

The Fascial Manipulation® method by Luigi Stecco

Fascial Manipulation® is a manual therapy that



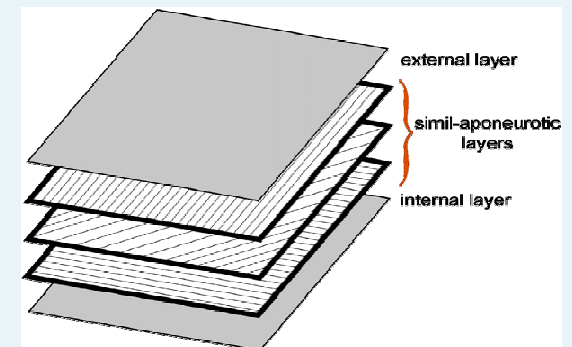
has been developed by Luigi Stecco, an Italian physiotherapist from the north of Italy, over the last 40 years. Focusing on fascia, in particular the deep muscular fascia, it considers the myofascial system as a three-dimensional continuum.

This method presents a complete biomechanical model that assists in deciphering the role of fascia in musculoskeletal disorders. In recent years, Carla Stecco MD and Antonio Stecco MD have carried out extensive research into the anatomy and histology of the fascia via dissection of unembalmed cadavers in Italy and France. These dissections have provided new histological and anatomical data including the existence of myotendinous expansions between segments, the multi-layer structure of deep fascia and the abundant innervation of this tissue by mechanoreceptors and free nerve endings.

The mainstay of the manual method developed by L. Stecco lies in the identification of specific, localised areas of the fascia in connection with specific limited movements. Once a limited or painful movement is identified, then a specific point on the fascia is implicated and, through the appropriate manipulation of this precise part of the fascia, movement can be restored. Through analyses of musculoskeletal anatomy Luigi Stecco realised that the body



could be divided into 14 segments, with movement of each segment being governed by six myofascial units (mf units). A mf unit consists of monoarticular and biarticular unidirectional muscle fibres, their deep fascia and the joint they move in one direction on one plane. Myofascial vectors within each mf unit converge at a specific point, named the Centre of Coordination (CC). Adjacent



unidirectional myofascial units are united via myotendinous expansions and biarticular fibres to form myofascial sequences. 6 CCs per segment coordinate movements on the three spatial planes, however, the complexity of physical activity in human beings requires coordination of an infinite variability. In order to synchronise complex movements, other specific points of the fascia named Centres of Fusion (CF) have also been identified. CFs are mostly located over retinacula.

Given its innervation and its multilayer structure, deep fascia is effectively an ideal structure for perceiving and, therefore assisting in organizing movements. Whenever a body part moves in any given direction in space there is a myofascial, tensional re-arrangement within the corresponding fascia. Afferents embedded within the fascia are stimulated, producing accurate directional or spatial information. Any impediment in the gliding of the fascia could alter afferent input resulting in incoherent movement. It is hypothesised that fascia is involved in proprioception and peripheral motor control in strict collaboration with the Central Nervous System.