

# Why do they keep coming back?

The persistent nature of chronic muscle stiffness and how the Functional Muscle Manipulation overcomes it.



## **Contracted muscles or 'tight knots'.**

Some of our muscles -mostly next to the spine- stay contracted for years and occasionally hurt. Even when they don't, they restrict our movement, block the blood and nerve flow to our arms or legs, even lower the function of our internal organs.

They affect our posture, they move our joints out of place, they lower our ability to do sports, to breath deeply and to relax, and they constantly drain our energy by staying contracted.

## **Great therapies, no lasting results.**

There are some good massage techniques out there, great chiropractors, movement therapists, acupuncturists that help a lot.

They soften up those muscles, adjust your joints back into place, but then your muscles contract and pull them back out. In a matter of days, or months in best cases, the stiffness comes back and the symptoms return.

*So, why do they keep coming back?*

## **The problem is not in the muscles.**

We have an amazing self-healing capacity. The longest living cells in our bodies die off and get replaced by new ones every 5 years. Why then, do the new muscle fibers take on the same tightness as soon as they take over? Because something more central is instructing them to.

Do you consciously command those muscles of your neck to stay tight? No.

Can you notice when this involuntary tightening gets worse? Yes.

When you get more stressed. Right?

So, what part of you makes you stiffen up when you get stressed?

The answer is: the part that takes control when we perceive something as a threat, even if we don't consciously realize it or control our reaction.

It's called the 'sympathetic nervous system'.

## It goes waaaaay back.

Human babies suffer. Contrary to other animals, our babies almost always have an immensely traumatic experience during the typical medicated childbirth. Then, right away, they get taken away from their mother, when the only thing they need is to bond with her.

*Babies cry because they hurt. Not because 'it's normal'.*



They contract because they feel threatened and because they suffer. So, our tendency to tighten up starts right at 'hello'.

Then, as parents, we cannot connect to them at the deep emotional level they need.

The baby's sympathetic nervous system, after repetitive emotional stress, chronically contracts a set of muscles in a pattern that will accompany us for the rest of our life.

Our culture justifies it as 'necessary toughening up'. But this becomes the basis of a lot of our problems.

### **"I'll just never let go again".**

We keep areas of our body constantly contracted, and then we tighten up those same muscles even more when something triggers our subconscious defensive reaction.

Like an annoying phone call. Or being stuck in traffic. Or just staying focused on work, while we're stressed that we may not do it right.

It's not work that makes your body hurt.

It's working under emotional/nervous pressure, while already contracted for years.

This chronic contraction has another side-effect: We lose sense of the state of those muscles. We don't realize that we keep them tight, and we definitely don't know how to release them. The ability to sense the state of our muscles is what we call mindfulness, or, scientifically, proprioception.

### **Restoration and long-term healing.**

Back in 1989 I created a technique to address this chronic armoring and lack of proprioception.

I called it Functional Muscle Manipulation.

It is based on the deep tissue massage, but it almost doesn't hurt. We use a specific breathing to help, we resolve the chronic sympathetic contraction and we build up on your proprioception, so that you gradually become able to actively release during therapy. As therapy progresses you become able to feel what your body is doing when you get stressed and to know how to release when it happens.

*This allows for long-term healing to take place, as 27 years of practice of FMM have shown.*

During the years, some of my most extreme cases -scheduled for disk surgery and unable to walk- avoided surgery, became free of symptoms and remained so for a decade or more.

I taught the technique to therapists in Europe and plan to spread it in the US.

You can currently find me in the Longfellow neighborhood of S. Minneapolis.



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