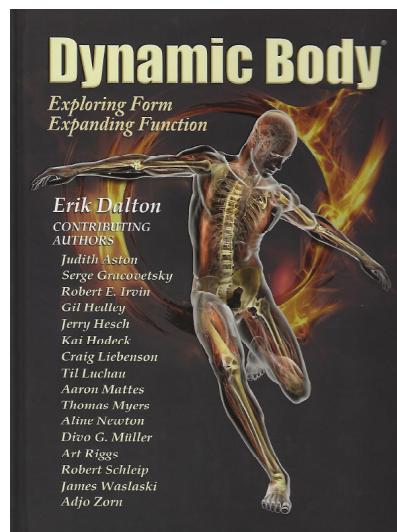


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# Reconsidering "The Fuzz"

## Notes on Distinguishing Normal and Abnormal Fascial Adhesions

Gil Hedley, Ph.D.

### Introduction

In the course of my career as a student and guide to integral anatomy, I have been blessed with the opportunity to dissect many human forms. This affords rare insights into the quality of relationships and continuities of the various tissue textures that compose the human body. My experience with dissection has been invaluable to me in establishing a deeper understanding of normal presentations. Literally, every person is different, and every body presents a unique expression of the embodiment of the human form. We are as unique on the inside as we are on the outside. Having been said, there are patterns of tissue structures, relationships, and textures that are, in large measure, shared by each one of us manifesting around principal themes. Dissection in the lab allows us to differentiate more readily among predominant "normal" presentations of tissue relations, than anomalous presentations, and patho-presentation. Such experience enables us to, for different tissues, an answer to "Is that supposed to be connected

and I could create space between layers manually, whereas others required a scalpel to separate them.

I was continually surprised by the myriad connections and tissues in the body that were poorly described, or – more often – not accounted for at all by the anatomy flash cards and books. Tom Myers had made it clear to my classmates and me during our Rolfing® pre-training, back in 1991, that "the map is not the territory," and he was correct beyond my imaginings. Dissection was teaching me that the map was missing continents! Continuities that spanned regions, vast amounts and different types of fascia, as well as the transitional relationships between one tissue texture and another were in fact "all present," but simply not "accounted for."

*I was continually surprised by the myriad connections and tissues in the body that were poorly described, or – more often – not accounted for at all by the anatomy flash cards and books.*

Now, facing such a problem, one strategy would be simply to cut away all the tissue that isn't in the book, and focus on what's "supposed to be there." That is pretty much the strategy of dissection for medical students, who are not going to waste a lot of their severely over-taxed time fumbling with matters outside the curriculum. Make everything look clean and tidy, carve the book drawings out of the tissue, replicate the regional model of separate parts in the unsuspecting cadaver, and consider the resulting dissection a verification of the curriculum.

Lucky for me, I had no teacher in the lab but the cadaver, and I had no test, schedule, or curriculum to which I was beholden. The way I saw it, as a bodyworker and as a somanaut, I was touching the whole person, so I wanted to account for everything that was there materially.

### Background

Years of my dissection studies, I was an acolyte of structural integration. I believed that I could help them to experience freedom of movement fully. Therefore, it is not surprising that I approached cadavers similarly. I would attempt to use palpation to differentiate the different layers of tissue under the skin, sometimes with success and sometimes not. Some tissues yielded to fingertip pressure,

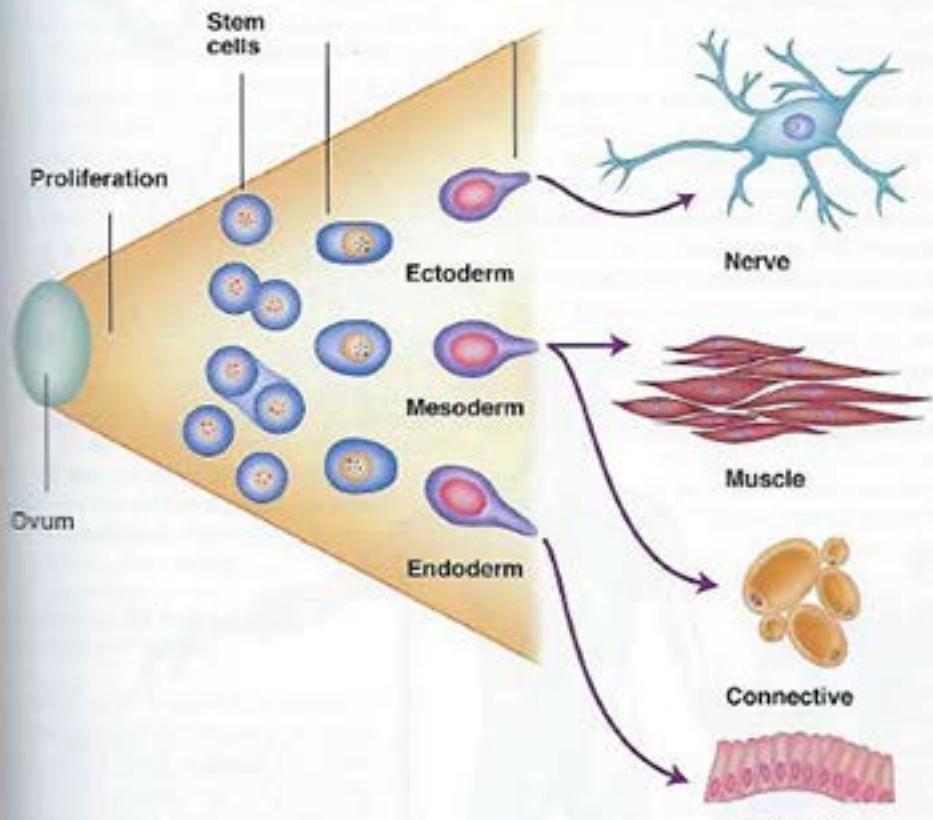
patterns, inflammations, intrusions, and intentional interventions, commonly manifest adhesions of one or another.

Expect to those visceral adhesions, and with respect to any suboptimal inhibition of any tissues at all, surfaces should be able to move relative to each other. There is also the potential for them not to move relative to each other. The trick is to learn enough to know when something is stuck by accident, as opposed to something that belongs attached, which is the normal quality of the relationship, and what "the book" says.

Documenting this is a big project, which I've begun in the form of The Integral Anatomy Series, and which I've been exploring with others in my dissection workshops. I've spent the last 16 years learning how to tell the difference between a healthy relationship and a stuck relationship, and helping others do the same.



Arrows point to span of abnormal adhesion of loop of small intestine (right, flesh tone) to colon (left, green tone).



**Figure 4:** From the generalized ovum, cells proliferate, migrate, and differentiate into functionally specialized tissues.

## The Connective Tissue

system of the connective tissue matrix can be seen as our "organ of form." From the moment of the first division of the ovum, the intercellular matrix of the connective tissue exists as a secreted glycosaminoglycans (mucous) gel that acts to glue the cells together. Around the end of the second week of embryological development, the fibrous version of connective tissue appears, a web of collagen spun by specialized mesodermal cells on either side of the developing notochord (spine). This net is the origin of our "metabolic web" – the singular structure that shapes our body and directs the flow of all our biochemical processes (Fig. 10).

The ability of the connective tissue cells to alter and mix the three elements of the intercellular space – the water, the fibers, and the ground substance gel of glycosaminoglycans – produces on demand the wide spectrum of building materials in the body. Bone, cartilage, tendon, areolar, and adipose tissue are all examples of connective tissue fabric. The connective tissue "organ of form," are composed of various matrices supporting the various types of cells.

### Scientific

view is that this extracellular matrix material is "non-living," but is this in fact an accurate description? The fibrous network of collagen, elastin, and proteoglycans and the hydrophilic gelatinous ground substance are all extracellular. It is all manufactured by the connective tissue cell and then extruded out into the intercellular space, where it may lose all

contact with its original producing cell. The fiber-gel matrix remains, however, an immediate part of the environment of every cell, like cellulose in plants, or the coral's limestone apartment building.



**Figure 10:** A magnification of myofascial tissue shows individual muscle fibers within the cottony mass of the perimysial fascia. Courtesy of Ron Thompson.

Given, however, that the animal (and human) extracellular matrix is so responsive to change – some in passive response to outside forces, some in active cellular response to damage or need – and given that the matrix is a liquid crystal capable of storing and transmitting information, and that it is so intimately married to the lives of our cells, I choose to think of

it as living. It is part of our adaptive response to the needs of practical continuance; it is part of the very fabric of our consciousness. Of course, the point is debatable, but for the rest of this chapter we take a mildly vitalistic stance that includes this extracellular matrix as belonging in and partaking of the field of the living being.

This extracellular matrix, taken as a whole, not only unites the various elements of the body, it unites the many branches of medicine. We leave

***The predominant scientific view is that this extracellular matrix material is "non-living," but is this in fact an accurate description?***

the description of its physiology and biochemistry to others more familiar with it. Here, we concentrate on two aspects of the matrix's spatial configuration: its "double bagging" arrangement and seeing the interplay of its elements in terms of tensegrity geometry.

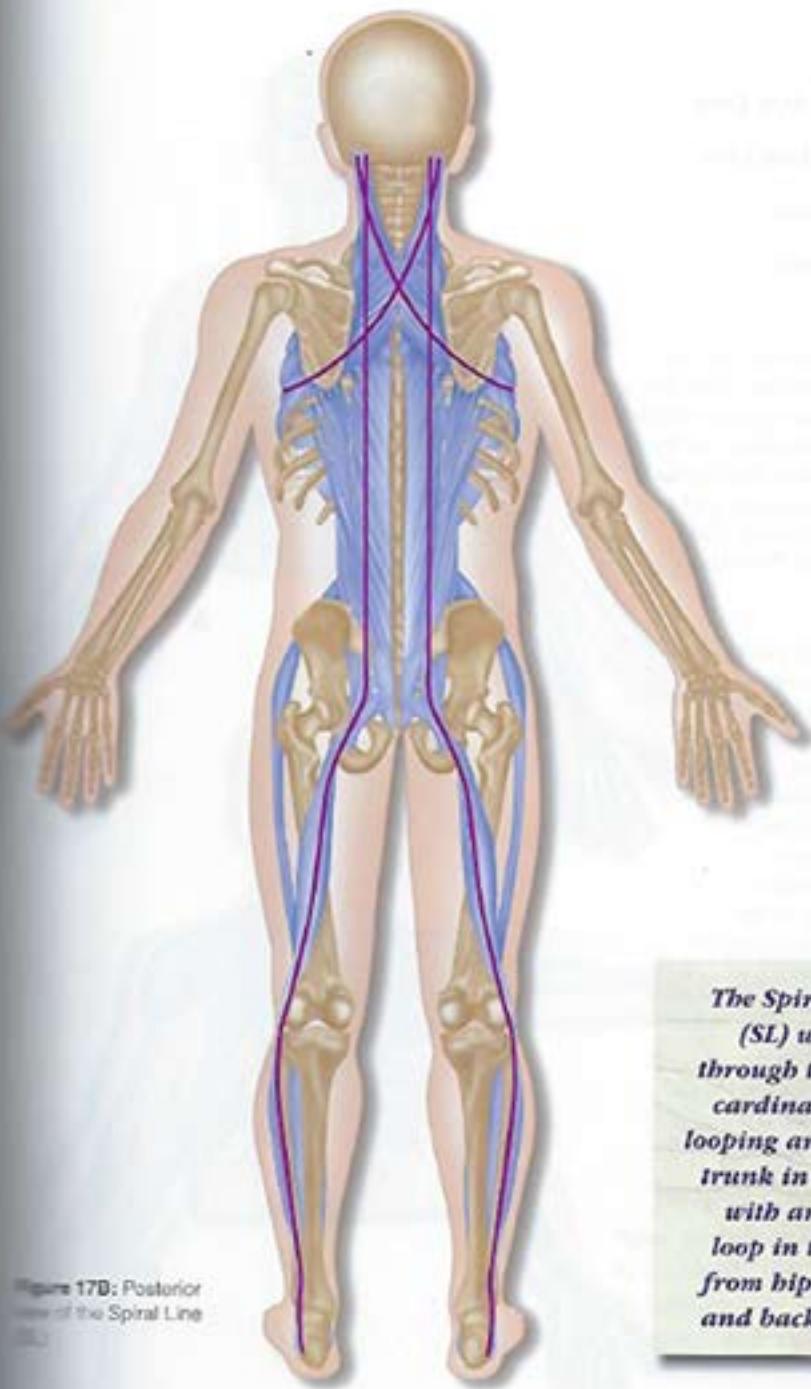


Figure 17B: Posterior view of the Spiral Line

*The Spiral Line (SL) winds through the three cardinal lines, looping around the trunk in a helix, with another loop in the legs from hip to arch and back again.*



# Dynamic Body

## Exploring Form, Expanding Function

How do we develop a treatment approach that doesn't just address the health status of a small part of the body, but encompasses the structural, functional, and cognitive aspects?

**Dynamic Body** makes a bold leap into answering this question with provocative insights from some of the top thought leaders in our profession. The contributors to this book are change agents - imaginative and innovative thinkers. They will push you to see the body in an entirely new light.

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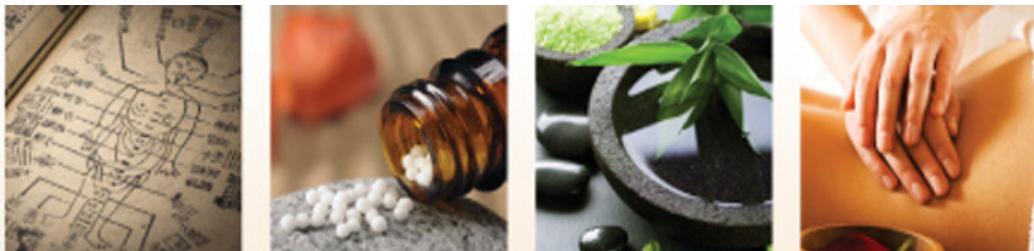


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