

It's Not Magic

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Some people think the soft tissue work (manual therapy, myofascial therapy, massage therapy) that I do is “magic” because after only a few hands-on treatments, their debilitating pain or dysfunction is gone... especially after they have spent so much time, energy, and money on other treatments that only provided minimal relief... or were told by other healthcare practitioners that they can't find anything wrong with them... or that there's nothing they can do for them... or that their injury or other situation would not improve without surgery. Well, it's not magic... it's just a specific way of working that many healthcare practitioners are not aware of.

From my experience over the past twenty-two years, there are three main causes of chronic pain & dysfunction in the body: ***fibrosis, scar tissue, and facial adhesions***. All three of these lesions, or soft tissue restrictions, prevent sufficient circulation into and around the cells and create inflammation, preventing optimal tissue regeneration, and are where biochemical compounds build up and irritate the nerve endings. None of these lesions will go away on their own, and must be remediated (smoothed out, and gotten rid of) by specific manual (hands-on) techniques.

Now, there is very little, if any, scientific research on what I am about to explain. This information is purely theoretical, based upon my (and others') clinical experience. It strictly is anecdotal opinion, and I make no medical/scientific claims.

Fibrosis: Whenever there is cellular damage in any tissue of the body, there is an inflammatory response. This damage may be from an injury to a specific area, from a surgery, or it can be internally in the tissues, organs, joints, or arteries as a result of systemic oxidation (a lack of oxygen in or around the cells). Whatever the cause... wherever there is inflammation, the body lays down fibrin (protein fibers that are a part of the blood clotting process) that naturally help to heal the tissue damage. This is good and bad. It's good because the area is technically healed. But it is bad because fibrin is laid down in a very disorganized way that results in a more dense, weak, and poorly circulated tissue. Biochemical waste products and other irritants can then build up on this tissue causing further discomfort.

Furthermore, as we get older, most people tend to accumulate fibrin throughout their bodies. It builds up in the arteries, joints, and around organs, leading to circulatory issues and more and more stiffness as we age. So one way that we can help to prevent this systemic fibrosis, other than a healthy diet and daily exercise, is to consume fibrinolytic foods & supplements. These foods are fermented and high in proteolytic enzymes, which have been shown to dissolve fibrin buildup. They include natto, kimchi, sauerkraut, very aged raw cheeses, and high meat. And systemic enzyme capsules may be taken as a daily supplement.

Scar Tissue: When there is significant inflammation, as with a severe disease condition, an injury, or after surgical incision, where there clearly is tissue damage present... the fibrin, along with collagen, continues to be laid down until a palpable scar is formed. Some scars are flat, and others are raised and thick. But both are dense... and the hardest ones form over damaged bone tissue.

Adhesions: If you look at connective tissue (fascia) under a microscope, you will see that it consists of very small fluid-filled tubules. When there is not enough fluid in these tubules, the collagen in the tissue becomes "sticky", clumping together and forming palpable lesions. Adhesions are areas of connective tissue that have been continually physically compressed either by an outside force (such as a chair) or by another body part (as when the hip bone gets compressed into the hip socket, when sitting) to the point that the connective tissue becomes dehydrated (the fluid gets squeezed out of it). This tissue then becomes adhesive to the point that it glues itself to the connective tissue and other structures around it. People who normally do not consume enough water, and are chronically dehydrated, are more likely to develop fascial adhesions. Certain dietary factors, such as excessive consumption of carbohydrates, may also contribute to the accumulation of adhesions.

Many practitioners use the terms "scar tissue" and "adhesions" interchangeably. However, there is a difference between the two. Scar tissue can build up on any damaged tissue in the body, while adhesions are only present in the connective tissue, and are not due to damage. Both lesions feel similar when palpated, lumpy with a more dense consistency than the surrounding tissue. And both contain collagen, which may adhere them to other surrounding tissues. But often the only way to know the difference is to know if there was damage to the tissue in that area or not.

Treatment is also similar, as the lesion is first warmed, and then stretched and gently but forcefully “smoothed out” with the fingertips. Other modalities, such as castor oil packs, instrumented assistance soft tissue mobilization, and Shockwave therapy may also be helpful in certain situations to help remediate these lesions. But it is important to understand that rolling out on a foam roller, lacrosse ball, or similar device WILL NOT affect these types of lesions. And suction cupping therapy will provide only minimal improvements.

All of these tissue restrictions can restrict mobility and prevent the body from accessing the area with proper circulation. This then creates structural imbalances & biochemical stagnations in the area that can lead to pain & stiffness, and will remain this way until it is remediated.

Most of the time when we feel excessive amounts of pain, this is due to irritated nerves from chemicals in the area that are related to inflammation. However, pain can also be associated with blood & interstitial fluid stagnation from poor diet, sedentary lifestyles, and other factors, which can also prevent circulatory patency and create local or systemic inflammation, with or without swelling. Before I can properly access & treat the deeper layers of tissue, these biochemistry issues MUST be cleaned up first. If this is not first achieved, there will be too much pain for you to deal with, and the integrity of the tissue & vessels in the area will likely be weaker and more susceptible to injury from the soft tissue work. If this is your situation, I may refer you out to a biochemistry specialist for help & guidance.

Furthermore, even if the issue is from a very old injury, your body still wants to heal it. You just have to give it the right tools... the right circulation! We have to “open up” that area... that connective tissue, that tendon, or that joint... and allow fresh healing nutrients to circulate into it that will naturally remove any acids, biochemical irritants, or metabolic waste materials that are the true source of the inflammation, pain, and stiffness.

You’ve probably heard that the key to health is movement... “Move it or lose it”, right? This is true. But more specifically, the key is optimal circulation. So that’s what we are trying to achieve with this work... circulation deep into and around the chronic injury site or place of tension. To accomplish this, I use a variety of hands-on techniques and stretching exercises... getting the old stagnant fluid out of the area, increasing fresh new healing circulation into the area, stimulating the healing process, and restoring the tissue to as close to 100% as possible.

Now, does it work help everybody in every situation? ...No. But either during the initial consultation, or within the first few visits, we will know whether or not these techniques will work for you. If not, I will try to point you in the direction of the appropriate practitioner, or other best option. If it is determined that this work IS appropriate for your particular situation, you will experience significant & permanent progress within the first three sessions.

If you are coming simply for a general whole-body wellness or maintenance treatment, you may reschedule as often as you like. But for the specific soft tissue work described above, it is recommended that you come no more than once per week. This allows your body and mind the necessary time to process and integrate the biomechanical changes. And it takes on average 2-4 days for adhered tissue to rehydrate itself after it is smoothed out and opened back up to proper circulation.

But however often you visit, the work that is done is usually permanent. It may not get any better without further treatment, but it normally does not get any worse, unless you continue the same habits or injuries that created the problem in the first place.

In most cases, there is immediate pain relief. However, the area may be sore from the deep pressure of the soft tissue work. This normal discomfort usually goes away within 2-4 days. Most people will notice a significantly permanent improvement within 4 days of treatment. But this also depends upon how well circulated the area is, and how well hydrated it is. Meaning that if there is poor circulation to that problem area and/or the area is not regularly hydrated by drinking enough water throughout the day, then it will take longer than 4 days (even up to two weeks) before the patient feels the relief they are looking for.

As long as there is at least 20% permanent improvement in the condition within the first few treatments, we will continue with the work. However, just how quickly your body adjusts to the treatments depends upon a couple of factors... How much water are you drinking (how hydrated is your tissue), and how much daily exercising and stretching you are doing for proper circulation into that problem area.

Hydration, exercise, and stretching, are essential for the treatments to work optimally. So if you are not drinking enough water, nor exercising & stretching regularly, then the positive effects may take longer for you.

So, if you have a painful or debilitating issue somewhere in or on your body that you have been dealing with... Whether it's a new issue, or something that's been bugging you for years... If there is something in the tissue that is restricting your daily life or interrupting your sleep, causing pain, flexibility issues, stiffness, or other imbalance... This is what I specialize in, and my work just may be the answer you've been looking for.