

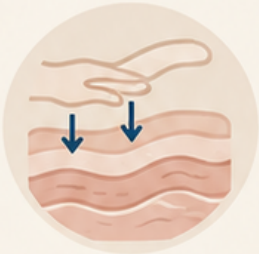
Hilton's Law

(John Hilton, English Surgeon, 1804-1878)



A nerve trunk which supplies a joint also supplies the muscles of the joint and the skin over the insertion of such muscles.

This has many interesting implications as to how the superficial and deeper tissues are connected through the nerve trunk. One of the more interesting applications in therapy is the stimulation of more superficial tissues that facilitate the relaxation of deeper tissues. Here are some instances in therapy where Hilton's law is used:



- As the skin and fascia are released through NMT (skin rolling, friction pressure therapy) the deeper soft tissues relax. The small deeper arteries that were previously constricted due to autonomic phenomena will dilate. Thus, circulation will improve to the nerves and soft tissues in the affected regions deep within the joint.



- As ice and/or vapocoolants are applied to the skin, the sudden cold and touch stimuli of the spray inhibits the pain and reflex spasm on that nerve trunk. Without this distraction, the extent of passive stretching of the muscle would not be as great. These are the underlying principles for “stretch and spray” and some forms of contrast therapy.



- Changes in ‘unreachable’ parts of the joint can be affected by stimulation of more superficial tissues.



Notes: