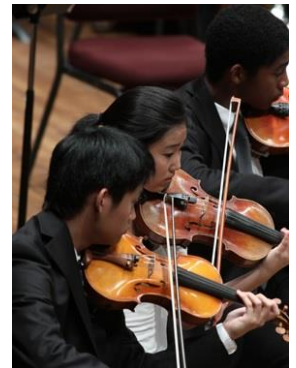


For athletes and musicians, “peak” performance is dependent on subconscious access to finely balanced body control. However, repetition in both posture and movement builds patterns in the body that often interfere with this nuanced and fluid control. This patterning usually is initiated by the muscular and fascial (myofascial) tensions that accumulate over time. Fascia is the connective tissue that surrounds all other structures, from nerves to bones to muscles. In fact, it not only surrounds the muscles, but penetrates and surrounds muscle fibers within a muscle. Stress such as repeated loosening and tightening of specific muscle groups may cause irritation of the muscle, resulting in inflammation. Fascia responds to this inflammation by adhering to underlying structures and to itself, building bands of tension that restrict full motion.

This restricted motion occurs over time, and therefore may only be noted when the restriction causes pain when trying to assess full motion. Recruitment of areas farther from the initial insult occurs to compensate for the loss of motion, which extends the pattern. So for example what for a violinist originally started as a strained muscle in the neck may progress to include the shoulders, left forearm, upper back, and join with the postural twist in the pelvis (from the position in the seat needed for bowing) to form a full body pattern. Treating just the neck then will not be sufficient, as the pattern is sustained by tensions elsewhere.



Likewise, a soccer player needs to be able to accelerate their center of gravity from whichever foot is in contact with the ground forcefully and smoothly, and rely strongly on the motion inherent in their joints. Previous injuries tend to build protective restrictions which limit mobility and also decrease strength. The repetition of linear motion may cause enough microtrauma to significantly tighten a muscle group. “Tight hamstrings” not only affect the mechanics of motion, but become prone to a injury themselves or may be a threat to other areas of the body. A “tight” muscle that through

inflammation has adhered to its surrounding fascia not only is more prone to injury, but may tire more easily through impeded blood flow and the inability to rid itself of lactic acid build up.

By addressing these potentially problematic patterns in the myofascial structures, injuries can be avoided. Indeed, performance may be enhanced by permitting greater access to both fluidity and strength. Greater amounts of concentration and energy become available to be placed more appropriately not only on technique but on the space beyond technique, where anatomy is performing of its own accord.