The Fascia & Fibromyalgia Connection Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Introduction and Guest Welcome

Hi. Welcome. I'm doctor Roger Murphree, and I am the host of the Freedom from Fibromyalgia Summit. And welcome. I'm so glad you're joining us today. I have Deanna Hanson here and she's going to be talking about myofascial release.

Actually, it's much more than that. But we're going to be talking about, a topic that I'm fairly familiar with, although, she's taking it to a whole nother level.

And for those of you in the, you know, the fibromyalgia community, you know that oftentimes you can't handle massage, because it's too painful. So Deanna's going to share with you, the benefits of what she what she does, what she what she's, created and how you can if you get to the right practitioner, you can be able to, to, benefit from this therapy.

So let me tell you a little bit about her. Deanna Hanson is a certified athletic therapist and the founder of fluid Isometrics and Block Therapy. And we're going to be talking about one of my favorite subjects, obviously, fibromyalgia, but also about fascia.

It's going to be fascinating. Thanks so much for for being on here. This is going to be a great conversation. Thank you so much, Doctor Murphy. It's such a pleasure to be able to share with your community.

Hey, you know, before we got on here, I was telling you a little bit about, my journey with with some of this body work. And years ago, when I was, had a very large medical practice and one of the medical doctors that worked there really got into myofascial release.

She had a performance syndrome, and it was just it was agonizing for her to drive every day, to, to the clinic. And she found out my fast release got me all interested in it.

And I started sharing it with my fibro patients. And then I actually took the training with the originator of the My Fast release. And, I have a chapter in my book all about my last release.

But it's a, it's a little bit dated compared to what you're doing.

What Fascia Is and Why It Matters

So, so first of all, what is what is fascia? Let's talk about fashion. What's fascia. So the way I see fascia is it's literally the surface cell membrane of every cell connected to every other cell.

So the fascia becomes this matrix, this communication system that provides us not only stability but mobility. And the real goal is that we keep every one of our trillions of cells in its correct alignment.

Because if we do that, then we have optimal space within and around the cell for ease of flow of nutrients into the cell and waste away from the cell.

So the fascia system is really here to support the cell in order that we can ensure flow is optimal. And really, if flow is profoundly simple, there's there's nothing in the body that creates congestion or even aging.

It's the adhesions that develop through the layers of fashion over time, from compression, from gravity, as well as unconscious living being dominant on one side, using the body inappropriately, not consciously breathing that ultimately causes us to fall into that internal space, and the cells begin to migrate away from their rightful position.

The further they get, the more the fascia will grip and adhere to everything in its path to try to create stability, stopping us from tipping over. And as much as it does that, unfortunately, it also limits mobility as well as flow within the body.

So I use this example kind of a visual, which is not a great one, but it's one that I use that the fascists like Saran wrap and it wraps around every organ, every tissue, every every bone in the body.

It's it's, you know, if you were to take everything away but the fascia, you'd still see, you know, the, the, figure of a person there. And that fascia can become dysregulated.

Can if you take if you take the, this this, Saran wrap and you start to just tighten it up, kind of like you would a rubber band, and you get all these buckles and places where you're blocked, and that's oftentimes where you're starting to get the trigger points and the pain points.

And this but, but also be part of that as you see that your metabolism, your energy just tanks because of that. Right. So so the visual for me is this Saran wrap that wraps around everything in your body, and you can't separate any, you know, your body from this fascia, and the state of your fascia really dictates the state of your health.

I had recently done, about a year ago or less than that, an interview with Gill Headley, an anatomist, and years ago back, and I think it was 2007, he put out a video called The Fuzzy Speech, which was really helpful when I was initially teaching my therapist because he works on cadavers, but he really dove in through the dagger into the fascia system and really showed the the fuzz being the adhesions that develop between the layers of fascia as well as scar tissue, and how that can negatively impact the body.

So, a number of months ago, we did a discussion with him, which was fascinating because of course, he has progressed in his understanding of the fascia along the way.

And he started talking about the fact as he continues to explore deeper and deeper, it's like this infinite tissue. And he started to talk about the Perry fascia.

And as soon as he said that, I said, that's what block Therapy addresses, because even inside the bone, every single cell, whether bone, organ, brain, skin, whatever it is, all is innervated by fascia.

So we are literally interconnected. And even though there's different layers of thicker fibrous fascia surrounding thing, there's also an innovation of fascia in every single tissue in the body.

So you you mentioned that, the compression of the fascia is one of the triggers of fibromyalgia. Can. Yes. You know, I think it's you know, I don't know what came from the chicken or the egg.

And everyone's got a different, take on what is the cause of fibromyalgia. There's all kind of different triggers, but but definitely I would agree with you.

I mean, that's a big part of it. And that can come on from trauma, scar tissue or past surgery. There's all kind of things that can create that. But can you go into a little more detail about that compression and how it affects you?

Someone with fibromyalgia. Absolutely. So there's three pillars to this system. Basically. The first one is creating space. So if we have every cell perfectly aligned, we have optimal space within the body over time, under the forces of gravity and incorrect posture and breathing, we literally wind down over time, which decreases our internal space.

We basically get shorter and wider as we age. So this compression is creating a lack of flow within the tissues. So what we do with our work with faster decompression is we use a tool called the Block Buddy or the block baby.

Now we also can use a rolled up towel which makes it really simple to try this work. But essentially what we're doing is we're wanting to melt through those adhesions all the way to the bone, and we use either bamboo or wood

as the medium, because we want to have something that is similar in density to bone, so that as we're going through those layers, we're connecting to the root of the issue.

Compression, Breathing, and Posture

And actually it was John Barnes when I first read that the fascia will grip and adhere with the force of up to 2,000 pounds per square inch. So to consider that internal force in the body is it's pretty interesting to even imagine because we don't feel it.

It's constant. So we're not even aware that it's there. So through the process of lying on the tool combined with the second pillar, which is proper, diaphragmatic breathing, this is really where the magic happens.

I'm just going to bring my computer down so you can see for a moment. So the diaphragm is a plate of muscle. When we inhale it moves down. When we inhale exhale it comes up.

If it's working properly it's creating a continual massage to the organs in this area. It is also the foundation for everything above. So if it's nice and strong everything above is supported properly.

If we're not conscious breathers, we ultimately fall in and collapse. So now we have the weight of everything moving into the core space, displacing the tissue, displacing the organs, and dramatically affecting the amount of oxygen that we're pulling into the body.

In fact, I read from Stephen Cope Yoga in The Quest for the True Self that we can feed the body up to six times the oxygen when breathing diagrammatically and whenever I say this, I often get people saying, well, it's not like I can pull six times the air into my lungs.

It's where we're directing the air, because at the base of the lungs is where the majority of the alveoli reside, the oxygen receptor site. So if we're breathing shallow through the muscles of the upper chest, which is typical these days, we're not bringing that air deeply enough for optimal absorption.

We're also not exhaling from that deep space to properly detoxify the body. And in fact, in 2014, they did a study proving that 84% of weight loss comes through proper exhalation.

There's a really interesting Ted talk on this. So to be able to access proper diaphragmatic breathing is really the key. And my view, and I think so many people's understanding of what we need to be healthy, lifelong, the challenges pain, fear and stress caused us to reactively hold the breath.

So if you see an animal that survives an attack afterward, they'll shake. They'll release all of this energy, this adrenaline, this energy that came in through fear.

We as humans, we tend to freeze. We tend to hold that, hold that state in our breath, and then we're forced to breathe through the muscles of the upper chest because we're still going to breathe.

Our bodies built to survive, but only when we're properly breathing diaphragmatic can we thrive. So as soon as we start locking away that breath, we diminish the oxygen.

Of course, every single cell in the body, first and foremost, requires oxygen to do its job well. I like to give the example. If you took a balloon and you blow it up fully, it's round.

It glows. It almost defies gravity. Take half the air out of the balloon. It's wrinkly. It attracts dust, it becomes heavy, and then it becomes an anchor for gravity to grip and manipulate us.

So as we go through life in this very stressful world that we tend to live in, if we're not trained in proper diaphragmatic breathing, that really becomes, in my opinion, the stepping stone to aging in a way that can create disease and all of the things that can afflict us negatively.

And then the third pillar is understanding proper postural foundations. How can we prevent the body from collapsing into this internal space? And it's I mean, we're a world built on exercise, but it's really understanding what areas of the body we should be focused on for strengthening the tongue muscle is even one of the three main foundations that we teach people to strengthen, because it, in part, is also designed to help support the weight of the head, which we're not trained for, that we're we're taught, you know, you chew and you talk, and that's kind of the function of the tongue.

But if we don't work it properly, then as the ribcage gets pulled forward, now the head gets pulled forward, that will strangle everything in this area.

The thyroid, major lymphatic drainage sites, carotid arteries, which affects how we sleep, the ability for the brain to function. Well, it will it affects everything.

So those are the three pillars that really make up the system. And together they can very effectively release the pattern of Sasha that we're currently in and rebuild the body back in correct alignment.

So, in my training as a chiropractor for a number of years, very focused on posture. And it was, based on, what's called chiro chiropractor biophysics, where you look at someone's posture.

And from that posture you can tell kind of where their trouble spots are. And that really a lot of that had to do with the fascia. Didn't understand that 30 years ago.

But, you know, 20 years ago now learning about the fascia and all kind of came together. But, you know, you got people that are walking around your head weighs 8 to 10 pounds. So it's like a bowling ball.

And if you've got, if you've lost the curve in your neck and you've got your head out like this, you know, people with poor posture, it's like taking a bowling ball.

And if you got an 8 pound bowling ball, you can walk around the bowling alley, you know, a big game, maybe put two hands. You know, if you're a petite person, but if you take that same 8 pounds and you put it out here and you do that for maybe five minutes or so, I mean, everything just starts to shake and everything becomes stressed out.

It's the same thing, kind of what what you're talking about, right? You put the changes in the posture, create these troubling patterns of stress that then show up as muscle pain and joint pain and, cellular dysfunction.

It affects the mitochondria, even. Yes. And when we're looking at the body, we look at the cause sites for the pain and the issues and what I've observed over time, the calves and the feet, the forearms and the hands and the top of the head, they're the furthest from the engine.

So because fascia will grip and adhere to bone magnetically sealing us, these are the real areas of the body that we need to address. Because even for people with, say, scoliosis, I deal a lot with this.

We think it's a function of the spine. You can do all the work in a specific area of issue. Then you start walking and you're going to have one foot that's acting more like a flat tire, so the body's going to get drawn away.

And if we're right handed, often it's the left side. But that's just a general rule. And then the way that the body is designed to stay upright, we naturally will anchor the other side to stop us from tipping over.

So if this is my feet and this is my hip joints, we have one foot pulling away and then the other foot anchoring. So then we have this congestion and confusion in the pelvis, which also takes away the proper amount of space in the core for the breath, because it's now pulling and twisting the body.

Trauma, Pain, and Nervous System Patterns

So as muscles get involved, so everything is connected, but without releasing the limbs and bringing activity and

awareness into these spaces of the body, then we're going to be just managing issues or symptoms, as opposed to really getting to the root of the problem and creating a full on healing for people.

So, you know, Jonny Whitten and doctor witness on here and he and he tell us all about posture and how it affects us mainly for focus on pain and the vagus nerve and some of the other things that we talk about.

But it is just not a stretch to think about if you've got a, you know, scoliosis that's incredibly uncomfortable, but maybe you have scoliosis, but this is how you are all day.

Maybe it's your posture, you know, at work, or maybe it's just you've kind of gotten old and crumpled, you know, from injury or whatever. So posture definitely affects the fascia over a period of time.

What are some of the other things that create a problem with the fascia trauma? I mean, trauma is a big one, right? Yes. So, you know, help folks understand what are some of the things that compromise the fascia that we have?

I think one of the biggest things that is, is a little bit of a confusion for people is exercise, because it's all about keeping internal space. So if you think of the majority of sports tennis, volley I was a provincial volleyball player the number of times I wound up and I rotated and twisted over to one direction, that created a pattern in my body.

Tennis, you know, you're you're overusing one side. So we have a very much asymmetry happening in the body doing weights in the gym. This is probably one of the most negatively impactful things I can see on the fascia.

If it's done incorrectly, there's a there's a very healthy way to do resistance for the body to gain strength. And there's also a very unhealthy way. And most people don't recognize that just to go to the gym and to start pumping your body, if you're already ready out of alignment, what you're really doing is strengthening yourself further out of alignment.

And we don't want density in the tissue because density means lack of flow. So when we can create integration as opposed to let's build and build and make those cells that are accessible to the energy as big as possible.

Rather than that, let's integrate all of the cells into our strength, feed them properly with oxygen so that the ATP is triggered and that that battery keeps going.

Then we have a very different body compared to to one that is forcing. So this process is about persuasion versus force. I was the person and as an athletic therapist in my 20s, I'm now 53.

At the time I was 50 pounds overweight and I was running, doing typo dieting, weights, exercise, you name it, I was doing it and I was getting bigger.

And then when I started the practice of yoga, the first thing that our instructor said was every 30s reminding us to breathe. Every single time. I was like, wow, I'm not breathing any time she's telling me so that was about 20, 23, 24 years ago.

And I started to recognize, no wonder things aren't moving because I'm literally frozen inside my body. And it was when I was having an anxiety attack at the age of 30, 23 years ago, when I suddenly recognized that, okay, like this anxiety attack was truly the seed of everything to come.

In that moment, I thought I was going to die because I couldn't get my breath. I dove my hand into my abdomen, encountered pain, let out a gasp of breath, knew I was going to live another day.

But then I started exploring in that tissue and it brought a huge amount of calm to me. Then I woke up the next day a little tender, but really excited to get back home and work again after the second day of working in there, my belly was flatter than it had looked in years, so this became my process.

Every day I would come home after working on my patients, I would work on my own body. Within two weeks, my

chronic back pain was going away and so on and so on.

So what I've recognized over time is that I always said I have anxiety, but what the reality was, was I was asking my cells to work really hard on my behalf, but I was starving them.

I wasn't giving them what they needed to do their job for me, so they were simply giving me a signal. They were giving me information. And that's the same as pain.

Pain is I like to use the analogy. It's like the baby crying. It's not something we should be masking or moving away from, but something instead we should be moving into in the right way.

And what's really lovely is the pressure. Fibers in the body are larger than the pain fibers, so when you connect into the fascia in a nice, slow, controlled manner with the breath, suddenly that acute pain, it suddenly changes in sensation.

And most people refer to it as a good pain. And it comes with gifts of healing. Because as you melt through those adhesions, now you spark blood and oxygen flow into tissue previously blocked, and now those cells become integrated into use for your for your life.

Now talk about trauma. So you know, trauma can mean different things and the physical trauma of the emotional trauma. But trauma plays a big role in you know, you store that trauma memory in the fashion, these different cells and it affects the fascia.

Can you talk a little bit about that? Because it's a common unfortunate is a very common denominator for, for fibromyalgia is the past trauma. Unfortunately, many, many, my patients had a very difficult childhood.

You know, but it could have been, you know, could have been a, an accident later on. I mean, it could be a surgery. There's all kinds of things that can create trauma, but, that's something that I really associate, a dysfunctional fascia with some type of trauma, and, and we've got speakers that talk about, trauma and the role that it plays in poor health, but can you connect the dots for us for there?

Yes. We actually just finished our 90 day trauma program in our membership, which was fascinating. It was it really was an incredible journey for me to be part of the community going through this.

So again, it's because pain, fear and stress caused us to reactively hold the breath. So whether I was ten years old, 20 years old, whatever age I was, if I didn't release the trauma in the moment.

So let's say I witnessed something horrendous right in front of my eyes. I'm going to pull away. I'm like, oh my gosh, I don't want to see that. Now. If I don't release that, this is where I, I am.

And now if that doesn't release, I'm going to have to be breathing up here. And now I'm aging from this alignment. And not only is it going to block blood flow to the cells that the diaphragm isn't now feeding, it's also connecting us to our brain.

So the way I see it is, the heart is designed to pump oxygen to every single cell in the body, and then every single cell in turn communicates with the brain every single moment, giving us information.

If we have every one of our trillions of cells communicating, then we're living in the moment. Our brain pattern is in a relaxed brain pattern and we can respond to each moment as a unique moment.

So when we develop adhesions throughout the body and our breath is locked, we're only supplying whatever percentage of cells we're able to supply. So let's say it's 20% of the cells in our body that's really only receiving that that circulation.

Those cells are going to be communicating with the brain in every moment. And it was years ago when I was

walking through a mall and I had started my practice of yoga, and we were having to do all of these, self-discovery type exercises.

So I'm walking through the mall and I'm in a really good mood, and this gentleman walks by me and we lock eyes. He scowls, and immediately I go into this mode because it reminded me of how my father would look at me when he was disappointed.

But because I was in this teacher training for yoga, going through this process, I thought, wait a second, that was that could have been pure coincidence.

Perhaps we happened to lock eyes when he got a shot of pain in his knee, scowled, and I made it about me. And why would it even be about me? I don't know this person so suddenly I recognize that that's the habits that we go into when we have some kind of a memory or a recognition.

But when your body is fully open, instead of me getting pulled into that which could have led me on a tangent for the rest of the day, I was able to say, no, no, that's that's not about me.

Why Block Therapy Differs from Massage

I'm going to exhale that energy out of my body and I'm going to reset. The thing with trauma is people haven't reset. So now they're going through that process from again, whatever time it started.

And they're accumulating more and more and more of that same energy into their bodies because we're magnetic. So if we're storing guilt, that's the energy we're putting out into the world and are going to be attracting more of it.

So we're going to continue to attract those similar scenarios, which is going to replay that trauma over and over again and actually grow in time. So when we can literally reboot the system by unlocking those fascia patterns and pumping fresh life into that space, we can let go of the physical, the emotional, the mental and the spiritual that all become connected inside the cells. So.

So people hear myofascial release, and I assume they've heard that oftentimes they associate going to massage therapists and they just do massage therapy.

I always encourage people to, to seek out a John Barnes certified practitioner because it's totally different than going to somebody says, oh, I do my first release, and then they do a deep tissue massage.

No different really than, you know, and and with fibro, because they have such a low pain threshold as, you know, they don't tolerate massage unless it is done a certain way.

And then it can be incredibly helpful. But long stroke strokes where you're working on the fascia, there's not you know, a lot of people say, oh, you know, it hurts so good, but then they're miserable for 3 or 4 days.

What is different? Why could somebody with fibromyalgia, go through your, your therapy as opposed to going to someone that does, you know, deep tissue massage?

There's a number of things actually that are important to understand with this. And the first one is we put the person in control of their own body. So this is a self care process.

So I'm not going to go and do something to you. I'm going to teach you how to work in your own body and how to understand the limits of what's good and what's bad.

And this journey, we do it lying down so you can be on a floor, you can be in a bed. We can even do it on a chair. And everything is very slow and gradual, so there's nothing forceful.

I like to use the example. If somebody is riding on the ocean in a boat, you're going on top of the ocean. We deep

sea dive, but we deep sea dive in a very slow and progressive way.

So we're not moving on the surface. We put the block in whatever position we're doing, and we connect with the breath. And the rule is your breath is your guide.

As long as you're breathing in a relaxed way, you are feeding and healing the tissue. If your breath becomes compromised because it's too painful, that's your body saying, okay, too much, let's back off.

And then we provide you with different options and variations and how to address the area so that you can do it with that relaxed breath. When we connect with that proper diaphragmatic breath, it brings us into the parasympathetic state.

So we're relaxed. It's very meditative. And again it's very slow and controlled. There's nothing forceful or aggressive. And so we have a number of people in our community who have fibromyalgia and they use this.

And we're seeing incredible results with them. Yeah. And anything you can do to to balance the sympathetic and the parasympathetic is, you know, with the fibromyalgia, we've talked about this on some of these interviews, but the sympathetic is the stimulating part of your nervous system.

And in fibromyalgia it's on hyper alert. It's vigilant. It's picking up every sensation, every thing that's going on, and it's overreacting to everything.

And so you have this thing where you're wired and tired, you feel all this internal tension and stress, and sometimes, you're irritable and anxious and you don't know what to do with it.

But at the same time, you get all this nervous energy and you're just totally exhausted. And that's because you're your calming part of your nervous system is dormant.

It's just it's not doing anything. So some of the techniques with the with the working with the fascia and the, the breathing techniques and then focusing on the vagus nerve can really have dramatic, impact on somebody that, that has fibromyalgia just changing this overreactive.

Response that they have. There's so many things that you and I wouldn't even think anything about. And initially, our very first, class that we always teach people to do is to connect into their core and their rib cage so that we can teach them how to activate that breath.

And it was in Eckhart Tolles book, where he mentioned that breathing diagrammatically connects us to the relaxed brain pattern. And if we're breathing through the muscles of the upper chest, we're connected to a fear pattern, thinking of thoughts of past and future.

So to be able to bring that breath into the moment immediately, really turns on that healing potential inside of each of us as an individual. And then we teach people how to become a healing machine, as opposed to a scared body that is looking outward for the answers.

This really teaches you how to connect to your cells, and how to learn to listen to the language of the cell, which is fascinating. If it was in Greg Braden's book, The God Code, where he shared and he goes into the detail of of how all this is, but he shared that on the surface membrane or, sorry, the surface layer of every cell membrane is the message God lives within.

So to be able to connect to those cells and again, maybe we're only connecting to 10 or 20% because of the adhesions that are blocking flow in the body.

I mean, they say that we're only using 10% of our brain. I actually think most people are only feeding the brain 10% oxygen because once we start really melting those adhesions and working this pump that is, that we're born to use, we literally become almost a physiologically different animal.

Everything about everything inside our body changes when we turn that breath on. Okay. Now your your therapy is a hands on therapy, so it's actually a self-care, but you can do it at home.

I mean, you're. Yes. Yes. Okay. What are a few things that people could do today and we're going to give them, you know, your website and they can, check out more about your what your program and, what are some of the things they could do today, either with their breathing or with their posture?

Home Practice and Closing Remarks

That would make a difference that they can notice within a, you know, maybe a few days of starting this new habit. Well, we actually have a free gift that we, are going to offer everybody that would like it.

It's nine classes where we teach you how to use a rolled up towel so that you can start this process and really understand how to engage proper diaphragmatic breathing, even for people who lie on their back.

Some people really struggle even when given the instruction to breathe through their belly, because it's literally locked away. Some people don't even really know how to access that.

So through this process, we teach people how to get into the space, how to find that muscle and how to start working it. And then by releasing the rib cage initially right away, we become a lot lighter and it becomes a lot easier to breathe.

So we can start right away simply by using a rolled up towel and following this instruction. And, people are having amazing gains just from doing this.

Deanna, what's the website that people should go to to learn more about this block therapy.com block therapy. Easy. That's an easy one. Great. Hey listen, this has been interesting.

I really enjoyed spending some time with you, and, I want to you did mention your book, and I don't know if I have this up or not, but I'm going to hold this, and I'll be all candid with you.

My intentions were good, but my my time is so crazy right now. I only got through, about the half of it, but. But when I read, I thought, wow, she's really taken John's Barnes work to another level.

And the fact that someone can take this information and do it at home is, I mean, that's unbelievable. I mean, it's just a fantastic, fantastic thing that you don't have to go anywhere.

You know, you can do this at your at your leisure, at your home. It's great. Yes. Thank you. Thank you so much. And again, the tell me the tell me the website one more time is block therapy.com. Block therapy.com. Great.

Thank you so much Dan. Enjoyed it. Thank you so much. So it's been a pleasure.