



Glossary

Actin filament The protein filament in a sarcomere that is pulled inward by the heads on the myosin filament to effect contraction

Active trigger point A trigger point that actively causes referred pain or related sensations without being directly stimulated

Agonist A muscle that is contracting to perform an action, opposed by an antagonist

Antagonist A muscle that opposes the action of an agonist

Articular process A small flat projection found on the surfaces of the arches of the vertebrae on either side incorporating an articular surface

Articular facet A small articular surface of a bone, especially a vertebra

Atlas First cervical vertebra, articulating with the occipital bone and rotating around the odontoid process of the axis (Greek *Atlas*, in Greek mythology a Titan who supported the earth on his shoulders)

Axis The second cervical vertebra

Bindegewebsmassage German for *connective tissue massage*, a therapeutic approach developed by Elisabeth Dicke

Body mechanics The use of the therapist's body to perform effective work with minimum strain or injury

Bodywork Any holistic approach to examination and manual manipulation of the soft tissues of the body for therapeutic purposes

Cartilaginous joint A joint in which two bony surfaces are united by cartilage. The two types of cartilaginous joints are **synchondroses** and **symphyses**.

Caudad Toward the tail (coccyx)

Cephalad Toward the head

Chiropractic A health discipline that primarily deals with the joints of the vertebrae and their proper adjustment for health purposes

Clinical massage therapy Manual manipulation of the soft tissues to resolve specific problems of pain or dysfunction

Compression The application of pressure to the body using the hand, fist, elbow, knuckles, fingertips, or thumb

Concentric contraction Muscular contraction that results in shortening of the muscle

Condyle A rounded articular surface at the extremity of a bone

Connective tissue The supportive tissues of the body, made of a ground substance and fibrous tissues, taking a wide variety of forms. Although bone, blood, and lymph are technically connective tissues, the term is normally used in massage therapy and bodywork to refer to tendons, ligaments, and fascia

Core™ Myofascial Therapy A systematic approach to structure through the fascia that works along Langer's lines

Coronal A vertical plane perpendicular to the sagittal plane dividing the body into anterior and posterior portions, also called the frontal plane

Cross-fiber friction Deep stroking perpendicular to the fiber of a muscle, tendon, or ligament with the fingertips, thumb, or elbow

Deep Away from the surface of the body; the opposite of superficial (e.g., pectoralis minor lies deep to pectoralis major)

Distal Away from the center of the body or from the origin

Dorsal Relating to the back; posterior

Eccentric contraction Muscular contraction during lengthening of the muscle, helping to control movement

Exhaustion The state of muscle cells in which the energy source, ATP, is temporarily depleted

Facet A small surface, especially of bone. A facet joint is a joint comprised of two surfaces in contact

Fascia Fibrous connective tissue continuously enveloping the whole body, individual muscles, and parts of muscles

Fascicle A bundle of muscle fibers

Frontal A vertical plane perpendicular to the sagittal plane dividing the body into anterior and posterior portions; also called the coronal plane

Hellerwork™ A type of structural bodywork emphasizing fascial manipulation developed by Joseph Heller, MD, based on the work of Ida Rolf

Horizontal A plane perpendicular to the gravitational force

Idiopathic scoliosis A type of scoliosis of unknown origin that may commence in infancy (infantile scoliosis), childhood (juvenile scoliosis), or adolescence (adolescent scoliosis)

Ischemic compression Compression of a point in muscle tissue, usually of a trigger point, that obstructs the flow of blood in the tissue

Kyphosis Excessive flexion (convex curvature) of the spine

Langer's lines (lines of cleavage) Lines indicating the principal axis of orientation of the subcutaneous connective tissue fibers. These lines vary in direction with the region of the body surface

Latent trigger point A trigger point that refers pain or other sensations only when compressed; however, it may limit lengthening of the muscle in which it resides, or cause muscle shortening in its referral zone

Lateral Away from the sagittal midline of the body. The opposite of medial

Lordosis Excessive extension (concave curvature) of the spine

Mandible The lower jaw bone, which articulates with the temporal bone on either side

Massage therapy Manual manipulation of the soft tissues for relaxation, pain relief, or other healthful purposes

Medial Toward the sagittal midline of the body. The opposite of lateral

Motor unit A single motor neuron and the group of muscle fibers that it innervates

Muscle architecture The structure of a muscle in terms of the directions of its fibers

Muscle cell, skeletal A single cell of muscle tissue, containing several nuclei and many myofibrils, innervated along with other cells in the same motor unit by a single neuron

Muscle fiber Synonym for *muscle cell*

Myofascial release A system of fascial work intended to release, stretch, and influence the orientation of the fascia

Myofibril A sequential strand of sarcomeres within a muscle cell

Myofilament A filament of either myosin or actin, which together form the contractile element of muscle tissue

Myosin The protein filament in a sarcomere from which molecular "heads" extend to pull the actin filament inward to effect contraction

National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork A national organization that tests and certifies qualified massage therapists and bodyworkers. Many states are requiring national certification (NCTMB) as a qualification for licensure

Neuromuscular junction The synaptic connection of the axon of the motor neuron with a muscle fiber

Neuromuscular therapy A systematic approach to myofascial treatment that attempts to interrupt the neuromuscular feedback that maintains pain or dysfunction. The two types are British (Leon Chaitow) and American (Judith Walker Delaney, Paul St. John)

Occipital condyles An elongated oval facet on the undersurface of the occipital bone on either side of the foramen magnum, which articulate with the atlas vertebra

Odontoid process A process projecting upward from the body of the axis vertebra around which the atlas rotates

Osteopathy A type of medicine that combines conventional medical diagnostic and treatment techniques with physical manipulation

Palmar Relating to the palm, the anterior surface of the hand in anatomical position

Passive shortening Reduction in the length of a muscle without contraction

Passive stretching Stretching or lengthening of a muscle by another person

Pennate Any muscle architecture in which the fibers lie at angles to the force-generating axis

Physical therapy A type of medical therapy in which passive movement and exercise are the primary means of treatment

Primary trigger point The original trigger point from an injury, which may generate other satellite trigger points

Process A projection or outgrowth from a bone

Proximal Nearer to the center of the body or origin

Reciprocal inhibition The relaxation of a muscle in response to the contraction of its antagonist

Recruitment The activation of motor units by motor neurons

Release Palpable relaxation and softening of myofascial tissue. In myofascial stretching, the therapist experiences release as a lengthening of the tissue. In compression of tender or trigger points, the therapist feels a softening in the tissue, and the client reports a lessening or cessation of pain

Rib hump A symptomatic elevation of the posterior ribs on one side during forward bending in idiopathic scoliosis

Rolfing™ A type of structural bodywork, originally called structural integration, developed by Ida Rolf, PhD, which focuses on manipulation of the fascia

Sagittal plane A vertical plane perpendicular to the frontal (coronal) plane, dividing the body into left and right sides (Latin *sagitta*, arrow)

Sarcomere A group of myofilaments forming the unit of contraction in a muscle

Sarcoplasmic reticulum The complex of vesicles and tubules that form a continuous structure around myofibrils and carry the chemical trigger, calcium, necessary to initiate muscle contraction at the molecular level

Satellite trigger point A secondary trigger point activated by a primary trigger point. Satellite trigger points will not respond to treatment without resolution of the primary trigger point

Scoliosis Any lateral curvature of the spine. The most common types are postural, idiopathic, neuromuscular, and congenital

Skin rolling A fascial treatment technique in which the therapist picks up folds of skin and superficial fascia with the fingertips using alternating hands

Stripping, stripping massage Moving pressure, usually along the fiber of a muscle from origin to insertion, using thumb(s), fingertips, the heel of the hand, the knuckles, the elbow, or the forearm

Superficial Nearer to the surface of the body; the opposite of deep (e.g., pectoralis major is superficial to pectoralis minor)

Swedish massage A general term for relaxation massage, derived from the type of massage taught by Per Henrik Ling

Synapse The point of contact of a nerve cell with another nerve cell, a muscle or gland cell, or a sensory receptor cell, across which chemical neurotransmitters move to transmit nerve impulses

Synchondrosis A union between two bones formed either by hyaline cartilage or fibrocartilage

Symphysis A union between two bones formed by fibrocartilage

Tender point Any point on the body that is tender; more specifically, one of a number of specific points posited by the osteopath Ernest Jones as indicating by myofascial lesions treatable by the strain-counterstrain (positional release) technique

Traditional western medicine The anatomically and physiologically based approach to diagnosing and treating disease and injury that predominates health care in Western cultures; also known as allopathic medicine

Transverse tubules Microscopic tubes surrounding and penetrating myofibrils that connect the sarcoplasmic reticulum to the muscle cell membrane

Trigger point A point in muscle or connective tissue that is painful in response to pressure and that refers or radiates pain to some other area of the body. Trigger points in muscle are found in taut bands in the tissue

Ventral A synonym for anterior, usually applied to the torso, from Latin *venter*, belly

Volar Referring to the palm of the hand (or, less often, the sole of the foot), usually used in reference to the anterior forearm