

Bodyreading

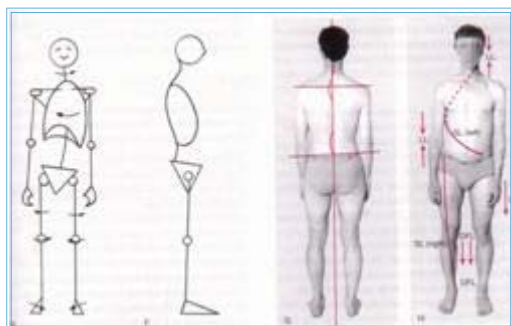
Seeing is Touch at a Distance

By Eli Thompson KMI

After graduating from my Massage Therapy training I was excited to open a practice and begin helping others. However, I found that with many of my clients, no matter how much I worked, their problems came back. Be it shoulder, neck, or low back pain, they felt better for a few days to a few weeks but my work seemed to be missing something. I was not able to get at the core of their problem.

I knew everything in the body is connected, that it all works together to create our wondrous form and function. I knew on a gut level that my client's complaints were rooted in a deeper, more global problem than just the localized area of pain. I just didn't know how or why. I needed a map and a new way of looking at my clients.

I was introduced to it by Tom Myers in his Anatomy Trains workshops. Not only did the theory of Anatomy Trains validate my sense that everything is connected, but it offered me a road map for those connections. I learned how to 'see' these connections in my client's posture through Bodyreading. With the information gained via Bodyreading, I could develop quick and effective strategies for treating their complaints more effectively. All this was taught in the context of Tom's technique library of KMI Structural Integration. This showed me the potential of rebalancing the body's structure. The Anatomy Trains revolutionized my practice and now I work smarter, not harder, with much longer lasting results.

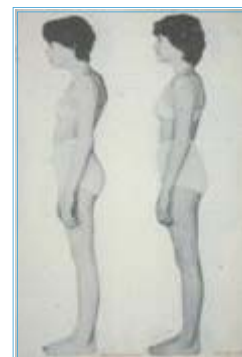


By studying the structural relationships in the body, we can gain important information for strategizing.

Bodyreading

Having this map is a great help, but every client is unique, with their own long held patterns. Generalizing their patterns will not make us more effective therapists. Bodyreading is a visual assessment technique that allows us to study the uniqueness of our clients' posture.

Most of us can tell if a client has one shoulder higher than the other or if the head and neck are tilted forward, but Bodyreading goes further. Postural patterns always incorporate the whole body and thus need to be studied as a whole. If one shoulder is higher than the other, it is an indication of something happening in the thorax. If something is happening in the thorax it implies that there is something going on in the pelvis / low back. And, of course, that suggests something about the legs and feet. By Bodyreading the Anatomy Trains we get a sense for how these structural relationships are fascially locked in and what we can do to free them.



Strategies that are based on the whole body pattern create more profound results.

Ida Rolf (the creator of Structural Integration) had a saying, "Seeing is touch at a distance." This simple statement conveys the power of Bodyreading. By "seeing" the roots of the problem we save ourselves, and our clients, time and effort at the table. We work smarter, not harder or longer or more often. We become more effective therapists.

What are the Anatomy Trains?

Anatomy Trains (developed by Tom Myers) is a simple road map for understanding how all the "parts" of the body are connected. When we first start studying anatomy, we usually learn what all the parts are and what they do in isolation. This gives us a very mechanistic view of the body. If one part starts having problems you fix it (this is what I had been trying to do). Since the theory of Anatomy Trains is based on the full body, fascial web, it gives a much more holistic, systems based perspective.

The focus is on the relationships between the parts. On how they relate and communicate with each other via myofascial continuities. In Anatomy Trains we find 12 such discreet myofascial meridians. They give us an understanding of

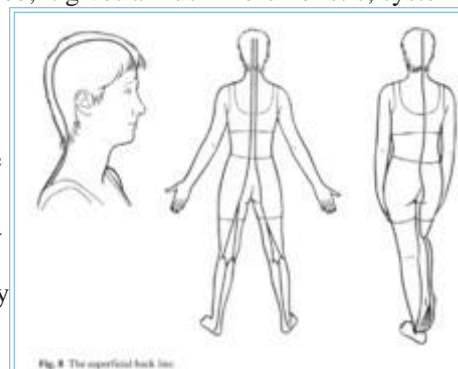


Fig. 9 The superficial back line

The Superficial Back Line

why the problem often isn't where the pain is. How the arches of the feet may influence the pelvis and create low back pain. Why massaging the shoulders only gives temporary relief from chronic shoulder pain. Learning to bodyread the Anatomy Trains will benefit every manual therapist.

All photos on this page courtesy of Tom Myers