

## ⑥ Things You Need to Know About

# Crossfiber Muscle Therapy

by Victoria Ross

I had always been drawn to the field of bodywork—but when a close friend of mine became critically ill with a collagen disorder, it kick-started me into a world of bodywork that was beyond my expectations. When we apply our hands to the body of another person and sense into what we are feeling, intuition can take over and lead our fingers in the direction that the person's body needs us to go. From the moment I applied my fingertips to the distorted body tissues of my dying friend, they knew what to do, even though I was not yet a practicing massage therapist. After three months of working on her with this unusual across-the-muscle-fiber approach, her health was restored and she went on to lead a productive life.

This discovery—of the rehabilitative effects of applying muscle therapy across the fibers of the muscles—moved the two of us to become torchbearers in the field of cross-fiber muscle therapy. Together we established a working clinic and two schools from which hundreds of cross-fiber practitioners emerged and went on to serve the public.

The entire field of work that eventually came out of that initial discovery came to be named and registered as Crossfiber Corrective Muscle Therapy®, with the word Crossfiber used for short. The term corrective indicates the *intent* to correct muscle damage, not a *claim* to do so.

This article describes some of the results you can expect with Crossfiber, including pain relief, improved range of motion, relief from various muscular conditions, improved chiropractic and physical therapy results, and acceleration of injury repair.



COURTESY OF VICTORIA ROSS

## What you need to know:

### 1 This is how and why this across-the-fiber method has such a corrective effect on the body tissues:

When our therapeutic fingers discover fibers that feel clumped together and wadded up, we know something has gummed up the works. Those fibers should run parallel to one another and should be gliding freely against one another.

For healthy, independent function to be restored to the muscle, those fibers need to get un-stuck and realigned. By positioning our fingers we are able to restore the parallel alignment of the fibers together with their independent movement and healthy function. Separating the fibers will automatically be accompanied by a series of improvements necessary for optimal functioning of that muscle.

### 2 This is what keeps these fibers separate, or non-adherent, and healthy under normal circumstances:

The body fluid that bathes all cells creates a moist environment that lubricates fibers, muscles and fascia, so that these body structures may slide alongside each other without getting stuck to one another. This fluid also provides the liquid medium necessary for cellular exchange of nutrients and wastes by osmosis on the cellular level.

Any cell in the body that is cut off from its intended blood supply cannot remain self-maintaining. Any muscle that is cut off from fresh, oxygenated blood isn't

getting the ingredient—oxygen—needed to fire a muscle contraction. In that condition the muscles are being carried around *by* the body instead of doing their job of *carrying* the body. It is our job to discover this condition and restore a healthy environment to such structures.

### 3 This is how separation of muscle fibers is accompanied by the restoration of health and optimal function to a muscle:

Because the vascular function of the body brings nutrients and oxygen to the cell and removes wastes from the cell, once the normal separation of fibers becomes restored and necessary fluids enter in and between the fibers, the ingredients needed to service the muscle can reach their intended destination in the individual muscle cell.

Muscle cells in a dried-out or glued-together condition

## Once the normal separation of fibers becomes restored, needed ingredients can reach their intended destination in the individual muscle cell.

are stranded, isolated from their maintenance crew. When cellular moisture is restored, the stranded cells are reachable again and osmosis can occur. The formerly dry, stuck muscle can now breathe, allowing health and optimal function to be restored.



## Learning how to release adherent factors in any of the 640 muscles in the human body helps you to intimately befriend each muscle.

### 4 This is what the fingertips are doing to allow these muscle fibers to be restored to their healthy state:

Understanding the concept of softening the glue-like matrix is key to perceiving how and why Crossfiber is corrective. If the fluid matrix bathing all cells becomes viscous, gummy, sticky and glue-like, then instead of lubricating and separating the cells, it acts as a bonding agent. This gluing creates adherent factors between muscle fibers, between muscle bundles and muscle groups, between muscle and bone, and between fascia and anything.

Melting that glue back down to a fluid state is basic to releasing adherent factors with Crossfiber. (Visualize melting and re-liquifying Jell-O by addressing it with your fingertips.) Once you have addressed the muscle with fingertips positioned across the fibers and you have held the position long enough for the glue to begin to melt, portions of fiber can then be gradually worked

loose with the fingertips. Patience is required to achieve this, but since this is where the correction takes place, it is worth the wait.

### 5 This is the effect that releasing the adherent factors has on the conditions that the client is experiencing:

Adherent factors within and between muscles are responsible for restricted range of motion, structural imbalances, chiropractic adjustments that fail to hold, entrapment of nerves or blood vessels, muscle spasms and pain, and soft tissue pain anywhere in the body. Releasing the adherent factors gives the body a chance to correct these conditions.

For example, when adherent factors are present in the carpal tunnel area, the median nerve can become compressed, trapped and quite painful. Releasing the adherent factors in the wrist area allows the median nerve to be released, thereby resolving the pain factor.

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## When combined with other health care disciplines that touch upon neuromuscular and musculoskeletal study of the body, rehabilitative effects increase.

Learning how to release adherent factors in any of the 640 muscles in the human body helps you to intimately befriend each muscle, identify which muscles tend to become distressed, and learn how patterns of muscle damage dovetail with structural imbalances—the cause or result of most of your clients' injuries.

### **6 This is how this effect compares with the effect that traditional massage or other soft-tissue work has on the glue-like matrix:**

Traditional massage, featuring strokes performed along the length of the fibers, does not address the glue factor. Since myofascial release (MFR) *does* address this glue factor, it might be said that Crossfiber is a comprehensive, head-to-toe myofascial release treatment for every nook and cranny of the body.

However, with myofascial release the primary focus is on areas of *fascia* that have gotten glued together, while with Crossfiber the primary focus is on aspects of *muscle* that have gotten glued together or glued to bone. Inevitably, since fascia wraps all of these structures—muscle fibers, bundles or groups—there is constant overlap between muscle and fascia when studying or applying Crossfiber.

### Related techniques

The field of Crossfiber Corrective Muscle Therapy employs various cross-fiber techniques to cover all types of muscular system irregularities:

Comprehensive Crossfiber Technique is a full-coverage approach, which consists of three detailed, comprehensive Crossfiber passes over a given body part, designed to create both a *local* and a *systemic* healing response. I have witnessed many systemic inflammatory conditions such as myositis, fibromyalgia, arthritis, collagen disorders—such as the one my friend suffered from—multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy be greatly helped by this total body approach.

The more specified, focused approach of both Crossfiber Muscle Isolation and Gentle Fascial Release focuses on localized conditions and highly sensitive areas of the body. Carpal tunnel syndrome, tendinitis, frozen shoulder, sports injuries, repetitive-stress injuries, chronic back or neck pain, and TMJ disorder respond very well to these muscle-isolation techniques.

For example, a dentist I worked on in our clinic in suburban Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was suffering from shoulder pain and immobility from years of standing and holding his working tools with arms suspended in midair. Manifesting extreme dehydration in the *infraspinatus* muscle of his *scapula*, he required several sessions scheduled in close proximity in order to first remoisturize the infraspinatus muscle, then to release it from being stuck to the scapula, and finally to reintegrate the unit for full, pain-free mobility.

Does any of it need to be painful? Not at all. Any Crossfiber technique can be applied with a feather-light touch if that is what the situation calls for. Further, Gentle Fascial Release is a technique entirely dedicated to extremely painful or highly fragile conditions in the body. This Crossfiber approach is gentle on both the client and the practitioner.

### Rehabilitative effects

When combined with other health care disciplines that touch upon the neuromuscular and musculoskeletal study of the body, the rehabilitative effects of this work increase exponentially. Throughout the years, I and my team have worked closely with medical doctors, nurses, chiropractors, neurologists, physical therapists and practitioners of shiatsu, jin shin jyutsu and craniosacral therapy.

The International Institute for Corrective Muscle Therapy (IICMT) is dedicated to fostering an atmosphere of mutual support between health care fields, combining knowledge and methodology to the benefit of ailing clients. We are in the business of breaking down adherent factors between professionals—and muscles.

Victoria Ross is the founder of the International Institute for Corrective Muscle Therapy ([iicmt.com](http://iicmt.com)). She has spent more than 40 years developing and teaching the art of Crossfiber Corrective Muscle Therapy for addressing the hidden adherent factors that cause muscle pain and dysfunction. She authorizes a team of instructors, who are National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork-approved continuing education providers, to teach her work. She resides in San Rafael, California. 