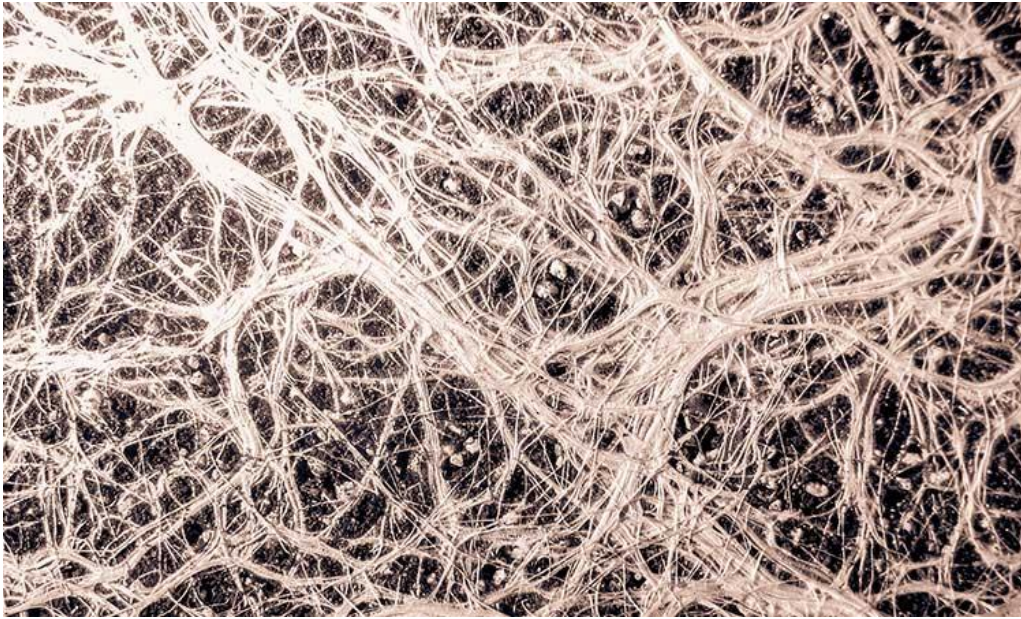


# Oh What A Tangled Web Our Bodies Weave



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We've all experienced pain and stiffness within our bodies. And we often attribute it to creaky joints or "tight" muscles.

And maybe you do a quick stretch, take a collagen supplement or even take some pain medication. But whatever you seem to do that pain and stiffness is persistent and never fully goes away.

What if I told you that the main source of that stiffness, achiness, and lack of flexibility could be from a body part you never knew existed?

Fascia.

It is believed that fascia contains approximately [six times as many sensory nerves](#) as muscle tissue. No wonder you are in pain!

So what exactly is fascia and how can you reduce discomfort caused by it?

## What is fascia?

Fascia is connective tissue that forms a web around all of your internal “stuff”. It surrounds your bones, vessels, muscles, nerves, and organs. It basically connects all of our internal structures together and gives them their shape - kind of like a three-dimensional flexible scaffolding inside our bodies. It helps to transfer energy across structures and helps to transform the work of our muscles into smooth movement.

Fascia should be supple and flexible while still maintaining structure. Think of it like a giant spider web – thin and flexible enough to take on the shape of whatever it surrounds, but strong enough to maintain its integrity to keep things in its place. It’s the [Elastigirl](#) of your insides. Okay, not really, but it’s a fun analogy.

Fascia stretches and moves...until it doesn’t. Sometimes fascia thickens or gets stuck and that translates into stiffness, lack of flexibility, and even pain.

## What Causes “Tight” Fascia?

Fascia can stick - both to itself as well as to the material it surrounds. It can stick to surrounding structures or you might feel little knots or bumps. This can be caused by a number of factors.

- Repetitive movement. Do the same thing over and over again such as running or cycling?
- Too little movement. Sit at a desk or in a car all day every day and don’t take your body through full range of motion?
- Trauma. Injury of any kind (including surgery) can also result in fascial adhesions.

## Fascia and Movement

Fascia helps us to move smoothly and effectively by connecting all of our internal structures together. [It allows muscles to move, nerves and vessels to slide between joints, and organs to shift and move as influenced by the body.](#)

Fascia enables the transfer of energy and the distribution of tension so our movements are smooth and coordinated.

## Fascia and Emotions

Something that may surprise you is how fascia is tied to emotions.

Because of the high number of nerves throughout the fascia, [dysfunction in the fascia can result in emotional changes](#) as well as physical discomfort.

Have you ever felt weepy while experiencing widespread achiness? Me too.

Fascial pain can lead to emotional changes which can lead to further postural changes (the way you slump forward when you don't feel great). So reducing physical pain can help improve emotional aspects of pain as well.

## Is It Fascia Pain?

Typically, when there is a dysfunction in a muscle, you will experience pain with a specific movement. If you hurt your bicep, pain occurs when you use that bicep.

But with fascia pain, your discomfort usually isn't triggered by a specific movement. Widespread achiness and stiffness is a common complaint. Some people even complain that their skin hurts or is hypersensitive or their complain that their pain is more intense in one area of their body.

With [myofascial pain syndrome](#), fascial adhesions can worsen over time and develop into **trigger points**.

Unlike with muscle injury, gentle movement often *decreases* fascial pain and improves range of motion.

## Three Ways to Reduce Fascia Pain

### Heat

Applying heat to an area of fascial pain helps to restore elasticity allowing you to stretch and move more effectively. So, soak in a hot tub bath or enjoy a relaxing 20-minute session in a sauna.

### Move more

Stretching, especially full-body movement like gentle yoga, manipulates the fascia and helps to reduce pain and stiffness. The key is to move the area in *all directions*. Be sure to twist and bend and stretch in as many directions as possible and hold those positions for extended periods to allow the fascia to release. I recommend holding each position for a least a minimum of 2-minutes.

I highly recommend every morning to move all your joints within your body through their full range-of-motion. Just like Ian from Markow Training Systems does in this [video](#).

## **Massage**

Massage therapy provides targeted treatment in specific areas and allows you to address an issue more comprehensively by generating heat, calming the nervous system, and treating muscle and fascia issues simultaneously.

Massage therapy can also address any trigger points you may have, since trigger points are often hard to self-treat.

## **Conclusion**

We all experience pain and stiffness from time to time. If chronic achiness and stiffness has been troubling you, a consistent program of heat, movement, and bodywork can be enormously effective at reducing discomfort and improving performance.