

Fascia: the body network

Have you ever considered a connection between your feet and your neck? Meet the fascia: a connective tissue that forms a body-wide tensional network. The fibrous architecture of fasciae provides resistance when muscles are stretched, and slack when muscles are in a shortened position. Fascia connects all muscles and organs, providing structural support for posture and movement. Elastic and resilient fascial structures serve as an internal mechanism to improve movement performance and prevent injuries. Similarly, external elastic props can be used to provide support, resistance and sensorial feedback during exercises.

Stretch-eze is a looped spandex fabric band that facilitates movement performance as an external elastic prop. Made from a wide, springy, soft fabric, it hugs your body just the right amount providing springy resistance for challenge and support *within* a closed kinetic loop. This important tactile, sensory input creates a heightened receptivity and pursuant body responsivity for achieving technical accuracy and movement efficiency. Trainings that focus on improving the fascia support typically involve controlled transitions, proprioceptive refinement, and slow and dynamic stretching. This approach is in perfect tune with Stretch-eze's features.

Movement transitions characterized by deceleration followed by gradual acceleration activate fascia's elastic properties. According to Schleip, author and fascial researcher, "the more the fascial spring effect is utilized, the quieter and gentler the process will be". Stretch-eze's elasticity enables smooth transitions and allows the body to refine the movement before moving forward. During the Teaser exercise, for instance, Stretch-eze facilitates transitions from the initial position (lying supine) to the final V – position. The band's elastic properties provide mechanical support, enabling the practitioner to focus on refining the quality of movement before progressing to more advanced variations.



Movement refinement can be obtained with different types of trainings: extreme slow motion, very quick micro-movements, and large macro-movements involving the whole body. With its whole body fascia-like connectivity, Stretch-eze allows performance of those macro-movements in a controlled way, therefore inducing a youthful collagen structure.

Flowing dynamic stretches are effective in addressing the fascia. According to Myers, another prominent author and researcher in the field, the goal is to find movements that engage the longest possible myofascial chain. Myers recommends including multidirectional movements with slight change in angles, including sideways, diagonal, and spiraling movements. As a uniquely versatile tool, Stretch-eze provides the necessary freedom to explore all those movements with the benefits of tactile feedback and whole body integration.

Using Stretch-eze in your yoga or mat work aligns seamlessly with fascial training principles. The band's recoil property and capacity to connect the whole body improves awareness and performance of three-dimensional movements. Those properties support controlled transitions, slow and dynamic stretching, and movement refinement. Feet and neck are connected through fascia. Find this connection, and your practice will never be the same.

Bibliography reference:

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