

Who can benefit from Structural Integration?

Athletes- more affective movement can improve performance

Yoga participants- increase the depth of your poses

Pilates participants- gain better balance in your core muscles and fascia

Office workers- sitting often creates shortening of the fascia in the front of the body and the back of the leg which contribute to neck and back strain



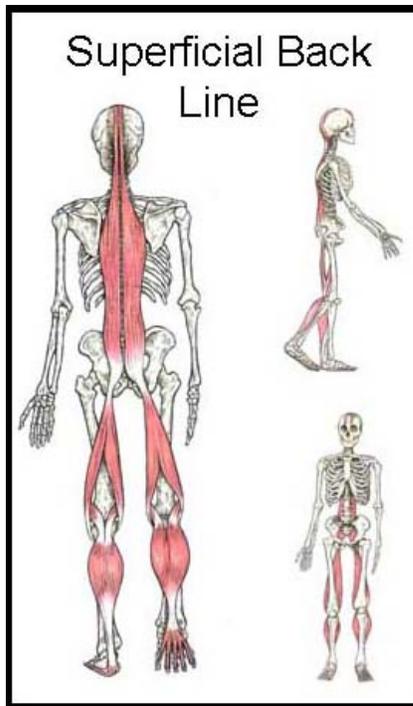
Structural support is not just the alignment of the bones and the strength of the muscle, but also includes a balance in the myofascial system. Myo- means muscle; -fascial being the connective tissue around the muscle. Fascia is what holds the muscles together and gives our body its form and support.

Clients frequently seek out bodywork due to a pain complaint. However, symptoms are often far removed from the problem area. For example, neck pain can be due to a lack of myofascial structural support in the rib cage, pelvis or legs.

To use the analogy of a house: if you shift the foundation, the second floor will also shift. If you were to put a new roof on either of the houses below, it would not be effective because there is a lack of structural integrity in the foundation of each house. While this is obvious with a house (especially these two), most people do not realize that the same is true of the human body. When the legs do not have the myofascial integrity to support the pelvis; hip and low back issues can occur. When the pelvis and low back cannot support the rib cage; neck and shoulder issues may arise.



Tom Myers, in his book *Anatomy Trains*, has done an excellent job of identifying how fascia functions along lines of pull in the body. The superficial back line of fascia, pictured below, demonstrates how some of the myofascia is inner connected on the back of the body. The foot plantar fascia connects to the calf muscles (*Gastrocnemius*) which are fascially continuous with the back of the thigh (*Hamstring* muscles) which are fascially continuous with the low back muscles (*Erector spinae*) which continue into the neck and connect to the fascia on top of the head. If there is tightness in any of these myofascial tissues, it can create challenges to any of the structures or joints above or below.



If you would like to feel the fascial connection on yourself, try this:

Keeping your knees straight, bend your head and neck forward and touch your toes. What do you notice? Can you touch your toes without bending your knees? Where is there tension?

Now try rolling a tennis ball under your right foot to massage the foot muscles and plantar fascia. Do this for a minute or so. Then try touching your toes again. What do you notice? Are you able to reach further? Is the tension the same or different between the right and left leg? Does your low back feel any different?

Now roll the tennis ball under the left foot and bend over again. Does it feel any different? Did the tension in your leg or back change?

If you are able to reach further, it is because you have lengthened the foot plantar fascia which has eased the pull on the rest of the superficial back line.

If you would like more information about Structural Integration or other services offered at Structural Wisdom, please visit our website at Structuralwisdom.com