

THE FASCIAS / CONNECTIVE TISSUES

The fascias are almost found everywhere in your body. Fascias are an uninterrupted, three-dimensional web of tissues that extends from head to toe, from front to back, from interior to exterior. They have several functions:

- Help maintain structural integrity
- Provide support and protection
- Act as a shock absorber
- An essential role in hemodynamic and biochemical processes
- Provide the pathway for cell to communicate with each other
- It is the body's first line of defense against pathogenic agents and infections
- After an injury, it is the fascia that creates an environment for tissue repair

There are three layers of fascia types. Each with its own distinct function and properties.

Superficial Fascia

Superficial fascia is found just underneath the skin. It stores fat and water and acts as a passageway for lymph, nerve and blood vessels. It also acts as a protective padding to cushion and insulate. Superficial fascia is viscoelastic (like a tempur-like pillow). It can stretch to accommodate the deposit of fat from ordinary and pregnancy weight gain. After pregnancy and weight loss, the superficial fascia slowly reverts to its original level of tension.

Deep Fascia

This is the tough fibrous tissue that covers and permeates the muscles, bones, nerves and blood vessels of the body. While it doesn't have blood vessels, it is full of receptors that reports that presence of pain. Deep fascia have the interesting ability to contract. When your body tense up before a fall, it is an example of your deep fascia contracting. When in the case of an emergency, the stiffened fascia helps provide a firmer foundation for your muscles to work against, providing additional strength in such events. However, the contraction process is not yet well understood at this time. Deep fascia is also able to relax and plays a role as a release valve when the internal structures like the tendons are under too much stress. As much other parts of our body, occasionally the fascia doesn't work as well as it should. It remains tight or tense when it should be relaxed.

Visceral Fascia

Visceral fascia is the deepest layer. It basically holds the organs in their cavities.

Reference:

Paoletti, Serge (2006). The Fasciae: Anatomy, Dysfunction & Treatment. Seattle, WA: Eastland Press, 151-161. ISBN 0-939616-53-X