the Oral type.

The energy with which they face the world lacks adult strength, pervaded every day by a sense of tiredness and impotence. They move slowly in space and carries out their daily activities thanks to inertia.

Their tiredness is not physical, but existential, and generally does not disappear with rest. Their structure therefore lacks the agility and strength to stand up and face problems, the muscle fibers lack reactivity and dynamism.

The bone structure is often narrow, the skin is fine, crumbly, pinkish to white, there is no blood supply and energy, so there is more sensitivity to cold and strong contact.

The thin skin, typical of Oral character type, is an indication of a lack of boundaries in relationships. In this respect, bodywork is useful for resetting limits and spaces in relationship dynamics.

The main blocks are due to lack of nourishment (lack of physical presence and vigor in all parts of the body) and expansion (they do not feel authorized to self-affirm and occupy space).

## FASCIAL BODYWORK:

In the Oral character type, the main objective is to bring back nourishing contact in the body.

The limbs, arms and legs need toning and invigorating maneuvers.

Once the chest and neck have been opened, circulation can flow more freely in the shoulders and arms. Presence and vigor in the arms are an indication of a healthier, more direct relationship with objects and reality.

With specific pressure, work on the chest causes the fragmentation of breath and breaks the contraction patterns. To this end, the practitioner can bring the chest with his hands into complete exhalation and vigorously move the hands away until it causes a full and intense

inhalation. A second maneuver on the chest may be to fragment the breath by asking the person to stretch out his hands as if extending them towards an object.

Strength and rootedness are not necessarily acquired through vigorous maneuvers. Moments of regression and containment are just as effective. The aim is to awaken the body and especially animate the legs, the energy must move downwards, finding its way to the ground. The legs must be elastic and mobile, especially in the knee area.

During the phase of "emotional awakening", special attention goes to the abdomen. The first nourishment for children passes through the navel, we can deduce the importance of the work in this abdominal area, especially for this character type. The site of the most remote impulses and needs, as well as existential fears and anxieties, this area deserves careful analysis in fascial bodywork. A flexible, warm and elastic abdomen is an indication of authenticity compared to one that is too tight, hollow or cold, especially if it is isolated and dissociated from the other segments.

Reconnecting the person to the center of their body in the abdominal area means bringing them back to safety. In the belly, the need to rejoice, to be moved, visceral feelings and pleasant movements such as love and sensuality come to life. A flat, retractable belly, with respect to a soft and elastic abdomen, is anaesthetized to these feelings. The abdomen must be neither too contracted nor too relaxed, like a well-tuned instrument.

Working on the oral segment and on the connection of the oral segment with the abdomen means reopening an accessible channel to emotions, so that visceral emotions can emerge and find a way to be expressed.

In this phase, polarities emerge: one between anger and resentment for the lack of self-affirmation, and another of sadness due to loneliness and abandonment.

These two polarities are often flanked by a third: that of disgust for negative nourishment.

During the maneuvers, it is therefore necessary to emphasize statements of need, resentment or repulsion.

Let us remember that working on polarities in fascial integration aims at completing opposites. Emphasizing extreme polarities generates new, more functional forms of behavior for individual adaptation. The Oral

character type, for example, thanks to emotions like sadness, resentment or disgust, can develop a new reactive force where they recognize their desires and are able to self-affirm.

For this purpose, working on the mouth and neck segment is important.

The oral segment is the means for the oldest expressions such as biting, sucking, shouting, spitting or grimacing. Adjacent stiffness in the neck can be an indication of swallowed and restrained emotions, a knot in the throat, for example, can be a reflection of pain, but also of vomiting and disgust.

After energetically activating the neck and oral segments, the practitioner can place one hand behind the head at the cervical-thoracic conjunction and the other on the chest, moving the scapular girdle and descending along the sternum to the abdomen where, with the fingertips, they pull the abdominals down.

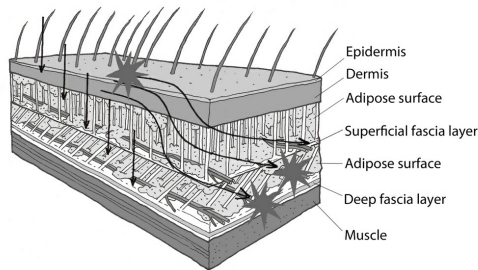
In this way, they open a channel up to the belly and prepare the body for targeted work on the masseter muscle. The masseter muscle is fibrous in this character type, often the main site of anger. For this reason, it is sometimes necessary to work on it deeply and with great care, not only externally, but also internally, inside the oral cavity.

The tension in the masseter muscle and a tight mouth indicate a restrained orality, often many hidden feelings. It is not uncommon for detoxifying coughing to occur. The opening of the chest channel allows the anger to go down to the abdomen and the hands. Asking the person to tighten their fists during exhalation facilitates the expansion of tension towards the extremities of the limbs which, full of vigor, become more energetic and vital.

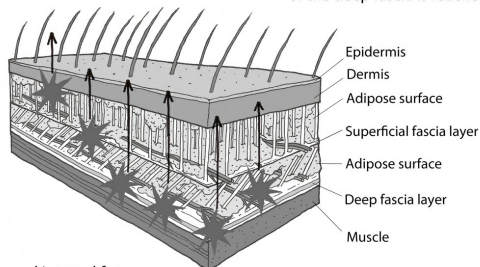
Further, important work for the Oral character type is on the palate. The bones that articulate it are closed and compressed by tension from the surrounding musculature. Internal work on the palate can benefit the tension in the eye, skull, cervical, and neck muscles.

## Oral

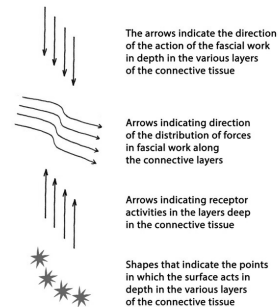
Intense pressure on some points like the masseter and light in others like the quadriceps: it is an activating pressure



The receptor properties of the superficial fascias are reactivated and the first layer of the deep fascia is reached



Proprioception and internal forces are activated superficially and deeply. The receptor activities of the deep belt are recalled and connected to the surface



Work on the personality depends on the type of contact, the pressure level and the depth reached in the different fascia layers. Each pressure has a quality that causes precise receptor activation and a direction for the distribution of forces and energies within the connective tissue. All of these variables determine the outcome of the work and the change in character.

## TECNIQUE:

Specific work on the muscles is carried out with activating maneuvers that vigorously recall presence throughout the body. Unlike maneuvers for the Schizoid type that bring the person back into the body, for the Oral character type, the objective is to recover that strength and energy retained in the subcutaneous layers. At first we work on the senses (activating the receptors of the first level of the fascia), subsequently the maneuvers enter deeper (activating Pacini and Ruffini receptors located in the deep fascia), acting on a proprioceptive and functional level.

## IN THE SUPINE POSITION:

Work with the Oral character type takes place mainly in a supine position.

The first bodywork sessions are focused on the neck and mouth

segments. The practitioner positions themselves laterally to the client and places one hand behind the nape of the neck, with the other hand vigorously activating the oral segment and then descending onto the ring of the cervical musculature. As the hand proceeds downwards, the shoulder girdle is levered from behind.

The movement tilts the girdle towards the front, allowing the chest to lower with the diaphragm. At this point, you can reach the rectus of the abdomen and create a single channel that goes from the oral segment to the abdomen.

These are very powerful maneuvers that can access intense emotions.

The person can benefit greatly from these maneuvers by relieving a lot of tension from the masseter muscles around the neck. The reddening of the epidermis is an indication of a good and correct activation in progress. The masseter muscle can also be worked internally using the glove.

The practitioner's index finger enters the inner fascia and compresses it like a pincer, at the other end it coordinates with the thumb. The work on this segment ends inside the palate. The practitioner's index finger pulls the maxillary and mandibular bone, creating a strong feeling of openness within the entire palate area. The union of the oral and ocular segments is generated by pressure at the meeting point between the bones of the hard palate and the palatine bones. The pressure in this area can be very liberating and generate a sense of integration throughout the nape of the neck.

The neck segment can be worked deeper on the hyoid muscles (above and below the hyoid bone). The action is not concentrated on individual fibers but on vigorous activation of the entire area with the fingertips. This maneuver can be integrated with a maneuver on the sub jaw muscles. Both are meant to activate a state of disgust and a visceral reaction. The maneuver is very effective in releasing the internal walls down to the viscera.

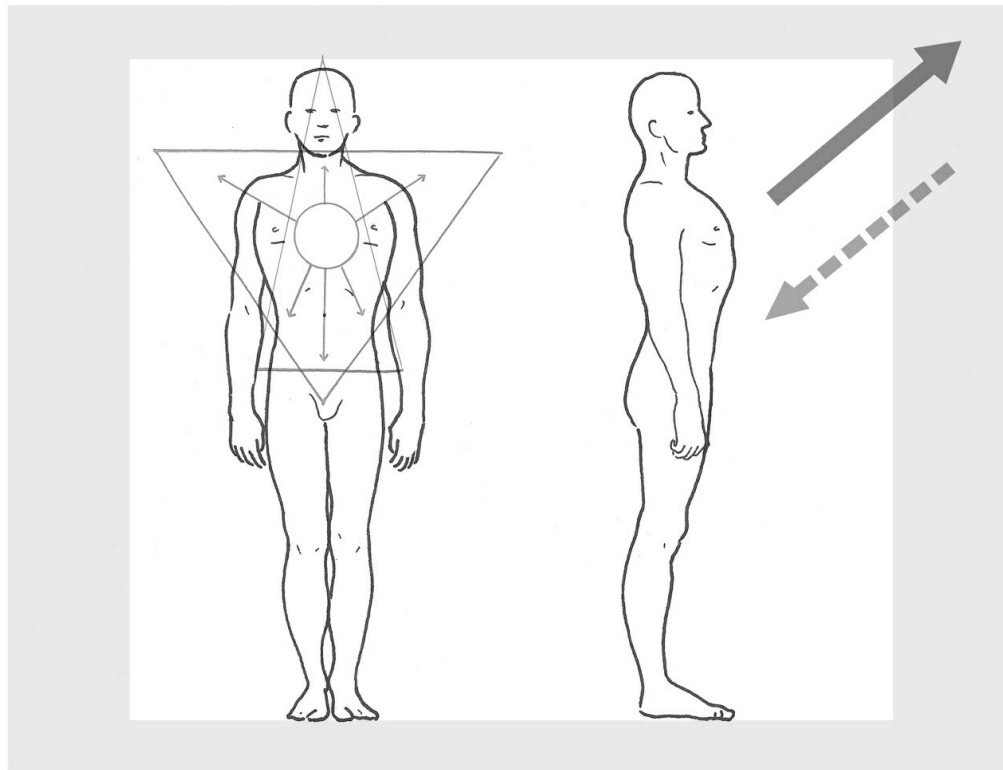
Finally, there is important chest work that is useful for reestablishing a good vital charge. The practitioner brings their hand to the chest and invites the client to exhale completely. When they feel the inspiratory muscles push to take in oxygen, the hand is immediately removed to generate a strong inspiratory impulse. This maneuver is very activating and can be done by asking the person to grab an object like a pillow.

Expressive maneuvers are useful. For example: the practitioner holds down the chin or jaw and asks the client to push forward with the nape of the neck, or invites the person to hold and squeeze the sides of the mattress or a cushion, creating self-affirming force in the tissues.

While with the Schizoid character type it is good to ask which parts of the body are felt to be more or less disconnected, with the Oral character type, the same question regards those parts where there is little nourishment, where no presence or vitality is perceived, in order to actively work on them.

## Chapter 9. DOMINANT CHARACTER TYPE

Dominant



### ORIGIN AND RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS:

Our growth has always required points of reference, certainties, teachings, dialogue and guidelines. The constancy with which we have or have not found these values, balances and consistencies in the environment of origin establishes the basis for trust, on which a stable identity originates and develops.

In the Schizoid type, the existential foundations stem from a situation in which these aspects are partially or totally lacking. In the family environment of the Oral character type, there are often many fears and insecurities about the world and protective, even toxic and suffocating attitudes are created. For the Dominant or Aggressive character type on the other hand, a certain ambivalence prevails, created by a parent's daily and inexplicable mood swings to which the children are subjected during their early years. When there are constant differences of opinion



between parents, children feel great confusion and instability.

For example, a child can be exalted for their merits and then be scathingly reproached, and thus tries to interpret this ambivalence and lack of clarity by submitting to incessant trials. The messages, at times implicit, are: "You're good, but you can do even better tomorrow" or "You could manage but it's useless to try, you won't be successful". These are examples of how moments of encouragement alternate with moments of devaluation. This ambivalence causes a growing sense of loss in the mind of the child, who reacts by trying to do things on their own, starting to develop an attitude that is aggressive towards the world and others.

Meanwhile, the body gradually creates its own armor, swelling in the upper chest yet holding back and hardening to avoid being hit or fooled. Moments of aggressiveness, perhaps simultaneous with approval or success, are vented and then alternate with the quick return to facing the world taking it all on their chest.

The Dominant type as an adult seeks moments of glory and has a grandiose identity that is regularly undermined by their underlying fragility and incompleteness.

In the 70's Rollo May<sup>[36]</sup> said that society was being formed by individuals with predominantly Schizoid character types. Today society tends to be made up of Dominant individuals, where protagonism and narcissism thanks to the media are multiplied hundredfold. A small role in the spotlight is within everyone's reach.

The Dominant character type has the tendency to develop many enthusiasms and passions, which are then abandoned incomplete. Their resourcefulness and practicality are lost due to the anguish of not succeeding, the shame of not being up to the task, disappointing expectations or simply by boredom.

They tend to have many grandiose ideas about themselves and expect others to recognize and understand them, as well as being at their disposal. Thus they always try to be energetically one step above everybody else, but to do this they must keep many things under control. For example, they arrive early and are precise compared to others, their way of being present and forestalling.

This control, extended to many fields, underlines their subtle fear of transience, of what is unknown and unforeseeable.

The anguish of defeat, which can appear at any moment, is always lurking. It always creates a sense of feeling lost or brings out their the greatest fear: the sense of failure.

To avoid this, the Dominant character type is always active and dynamic, doing much more than possible and goes far beyond their limits. These actions are not motivated by generosity or altruism, but rather by a challenge, the desire to demonstrate their worth, looking for situations in which to put themselves to the test more and more. They also examine their fellow humans, judging and trying to understand if they can be trusted. They create continuous situations for discussion, which only thickens their armor, hardens their fascia, and brings the body to the maximum limit, always dynamic, performative, so that they appear strong and self-confident in the face of obstacles, or hard with those they fear.

Their body tends to maintain a high and resistant state of energy, full of strength, even if sometimes excitement can turn into omnipotence. They try to maintain this status through personal beliefs, demonstrations of power, moralism and manipulation of others. Hence the term "aggressive" or "inflated", because they are seen as a people who can explode, become overbearing, authoritarian or even violent.

Anger is always expressed in order to dominate or control, with a loud voice, a strong tone.

The deeper the original wound is, the stronger the irotic reaction. This character type always has categorical opinions about what is happening, using specific words and clear speech to catalogue what is right or wrong.

They create atmospheres where the tension is very subtle, and when it breaks, the underlying aggressiveness can emerge from one moment to the next.

In relationships there are often dynamics of submission. Calmer character types, such as the Oral type, compensate and tranquilize Dominant types. Relationships often tend to be sado-masochistic with this character type, even without wanting this.

Love is sometimes exchanged for power, couple relationships become an opportunity to control the other person. They can be controlling, possessive and jealous with the excuse of loving their partner, or they can be a savior, justified by the fact of wanting to defend or help the

other person. In relationships they affirm their power and identify with roles where aggression is allowed or legalized, such as in leadership and commanding positions.

The eternal inner conflict is choosing between what is right for themselves and what serves to support their role. "Can I do what I really want or do I have to adapt to the demands of what I represent for others?" If, on the one hand, there is a strong desire to let go, give in, give up, on the other hand, the underlying fear there is the fear of not being able to do so without losing strength.

Tension in the body is the best way to arm themselves against the world and not get hurt, so as not to risk sinking into the fearsome sensation of betrayal.

## APPEARANCE AND IMBALANCES IN THE BODY:

Observing the body of the Dominant character type, attention is drawn to the upper part, which is expanded and swollen, especially in males. If the lower half of the body has the function of establishing contact with the earth, supporting, rooting, balancing and giving solidity, the upper part is the most important channel for the relationship with the world. Through the upper part we take, give, exchange and communicate.

Therefore, an over-developed upper half is the symbol of strong self-affirmation and an inclination to act and do. The expansion of the limbs, shoulders and chest indicate a particular predisposition for assertiveness and extroversion. The Dominant type is contracted at the level of the diaphragm, legs and hips are thin, there is a sharp break between the upper and lower part, and the perceptive experience from the pubic area downward is diminished. This type has difficulty feeling and managing gut emotions, connecting to one's center and stopping and listening.

The body acts as if it were defending itself from the outside world. The muscles and fascia are a bumper against outrages, their compactness dominates reality with superiority and alertness.

There is thickening at the expense of flexibility, the density sometimes compresses the blood vessels and causes circulatory problems.

The symbol of domination and superiority is represented by the chest during inhalation. If we try to hold our breath for a few seconds by

channeling the air into the upper part of the lungs, we can empathically perceive the sense of control. It is a strong yet unpleasant feeling. The Dominant type retains and accumulates all of their emotions in the chest. Every now and then they are violently discharged, like a lion roaring and warning the surrounding animals to stay away, but then the armor closes up again.

There are two distinct types of aggression, one for men and one for women. Men are usually over-excited in the upper part, women have a strong charge at the level of the pelvis.

For men, the pelvis tilts towards the rear and the curved lower back indicates sexual energy that is not fully expressed, not experienced with harmony and depth.

The tensions at these levels for both types block the experience of pleasure and abandonment. The vigor of the chest becomes the means to dominate and seduce for men, the buttocks becomes the expression of eroticism for women.

On the one hand, these are elements of strength, but on the other they preclude any relationship based on intimacy and abandonment. When the perceptive experience is broken at the genital level, there can also be impotence. In addition, the energy that flows into the upper part for men makes the legs more fragile and more prone to injury, pain or stiffness in the joints.

Other tensions are distributed at the cervical level, (splenius of the head and neck), and in the shoulder joints (rhomboids and trapezoids), the thorax is supported by the inspiratory muscles, (subclavian, scalene, pectoral major and minor). Therefore, important bodywork must be done on these specific rings.

Going up a segment is the gaze, intense and penetrating, characteristic of those who control, but also charismatic and seductive. They use their eyes to scrutinize the world with the intent of intimidating or seducing it, their gaze becomes an additional means of protection.

## FASCIAL BODYWORK:

Fascial bodywork in the Dominant type aims to activate proprioceptions in the lower part of the body and distribute more presence and vitality in these areas. It is important for the Dominant

person to create their own grounding and move their sense of security from the chest to the pelvis and finally to the legs. Therefore, we try to connect the shoulder segment to the chest and then reach the abdomen and pelvis. The bodywork is consecutive and concatenated in order to unite all these segments.

For women, it is necessary to concentrate on the tension in the abdominal-pelvic area. The posture for women is a frontal tilt and excessive lordosis and should be worked on carefully, considering all the muscles involved. The aim is always to reactivate the connection functions between the upper and lower body, regulating the vital and sexual aspects of these areas, and the sensations related to the pleasure of well-being. For this reason, the pelvis and pelvic floor maneuvers described in the chapter on the Masochistic character type are important.

The first aim of bodywork on the Dominant type is to lower the diaphragm. Start by opening a channel from the legs, thus allowing the chest to find a space to descend. An important concept of fascial bodywork is introduced here, concerning the use of meridian lines as a means of communication and distribution of forces. In order to free the neck muscles, you can use maneuvers on the arms or on the erector spinae. In the Dominant type, however, the diaphragm will drop more easily if you start with the femoral quadriceps or the rectus of the abdomen. The principle is to open a channel of communication using the muscle chain and to allow the forces to distribute themselves and the fascial connections to be re-established so that nervous activations can re-ignite.

To do so, it is useful to invite the person to inhale as deeply as possible, accompanying this with small hand pressures and positive, energizing affirmations. Afterwards the exhalation will be more complete and all the inspiratory muscles will be relaxed. During this maneuver, the practitioner can also make statements that recognize the patient's fatigue and endurance. This recognition will act directly on the tissues. Another particular type of fascial bodywork that is very effective is tickling. Tickling releases surface tension, reactivates body proprioception and breathing. Tickling is also an experience of pleasure that this character type lacks.

The work ends up on the pectorals and all the inspiratory muscles, on

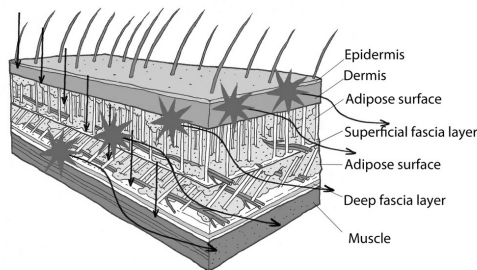
the ring that surrounds the entire chest and at the level of the xiphoid process.

It is important the connection between the chest and abdomen with the hands. Usually the right hand is placed on the chest and the left hand on the abdomen. This is also a way to work on the alternation between control and need: in its rigidity, the chest embodies control, once released you can access need in the abdominal area. This release can cause strong diaphragmatic spasms and coughs. The cough in fascial integration is an important expressive pathway that unfreezes control.

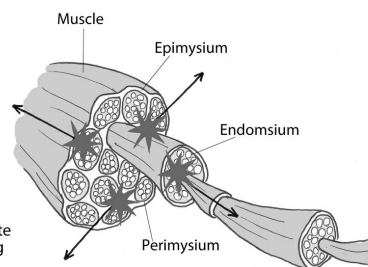
This last bodywork experience highlights the emerging polarities in this type: the polarity of the anger of betrayal, evident in the patterns of rigidity and control, and the polarity of sadness for the lack of intimate relationships. Once they have emerged, the armor "deflates", the practitioner has the role of accompanying the person to feel the two body polarities alternating between "hardness and fragility". Hardness is linked to control, fragility to the possibility of trusting and letting go. Through the expression of these polarities, a third, more evolved and integrated one can emerge that gives the person the possibility for healthy relational exchanges based on the possibility of exchanging, rather than challenging, affection and intimacy.

## Dominant

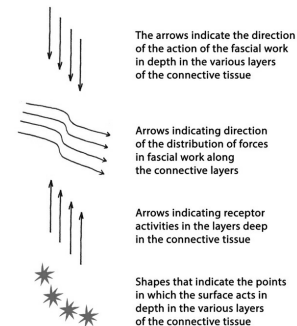
Intense and deactivating pressure



The intense and active areas of the superficial and deep fascia are deactivated (they are the areas of the armor), the forces once discharged are distributed at each level and the fascial layers are connected to each other.



At the muscle level we activate muscle metabolism and bring it to a state of calm.



The bodywork depends on the type of contact, the pressure level and the depth reached in the different fascial layers. Each pressure has a quality that causes precise receptor activation and a direction of the distribution of forces and energies within the connective tissue. All of these variables determine the outcome of the bodywork and the change in the person's distinctive personal traits.

## TECHNIQUE:

Specific work on the muscles is carried out with energetic and decisive maneuvers. Often the connective tissue is worked on with small rubs that become more and more intense and activating. The bodywork must respect the limit between the need to break the resistance of a very strong armor, and the activation of resistance linked to the perception of a challenge in the person. Therefore, it is necessary to favor release through the establishment of a relationship of trust rather than through technical intervention.

## IN THE SUPINE POSITION:

The manipulation of the fascia begins on the major and minor pectorals along the fiber from the coracoid process to the sternal and costal insertions. The subclavius muscle can also be the focus of

bodywork, together with all the supra-clavicular muscles that keep the chest blocked in inhalation, then we proceed along the sternum. The pectoralis major, often dense and structured in this character type, loosens more easily by rubbing the tissues with the ulna.

Fascial bodywork on the ring at the level of the xiphoid process and the diaphragm is done by manipulating of all the intercostal muscles in the thoracic cavity. An immediate reaction can be seen in diaphragmatic respiration.

If you have previously worked on the quadriceps and on all the inspiratory muscles to open the pathway, at this point you act on the diaphragm so it can lower and relax. Isolated, direct work on the diaphragm will not lead to the same result, as it is a resistant and compressed muscle in this character type.

Bodywork on the diaphragm proceeds by alternating, with combined maneuvers, on the chest and on the abdomen.

#### IN THE LATERAL POSITION:

In a lateral position, the serratus lateral muscle is worked vigorously with the elbow, causing a release both sides. Contact with the fingertips follows along the obliques, allowing the whole side of the body to be freed with evident, liberating jerks.

Laterally, the bodywork continues on the trapeziums, which are very contracted in this type of person. The practitioner works on the trapeziums with his elbow and descends on along the center of the column to the lumbar area.

#### IN THE PRONE POSITION:

Bodywork in this area begins at the top of the shoulders and descends along the rhomboids to the medial area of the shoulder blades. The practitioner is above the client's head and rests on the muscles, proceeding with the elbow.

The bodywork descends deeper and deeper until it reaches the upper posterior serratus muscle. A second maneuver during the same session works on the lower posterior serratus. In this case, the practitioner is positioned alongside the client and always rests on his elbow.

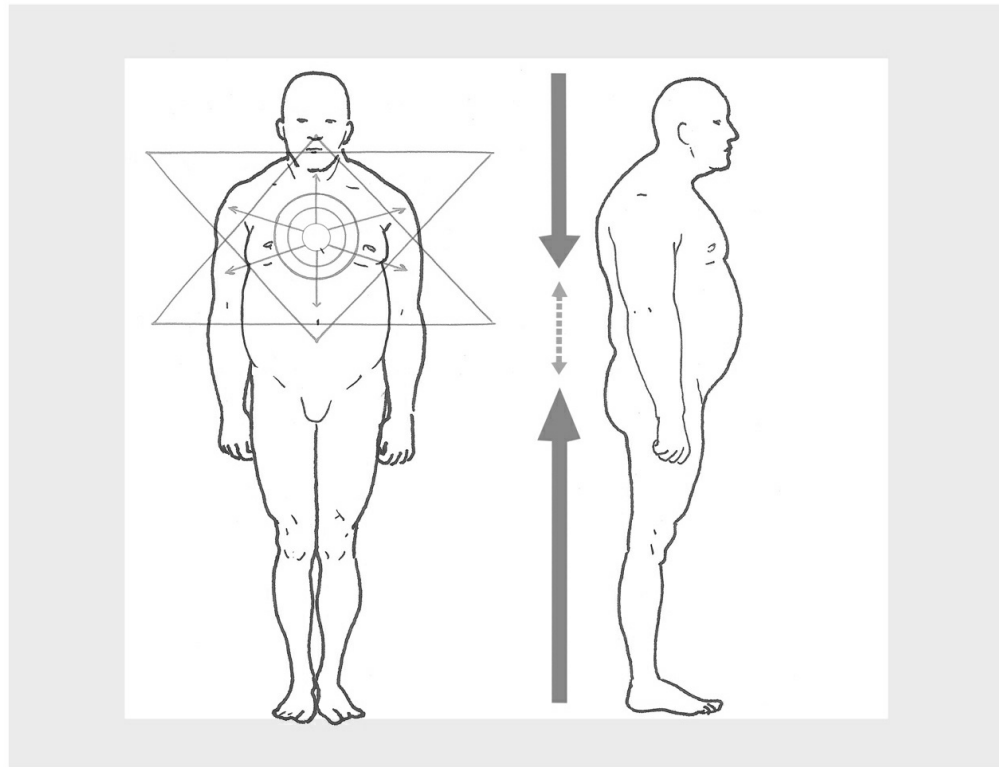
Both maneuvers can also be carried out using both hands to connect



the work on the posterior and anterior serratus and the oblique muscles. Breathing must be deep and pressure must be increased during exhalation, with the emphasis on release.

## Chapter 10. MASOCHIST CHARACTER TYPE

Masochist



### ORIGIN AND RELATIONSHIP DYNAMIICS:

Children begin to have greater autonomy around age three: they learn to eat, dress and wash by themselves and do many things with more self-sufficiency. On the one hand, this freedom make them more independent, on the other it creates more responsibility, trials and judgments. By being observed, they become targets for recommendations and in some families judgments may become excessive and lead to apprehensive and suffocating parental behavior. Children are controlled so that they do not get dirty, cold, make noise, move too much or hurt themselves. At this developmental stage, the basis for this personality type is formed and, however great the wish to explore the environment and be free, this character type wonders if, when and for how long they will be have this freedom.

The implicit, underlying injunction is: "don't make a big deal, don't go

away, don't worry your parents". The healthy aggressiveness of the child, used for exploring the world or creating boundaries with respect to others, is gradually compromised and loving, servile behavior appears.

Aggression in adulthood is sometimes sublimated also regarding food. It is not difficult to find adults of this character type who have weight or obesity problems.

Weight loss, despite diets and other remedies, becomes impossible until the underlying resentment is expressed and recognized. Eating becomes the healthiest way to vent aggression and add protective layers to the body, shielding it from the outside.

The masochist's anger is resentful. They are angry because they cannot be free, they have not been able to be free and they will never be able to be free. It is different from the anger of the Oral type, expressed with rejection and a request for what they have not had.

The masochist avoids expressing anger, not because they are afraid of being rejected or abandoned, but because they would feel guilty if they were responsible for actions that hurt someone. They also always doubt that they have missed something, that they are at fault or that they do not deserve much. They have a sense of basic incompleteness and a lack of self-esteem that undermines their independence and emancipation, to the point of feeling clumsy and awkward.

This clumsiness is often experienced with irony, teasing, derision and sarcasm aimed at the self. Although it may seem like a sign of openness, it prevents them from admitting the real difficulty of taking themselves seriously.

Their shame and sense of guilt are different: the guilt refers to wrong actions, and shame to personal defects. Their shame comes from the fact that someone can say: "something is wrong with you" rather than: "you made a mistake", which strikes their humanity rather than their behavior. From a young age, their self-contained personality is conflicted between the desire to freely explore the world independently and the continuous doubt of being able to do so. They risk forgetting themselves more and more in order to stay faithful to their obligations. Their sensitivity to the needs of others makes them ready and available, servile, and puts them at times in humiliating conditions.

If their greatest desire is freedom, freedom is also their greatest fear. They hardly ever dare to express their needs directly, but prefer to

move under the sphere of influence of others. While the Oral character type can do little or nothing without the help and support of others, the Masochist is very good at doing their own thing, even if they would never dare do anything for themselves.

In some cases, the Oral and Masochistic types can present together, in which case the need for others, the resistance to movement and the tendency to self-punish coexist together as character traits.

It should be made clear that masochism means the tendency to endure suffering. For example, a person who, despite the underlying desire to change, remains in situations beyond their limit, or they take on great responsibility and give up their own gratification rather than giving up their obligations.

This character type lacks the will to decide and define, they cannot easily change their own destiny and renew themselves, they are innately lazy, indolent and tend to procrastinate.

This tendency is reinforced by familiar messages such as: "hold on, don't complain, first duty then pleasure".

Masochistic dynamics can be recognized by the fact that pleasure sometimes comes from tension and resistance. Tension is sought to the maximum to find pleasure and even after an outburst it is sought again. This dynamic is also recognizable in the body, where there are compressed and resistant fascia.

## APPEARANCE AND IMBALANCES IN THE BODY:

The body reflects the conflict between the desire for freedom and castration. The fascia seems to press from the inside on thick, dense skin that swells, contrasting the emergence of pressure. The muscular apparatus is robust and voluminous; the flexible, consistent walls expand from the center to the periphery. Due to their internal thrust, contents like liquids or air act on the membranes as if they were about to burst. Each fascial manipulation deals with these dynamics.

The osteo-articular structure is strong, well placed, rooted and lacking in agility and speed of movement.

Arms, legs, trunk, pelvis and neck are thick and full. This character type is typically overweight with the consequent stiffening of joints and joint problems: arthrosis, rheumatism, widespread pain in general.

In most cases, the body is thickset, the muscles around the cervical vertebrae are short, from the most superficial to the deepest ones.

The cervical tract is closed and shortened and can give rise to a sense of respiratory suffocation that often results in symptoms of anxiety. From a physical point of view, the most common diseases are cervicalgia and herniated discs. The protuberance that forms between the last cervical vertebrae and the first thoracic ones, often called buffalo hump, is one of the most common problems in this character type. It appears as an accumulation of fat and dense connective tissue at the point of curvature where the head and shoulders extend forward. It is also the typical shape of the body that indicates a state of submission and endurance.

The block around the neck can extend to the clavicles and shoulder blades, immobilizing the shoulder belt joint and limiting the range of the arms.

The freedom of these joints is proportional to the expressive freedom of the upper limbs. The so-called rounded shoulders are a manifestation of this state, and indicate an overload of responsibility.

The same compression can exist in the diaphragm and the whole diaphragmatic segment that stretches from the xiphoid process to the posterior pillars of the diaphragm. The functional limit of this ring conditions the excursion of the thoracic cavity. The compressed type often has respiratory problems, we can define the breath in turn "compressed" and held. During fascial work, the person can react by choking on the breath or emitting horse sounds, as if every movement were accompanied by a great effort.

The pelvis also has a lot of compression. The tension starts from the superficial muscles of the buttock, reaching deep into the pelvic floor. Tension in the buttocks and pelvic floor are indicators of angry, rancorous emotions.

Often the gluteal area forms a single block with the abdominal area and leg muscles. Abdomen, pelvis and hip joints appear as a single, swollen tube whose deep and chronic contractions reach the muscles around the anus and the front longitudinal ones of the spinal column, throughout the lumbar area. This compromises free movement of the hips and the lumbar sacral belt.

The body appears dense and is often energetically overloaded, home

to many interrupted feelings of excitement and emotions that have not been externalized, especially with regard to anger, pleasure and freedom.

The experiences retained in the body give rise to a dark or yellowish skin complexion, indicating a vital, circulatory slowdown.

The face is different. Its roundness expresses tenderness and welcome: the eyes are open, bright and innocent, the smile expansive like a child's.

There is a relationship between the masochistic character type and the spiral identified by Myers. The tension in a spiral, a spring twisted on itself, reduces body length. In the same way, the Masochist's spine can present itself as a chain of crushed, twisted downward links. It is in fact the character type that most often presents scoliosis.

But the spiral also holds a force that is ready to trigger with propulsive and contrary movements, a bit like a wound-up propeller. This principle is the key to spiral movements in oriental practices, where the force of a gesture is generated by the spiralization of the muscles.

Releasing the spiral tensions from the body generates freer, wider movements. As far as the front and back lines are concerned, in this character type the front line tends downwards together with the back line, generating a force towards the ground.

Sometimes the body shape of the Masochist can be confused with that of the Oral character type because often the sternal area is blocked and stretched towards the pelvis. But if you look carefully, you can see that the chest is significantly more compressed and more toned than in the Oral type. The chest is lowered by the tension of the diaphragmatic ring and the abdominal rectus, which in turn are responsible for the posterior tilt of the pelvis.

Usually the compression of the diaphragm pulls the upper body down, including the neck and shoulders.

The Masochist body shape symbolizes their greatest fear: freedom. The body prepares itself for defense, it is entrenched, it creates a thick armor that contains and protects it.

The attempt to free it is an arduous undertaking. It is necessary to accompany the person in rediscovering their own experiences of strength, in order to generate a new direction in life.

## FASCIAL BODYWORK:

Carrying out fascial work with this type of character means always thinking about the fact that our external force acts in contrast with their internal opposition that resists. The tissue can be full yet compressed, also because of lipid accumulation.

These types of people are accustomed to enduring, and their tissue is proof of this. Therefore, the session should not become a place where they are forced to endure pain again, but a place for releasing what is inside, finally opening up and taking up space. Bodywork must be slow, but without losing intensity. We have to penetrate into a thick, dense connective pulp. In order not to cause harm, the practitioner must observe the client's expression and the reaction of the body, adjusting the pressure accordingly.

During sessions, there can be a double reaction. On the one hand, the client can indulge the practitioner with great satisfaction, letting the practitioner act freely by allowing work in many areas of the body and at any level of pressure. Unfortunately, once again the client fails to become aware of limits and puts themselves in the condition where their body suffers. In another scenario, there is strong sensitivity and the person uses the physical pain to avoid entering deep work. In both cases, the relationship with the practitioner can take place on an ironic, playful level, which undermines taking the work seriously.

The masochistic character type can be struck by the intensity of pressure and strong perceptions, although their initial complacency can regress to resistance. We must not be surprised, this is where the real fascial bodywork begins. The practitioner has a key role in supporting and welcoming emerging emotions. Bodywork thus becomes an opportunity for becoming more aware of inner dynamics and acquiring more body strength, more presence and dynamism in the tissues.

A great sense of fatigue can also manifest, expressed with laughter in this character type. Paradoxically, hilarity is the means of expression used by the masochist to reduce internal pressure.

Useful fascial integration techniques together with pressure invite the person to "extend" or "transmit" tension along the arms and legs. Grasping or squeezing a cushion is effective, or moving the legs or kicking, in order to clearly perceive the force as it extends. The maneuver thus becomes a cathartic, conscious act.

Free movements should always be sought during the session: fast arm

and shoulder movements, strong diaphragmatic breaths, tilting the pelvis back and forth, together with words or simple sounds, are useful.

Deep release allows for the emergence of two intrinsic polarities. First a sense of anger, then a sense of humiliation. Both come from an attitude in life in which do-goodism and sacrifice prevailed. Alongside anger, a state of sadness can emerge, but so can fear, both of one's own bodily excitement and of coming into contact with an excess of freedom, from which one has always been detached.

The operator has the task of bringing the person into these deep states by emphasizing polarities, especially internal excitement, the key to freedom. Through these new expressions, a third, healthier and more integrated polarity can be constituted, where the person reclaims the possibility of denying themselves to others, saying no, creating healthy boundaries and preserving personal space.

Regarding the merits of fascial bodywork, the most important aspect is the release of compressions in the cervical area, the shoulder joints, the chest and the pelvis.

The work on the neck starts from the superficial muscles in order to gradually enter all the prevertebral muscles in depth.

The work on the acromioclavicular joint must be carried out without forgetting any muscle that wraps around the shoulder girdle (formed by the scapulae and the two clavicles).

The chest receives the work three-dimensionally, in the anterior area involving the vast area of the pectoral minor, major, laterally on the serratus and on the group of muscles that surround the scapula, and posteriorly on the trapezoids and rhomboids. The intention is to deconstruct the armor with small, deeper and deeper vibratory pressures.

The work on the pelvis focuses on the more superficial muscles such as the large buttocks to get deep into the central areas of the pelvic floor. It is easy to find resistance and pain in the deep ligaments. In these areas there is a lot of unexpressed anger, but the work leads to a pleasant release.

The work can also be extended to other areas where connective density and compressions can be observed, such as the femoral quadriceps, the erector spinae, the leg tendons, etc..

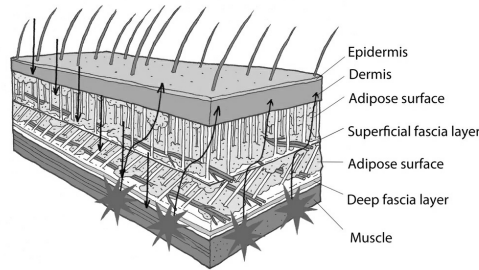
During the maneuvers the client may sigh strongly and the emission of



sounds and intense breathing must be supported. Even better if the sound can turn into a shout: maximum expressiveness and freedom can be achieved by developing self-assertion through the voice.

**Masochist**

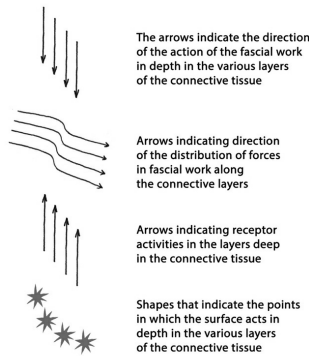
Gradually deep pressure



You get to the deep and compressed densities by reactivating the proprioception and freeing the forces accumulated in the deep layers; the intention is to bring the forces superficially.



At the muscular level it is activated locally and deeply, distributing forces longitudinally. The tensions of the deep fascia are brought to the surface, and are distributed throughout the body.



The arrows indicate the direction of the action of the fascial work in depth in the various layers of the connective tissue

Arrows indicating direction of the distribution of forces in fascial work along the connective layers

Arrows indicating receptor activities in the layers deep in the connective tissue

Shapes that indicate the points in which the surface acts in depth in the various layers of the connective tissue

The work on this character type depends on the type of contact, the pressure level and the depth reached in the different fascia layers. Each pressure has a quality that causes a precise receptor activation and a direction of distribution of forces and energies in the connective tissue. All these variables determine the outcome of bodywork and the change in personality.

**TECHNIQUE:**

Specific work on the muscles is carried out with single maneuvers and intense pressures that penetrate deeply. The elbow or the front of the ulna is often used with the intention of creating a vibratory effect.

#### IN THE SUPINE POSITION:

The first maneuver is carried out by helping the person bring their breath into the neck area. The intention is to prepare the tissue to enter the fibers through lateral contact and act on the compressions of the neck.

The second maneuver: the practitioner places one hand behind the nape of the neck at the level of c7, t1, t2, t3 at the height of the buffalo hump and pushes the nape of the neck forward, inviting the vertebrae to advance, at the same time coordinating the work on the front chest. The cervical vertebrae are brought forward and the chest is down. Sometimes this maneuver causes liberating spasms and coughs, involving the entire front line up to the abdomen.

The maneuver finishes by stretching the neck and inviting the person to take wide, free breaths together with open, circular arm movements.

The maneuvers move down to the diaphragm. Bodywork on the diaphragm, as seen in previous characters, is also important for this personality type.

The final front work is on the pelvis. To unblock the pelvis, it is necessary to soften all the fascia that reach the hips and especially the anterior superior iliac spine. The pelvic floor is can entered from the front from several points: from the abdominal rectus using the fingertips in the pubic bone, or lifting the leg and entering from the tendons of the leg, sliding on the walls of the ischium.

The pelvic floor is also worked laterally and backwards, always passing through the ischial opening.

#### IN THE LATERAL POSITION:

The client lies on one side with a cushion between their hands. The bodywork begins with both hands on the masseters and goes down to the side of the neck, involving the scalene and sternocleidomastoid muscles. The bodywork continues with the elbow, with small vibratory pressures on the scalene muscle that destructure neck compression. At

the same time, the client squeezes the cushion, emphasizing the expression of the emerging experience.

Then there are energetic maneuvers that aim to unblock the shoulder girdle by acting on the deltoid, teres minor, teres major, infraspinatus, supraspinatus, subscapularis muscles.

From this position, bodywork follows the scapulae to the trapezoid and the serratus.

In the same session, neck compression can distribute itself laterally towards the shoulders, up to the diaphragm.

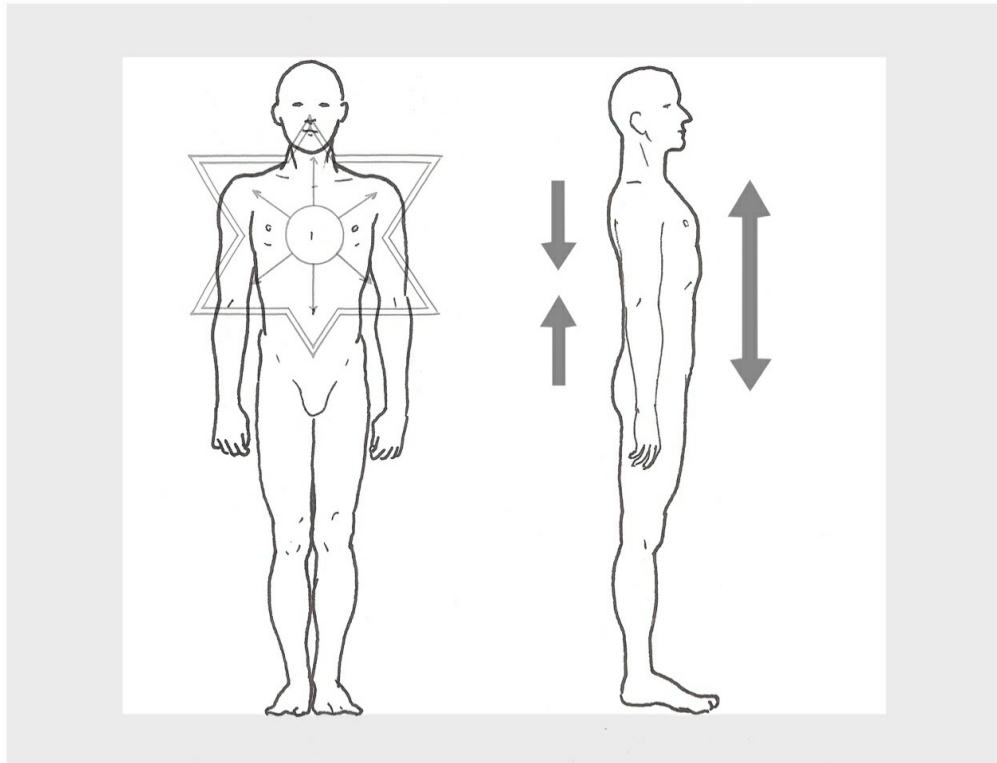
#### IN THE PRONE POSITION:

The practitioner is positioned behind the neck of the client, using the elbow on the trapezoids and rhomboids. The aim is to activate the trapezoids and rhomboids energetically and then descend onto the infraspinatus and serratus muscles. After unlocking the compressions in the posterior area, the work proceeds with energetic, diffused contact that activates involuntary, free movements of the shoulder blades and arms. The client is invited to move the upper limbs freely, following the spontaneous activities of the muscles.

The same bodywork can be done on the pelvic muscles. The practitioner enters all the muscles around the pelvis vigorously with fingertips and elbows, producing sudden, spontaneous movements in the whole area, making room for emerging emotions.

# Chapter 11. RIGID CHARACTER TYPE

Rigid



## ORIGIN AND RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS:

It is not difficult to recognize the rigid type. The body is balanced, well-proportioned and often well cared for. They have a brilliant personality, with a basic need to impress and please others. If we go back to their origin, we can find, in most cases, early experiences of exclusion and isolation.

At first, the child is exalted and loved by the family, at a later stage, however, he is excluded and made autonomous.

Often the child is forced to grow up early and participate in family crisis and heated quarrels and, is obliged to take the side of one parent then the other.

This participation in the dynamics between the parents creates a confused idea of the couple, exchange and relationships and leads to experiencing obvious underlying resentments and a negative perception

of the self.

Hence comes the desire, also evident in the body, to impose their own presence and value to repair this original wound. The way they do it is by trying to please others, capturing their sympathies, affections and attention, sometimes learning to use seductive qualities.

This attitude may develop until, in adulthood, real mechanisms are staged that lead them to embody roles with brilliant, ambitious qualities. The rigid character type has a great ability to manage time, is a time strategist, trying to optimize it to achieve goals and is always multitasking. They cannot afford to relax and abandon themselves, especially by giving in to tenderness, which they consider to be a waste of time.

Lisa Bourbeau writes: "a rigid person forgets their basic needs, clinging instead to the means that serves to satisfy them"<sup>[37]</sup>. To reach a goal, discipline is more important than the satisfaction of reaching the objective.

Their assertiveness is fulfilled in those relationships where they can use the other, when they use situations to their advantage. Sometimes they appear imperturbable and determined, but this easily degenerates into melodrama, which stems from deep insecurity and the inability to engage in real relationships.

Their seductiveness quickly attracts others, making them the center of attention, ensuring they have a place, all things which were lacking in the family of origin.

The search for success becomes the best form of self-defense to avoid suffering from exclusion, or else they exaggerate, through excess and sexuality, in denial of their feelings. Unfortunately, however, no external conquest guarantees a solution and complete satisfaction.

Through their tendency to seduce and abandon, they tend to wander from one relationship to another without stopping or feeling completely satisfied. This attitude that can also be repeated in fascial bodywork, where their difficulty to trust makes it easier to abandon the setting rather than to complete the treatment.

During sessions, they may express exaggerated dramatizations that do not always correspond to real feelings and sometimes do not lead to any awareness.

The Rigid type can't stand any kind of fragility, either in others and in

themselves. They are deeply sensitive but they have acquired the ability to hide this sensitivity from others.

Their deepest wound is that they are not always the best and the first and they fear being crushed by showing their fragility. For this extroverted character type, the most important work is to reconnect with the self, using the body to rediscover perceptions and deep feelings.

Their problem is that they stiffen so that their body does not feel anything. They anesthetize themselves and do not remember what they felt, completely lacking experiential memory.

### APPEARANCE AND IMBALANCES IN THE BODY:

The shape and consistency of the body of the Rigid type reflect the moniker "rigid". Their personality directly influences their body: a rigid temperament creates rigid tissue, vice versa rigid tissue influences rigidity in behavior. We have seen this in other character types, where dense and resistant tissues are associated with compressed dispositions and soft tissues for people with little volition.

The Rigid type can have a soft outer layer and a fascial plane with a harder, deeper consistency.

Their fibers are narrow and strong, the connective tissue that contains them forms an inflexible shell. The muscle, even if it is not compressed, is very toned and short, resistant and knotty. To the touch, the musculature may appear considerably contracted. Their movements are limited and quick, like those of a puppet.

The relationship between the upper and lower parts of the body is balanced and proportionate. Balance is also found in their posture. An image that reflects these canons is the Oscar statue: straight head and back, full chest, narrow waist, square jaw, closed chin and proud bearing.

Yet there is a discontinuity between the front and the back, animated by different social attitudes. The front, normally softer and more welcoming, reflects the social "I", linked to appearance and the facade. The rear suggests more unconscious elements, linked to what they really feel, and is normally more contracted [\[38\]](#).

Overall, the Rigid type has a pleasant appearance, their eyes are alive and their complexion is flushed. In women, the waist is narrow, the belly retracts and the buttocks is roundish.

The movements of the body are precise, almost studied, sometimes sinuously fluctuating and provocative, enhancing the outward aspect. Mimicry and gesture become useful instruments for seduction. But upon closer look, one recognizes a sometimes forced expressiveness, an underlying simulation, a lack of spontaneity. Hence the term "rigid", where the structure can be proportionate as much as it lacks elasticity and harmony. Such an artificial body prevents the various segments from vibrating harmoniously with each other and generates a block in emotional expression. In fact, the voice can be markedly mechanical and set, precise and impeccable, as if it were always in the role.

The upper back (rhomboid trapezoids and large dorsal) and the muscles around the cervical vertebrae are often rigid, as is the segment of the neck, erect and balanced, always under tension.

This rigidity extends into the legs and arms. The lack of flexibility in the ankle and knee joints, the pelvic joints, the arms and shoulders is evident.

Inflexibility, generally widespread in all areas of the body, is a consequence of the difficulty in abandoning oneself and giving in, a difficulty that is evident especially in the back. If we focus on the back, the vertebral line and the erector spinae support the entire body and must therefore be sufficiently toned, but also elastic and flexible enough to allow the body to adapt to changes and move easily in space. The back, therefore, which is symbolically associated with presence, determination and firmness, appears tense and inflexible in the Rigid character type, and therefore it is certainly not very adaptable.

In a popular Italian saying, "having a spine" means possessing qualities linked to strength and will, facing the world with determination and resoluteness. These beliefs act on the body and, especially for this type, impose a consistency on the structure that is difficult to affect.

## FASCIAL BODYWORK:

It is rare to find the Rigid character type in its pure form. Body structures can first pass through other types and then take the form of the Rigid. Initially there may be Oral traits or some parts of the body that belong to the Masochist, or the general explosive energy of the Dominant.

Any excessive rigidity, any lack of harmony and naturalness, any excess of stereotyped patterns are all aspects of their distinctive traits.

The body is armored and stiffened so as not to feel emotionally, moments of abandonment are rare and expressions of feelings are almost absent.

There are two types of rigidity: an obsessive type, with greater difficulty in showing one's emotions and more resistance to the practitioner's maneuvers, and a hysterical type that, on the contrary, conspicuously expresses the inner self, but at times in an exaggerated and theatrical way, without going in-depth.

The rigid type tends to seduce and also to challenge the practitioner. Seduction is a way to avoid coming into contact with the wound and manage the relationship, as they do in external relationships. The practitioner must pay close attention to this challenge, which is nothing more than an attempt to show that they can neither change nor be helped.

A distinction must be made between the Rigid type and the Aggressive type when it comes to control. Both tend to control, but while the Rigid controls themselves by trying to achieve a certain mastery over their own body, the Aggressive type controls by dominating others and achieving their goals. For the former, it is more difficult to transform body structures while for the latter it is difficult to alleviate the sense of panic and defense.

It is therefore necessary to avoid invasive maneuvers for both types, at least at the beginning. During fascial bodywork, it is necessary to deal with basic anguish, the fear of giving in and abandoning oneself, the resistance to emerging fragility. Fascial bodywork must be done with great gentleness to allow the structure to gradually relax, so the person can re-establish the relationship with their body.

In this regard, continuous and fluid breathing accompanied by harmonizing movements are useful, especially in the pelvic area where there is a strong disconnection.

The channel that passes through the mouth, throat, chest, diaphragm, abdomen and pelvis must be re-established and opened. The connection between the heart and the pelvis is important because it recreates the link between pelvic (or sexual) sensations and the heart (or sentiments). The Rigid type has lost this connection, and the interruption is especially



evident at the level of the diaphragm, the abdomen and the pelvic floor.

Structurally, the pelvis the base on which the entire upper part rests and it forms a crucial connection between the legs and the spine. The coccyx and the sacral vertebrae house the nervous tracts that activate aspects of control and sexuality, acting as bridges for connections with the legs.

Bringing the breath into these areas is very activating. In this case, it is not only inhalation or exhalation that is emphasized, but both phases are emphasized with continuity and homogeneity. The breath is the means to enter a state of loss of control and softness, to express more spontaneity and naturalness.

Continuous breathing creates excitement, an important theme for the Rigid type who is accustomed to using it only for seduction and ambition. Fascial bodywork tries to promote change, allowing the person to use their excitement to access the intimate relationship with their body.

The maneuvers must proceed all over, focusing on the rigidity of the joints and limbs, to awaken the sensitivity of the parts of the body that are disconnected and not in harmony.

The most important areas are the back and the chest. It is necessary to increase elasticity and flexibility in the back muscles in order to create more pulsations in the chest so that it becomes a sounding board for gut emotions. The chest, in fact, amplifies the emotions that come from the belly: it not only magnifies the emotions that rise up through the diaphragm, but gives them passionate qualities. A vibrant, flexible chest is an expression of vitality, passion and compassion.

The control scheme of the Rigid type also clearly affects their breathing since self-control depends on breathing. The etymological meaning of the word "*respirare*" ("to breathe") is "to restore spirit", to make the body breathe, to revive and revitalize it. The pulsation and the rhythmic work of breathing are the basis of a continuous exchange between the inside and the outside. Each character type has interrupted breath. When the fascia expand, we breathe more slowly and deeply; when the fascia compress the chest, we take shorter and more frequent breaths.

It is necessary to create space for the expressive dimension of the thoracic cavity and so that the chest moves up and down harmoniously. The maneuvers that influence the body in this area, usually blocked in

inhalation, intend to move the control downwards and generate a sense of abandonment. This intervention is similar to the one for the Dominant character type.

In addition, the breathing block in the upper chest in the axillary cavity can cause lymphatic congestion under the armpits, which can sometimes generate serious problems in the chest.

Lordosis in the lumbar area causes a shortening of the entire vertebral line, usually involved in maintaining upright posture. It is difficult to move, especially since the Rigid type's body armor is a system of communicating levers. It is often the case that a tension is moved to a different area of the body instead of being released. Work on the back during one session, for example, can become stiffness in the abdomen in the next session.

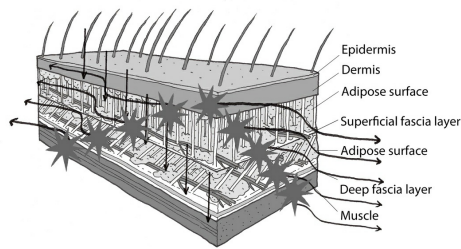
In this case, it is appropriate to use combined maneuvers that unite several parts of the body. The intention must always be to harmonize the segments and release the tension, without having it migrate.

Bodywork on the pelvic floor helps the deep tensions of the back to open from the base.

The work with the Rigid character types focuses on the expression of two polarities: on the one hand, the person is helped to become aware of their rigidity; on the other, to feel their softness and, where possible, to give up control. The practitioner must therefore be very careful to enable the client to become aware of when he resists or gives in. Through the exploration of these polarities, a third polarity can emerge: where the person manages to integrate rigid roles with healthy moments of fragility and intimacy.

## Rigid

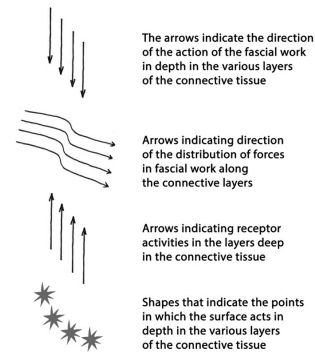
The pressure is distributed throughout the body and is activating, in some segments the pressure in the depth increases



The whole body is activated and all the receptors of the superficial and deep fascia are connected, we connect superficial and deep disconnected areas



Surface and deep tensions are dissolved, in particular in the segments of the heart, belly and pelvis, connection is created between the superficial and deep fascia, the segments are connected longitudinally



Bodywork depends on the type of contact, the pressure level and the depth reached in the different fascial layers. Each pressure causes a precise receptor activation and a direction in the distribution of forces and energies within the connective tissue. All these variables determine the outcome of the bodywork and the change in personal traits.

## TECHNIQUE:

Specific work on the musculature is carried out with combined maneuvers that join several segments together.

## IN THE SUPINE POSITION:

The first connection is between arms and pectoral major, the bodywork then passes to the connection between the diaphragm and pectoral laterally and centrally, following the connection between the diaphragm and the quadriceps, ending with the connection between the quadriceps and the tibia.

Finally we work on the joints: ankle retinaculum, knee, anterior superior iliac spine, lumbar belt, coracoid process, etc.

## IN THE PRONE POSITION:

On the back, the bodywork is the same, starting from the arm whose specific muscles start from the scapula with the upper scapula and trapezius muscles. Then we connect the lower posterior serratus, the lower posterior serratus to the gluteus, (a maneuver that can be performed both with the hands and elbows), finally we connect the gluteus to the leg tendons and the gastrocnemius.

#### IN THE LATERAL POSITION:

Starting from the neck, a maneuver connects the scalene muscles to the obliques. Then, always from the neck, you reach the serratus anterior. The neck and the obliques can be connected first anteriorly (anterior obliques and external obliques) and then posteriorly: (posterior scalene and square of the loins), involving the entire abdomen.

The practitioner reaches the buttocks area and, with combined maneuvers, descends along the entire lateral line.

## **APPENDIX. TRAINING PROGRAM**

The fascial integration training program takes place over a year.

It is a complete compendium of professional interventions on the muscles and all voluntary and involuntary systems in the human body.

The training program is for doctors, physiotherapists, psychologists, osteopaths, graduates in motor sciences, aesthetics and wellness professionals like personal trainers, fitness and Pilates coaches, craniosacralists, operators in bio-natural disciplines, psychomotricists, health workers, naturopaths, body therapists and experts in movement and massage in general.

Bodywork focused on well-being and the notions learned are a useful complement to all these professional and non-professional disciplines that deal with posture, the resolution of specific symptoms and movement. The training program, a meeting point for many professionals, offers professional enrichment and a personal transformative path.

The training program is divided into modules or sectors:

1 The first module presents the technical maneuvers for work on the muscles: they are all specific fascial manipulations based on Rolfing techniques.

2 The second module includes the study of the muscle chain meridians that go from the skull to the sole of the foot, based on the most recent discoveries regarding "Myofascial Meridians" by Thomas Myers. These meridian "maps" are a useful, complete outline used to distribute and dissipate tensile forces.

3 The third module deals with postural examination, line analysis, segment displacement, identification of asymmetries and imbalances, as well as the evaluation of body shapes according to the observation of the seven segments identified by Wilhelm Reich. The latter are like belts that tighten around the eyes, mouth, neck, chest, diaphragm, abdomen and pelvis.

4 The fourth module focuses on the study of neurovegetative activation practices through respiration and movement. This module is both a warm-up for the fascia before, during and after a session as well as a set of energy techniques that act in-depth on the body armor. These

maneuvers penetrate the innermost areas of the body, such as the heart and pelvis, increasing both body awareness and expressiveness. They are also useful keys for accessing emotional content that impacts on the well-being and vitality of the body.

The seminars are mainly practical and experiential. The students are accompanied during the work while they directly experience the maneuvers. Each session is presented and monitored. Lessons are supported by the use of multimedia tools, anatomical models and live demonstrations.

Handouts are provided with summaries of the lessons carried out, photos of postural imbalance maneuvers and the anatomical sections of reference.

Some lesson notes and videos will be available online in order to facilitate reviewing the topics covered. At the end of each meeting, homework will be assigned and difficulties will be shared during group supervision when reviewing cases and revising the work.

The training program is carefully designed so that practitioner can best perform his/her work and address a wide range of cases and issues without the risk of burnout.

At the end of the course, each participant will present a case study, so as to assess the assimilation and understanding of the issues addressed, in order to receive the final certificate.

During the final phase of the training program, all modules will serve the practitioner in designing and implementing a complete treatment plan. An initial and final evaluation of the work carried out, where the client receives an objective and clinically significant referral from the practitioner and the subsequent interventions are established together according to the treatment plan, is required. Practitioner and client therefore have a work target, fundamental in their relationship.

The training program aims to give each student the opportunity to acquire a vocabulary of techniques and a model of intervention that is easy to apply and allows them to properly and creatively work on the well-being of people.

Organizational and Didactic Secretariat for Fascial Integration "Training Program"

[info@integrazionefasciale.it](mailto:info@integrazionefasciale.it)

[Www.integrazionefasciale.it](http://www.integrazionefasciale.it)

Fascial integration founded a professional association that unites fascial practitioners and professionals who work on the connective tissue. In addition to providing specific services for the profession, it promotes research on fascia and permanent training on new developments in the field.

It maintains, implements and improves the skills, quality and the ethical standards of members thanks to a permanent monitoring system, providing a certificate of quality that meets the latest ministerial standards.

For information on the professional association:  
Associazione Professionale Operatori Integrazione Fasciale  
[www.integrazionefascialeprofessionale.it](http://www.integrazionefascialeprofessionale.it)

# CONCLUSION

The topics in this text, mainly addressed from a theoretical point of view, require a lot of practice and experience. Only continuous activity allows bodywork to be performed with expertise. My special thanks go to Jack Painter, an important teacher I have been following for years. Most of the topics in this book were developed thanks to the reorganization and structuring of his teaching.

Jack Painter claimed that integration only takes place definitively when we really feel alive and are in a dynamic relationship with events, when we are actively part of everything that happens to us. This means actively living and experiencing emotions and feelings in our lives. If we really succeed in doing so without perpetrating physical closure patterns but, on the contrary, we are genuinely involved, then we can clearly perceive deep body movements and the freely circulating energies that transform and express themselves according to their nature.

If we can attain integration, nothing remains stuck in the body for long, but every bodily expression finds the right eloquent, vital space in a wide range of possibilities. My desire has always been to use fascial bodywork to bring about a profound, lasting change in the physical aspect and attitudinal traits of people. I have put all my passion and enthusiasm into this research and tried to face all the challenges, be they physical, psychic, psychosomatic or postural. I have always been interested in the health and well-being of people, using fascial integration as a truly adaptable, easily applicable model that leads to maximum results, besides being in line with new research and discoveries in the field. Over time, my way of working on the connective tissue has changed a lot: touch, intention and intensity are different from before, and I'm sure they will continue to progress since this technique is in continuous evolution and development.

Thanks to experience, the fundamental thing is to be more and more precise and effective, so as to complete a work session even in very few maneuvers. The intent is not to modify the client based on our idea, but to modify our intervention with respect to the need brought by the person. For this reason, knowledge of the person we are helping is essential: we mean details such as the tone of the voice, the gait and movement in space, the breath, skin color, body shape and the texture of the tissues. These are just a



few details that allow us to perform interventions with precision and skill. Fascial integration brings the person back into contact with their physical and individual reality. For this reason, the practitioner's intuition is also important, as is the palpatory examination, knowledge of the tissues and a trusting relationship. During the session, client and practitioner grow together, actively participating in a deep movement, sharing an openness and a dynamism that influence one another. Each time the practitioner probes the tissue, which he/she considers a living, reactive element, endowed with its own intrinsic and living spontaneity, acting for the benefit of the structure and the person.

The theoretical foundations of fascial integration, based on fundamental mappings such as myofascial meridians, character types and anatomy, have been discussed in this text, but there is a moment when these references are replaced by every practitioner's own creative, personal way of performing the interventions.

In Maria Montessori's words: "Teaching details leads to confusion. Establishing relationships between things means giving knowledge".

Let us remember, as already discussed, that living structures are never so linear and precise that they can be completely classified and predicted. There can never be an intervention method applicable in the absolute. Too much analysis is misleading and limiting in this context, since treatments involve a living structure, with many variables related to the relationship that influence the effectiveness of the treatment exponentially.

The fascial practitioner, a skilled connoisseur of the fascia, recognizes the organismic feedback, the reactions of the tissues, and adapts his/her intervention to the situation without focusing too much on the use of one technique rather than another, favoring the interchangeability of the maneuvers learned.

I hope that this contribution will be a useful starting point for all those who already work with fascial manipulation or who are now starting this path. This book serves as the subject for further study and enrichment. For this reason, I invite each of you to continue your experiential practice and to be passionate about this wonderful technique, because our journey does not end here!



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