

## Soft tissue Release

Myofascial pain is characterized by taut palpable bands known as trigger points. Trigger points can result in either local or referred pain. Studies show that trigger points are a primary cause of pain over 90 percent of the time and the sole cause of such pain as much as 85 percent of the time. Latent (“silent”) trigger points tend to accumulate over a lifetime and appear to be the main cause for the stiff joints and restricted range of motion of old age. These latent trigger points can also overstress muscles, causing shortening, which affects attachments and causes irreversible joint damage. Trigger points are known to cause: headaches, neck and jaw pain, low back pain, symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome, and many kinds of joint pain mistakenly ascribed to arthritis, tendonitis, bursitis or ligament injury. Trigger points cause problems as diverse as: earaches, dizziness, nausea, heartburn, false heart pain, heart arrhythmia, tennis elbow, tinnitus and genital pain. Trigger points can also cause: colic in babies and bed-wetting in older children, and may be a contributing cause of scoliosis. They are a cause of sinus pain and congestion. They may play a part in chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, and lowered resistance to infection. Because trigger points can be responsible for chronic pain and disability, they can also cause depression and anxiety. Causes of myofascial pain syndromes include macro trauma, such as a strain/sprain injury or car accident. They can also include repetitive micro traumas, such as those caused by typing or other repetitive fine motor movements. There are numerous perpetuating factors that also play a role in the development or maintenance of trigger points. These include:

1. Mechanical factors e.g. postural stresses
2. Nutritional deficiency's e.g. B vitamins, C, calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron
3. Dietary factors e.g. simple carbohydrates, dairy, caffeine
4. Metabolic and endocrine imbalance e.g. hypoglycemia, hypothyroid, menopause
5. Psychological factors e.g. depression, anxiety and stress
6. Lack of exercise

Soft tissue release (STR) is a simple and effective therapy yielding long-term results in a short period of time. It is a procedural guide for the examination and treatment of the most common and clinically significant muscles that cause pain and dysfunction.

In STR, local adhesions around myofascial structures are located and then removed, thereby restoring structure and function and eliminating pain.

STR uses muscle testing and palpation to diagnose myofascial dysfunction. Once adhesions are located, they are reduced as follows:

1. A specific contact is made on the muscle
2. Traction is applied to the tissue to trap the lesion
3. The area is moved actively, passively, functionally or provocatively while the tissue is pinned or massaged

As adhesions are broken up local nerve supply, circulation and lymphatic flow are enhanced effecting range of motion and strength and restoring normal function.

The average number of treatments is 6-10, over a period of 3-6 weeks. Results are enhanced when used with other techniques, such as “dry needling”, chiropractic, nutrition/diet therapy and home exercises.