



## 69b Myofascial Release: Demo and Practice –

Tools of the Technique and  
Principles of Treatment for  
Posterior Upper Body



# 69b Myofascial Release: Demo and Practice – Tools of the Technique and Principles of Treatment for Posterior Upper Class Outline

60 minutes	Body Mechanics & Technique Demo
15 minutes	15-minute break
45 minutes	Technique Practice
15 minutes	15-minute break
45 minutes	Technique Practice
15 minutes	Clean Up & Closing Circle
3 hours, 15 minutes Total	



# 69a Introduction to Myofascial Release: The Structure and Function of Fascia

## Class Reminders

### Exams:

- 70a Exam

### Special Reminder:

- 71b Sports Massage: Technique Demo and Practice – Pre-Event and Post-Event
  - Please wear athletic clothing to this class.
  - You will be giving and receiving several 10-minute pre- and post-event massages in an athletic context

### Preparation for upcoming classes:

- 70b Chair Massage, BMTs, Passive Stretches, and Side-lying Massage
  - Packet C: 11-12



# Classroom Rules

**Punctuality** - everybody's time is precious

- Be ready to learn at the start of class; we'll have you out of here on time
- Tardiness: arriving late, returning late after breaks, leaving during class, leaving early

**The following are not allowed:**

- Bare feet
- Side talking
- Lying down
- Inappropriate clothing
- Food or drink except water
- Phones that are visible in the classroom, bathrooms, or internship

*You will receive one verbal warning, then you'll have to leave the room.*

# Classroom Rules

## **Cell Phone – Turn it off!**



And put it away!



# 69b Myofascial Release: Demo and Practice –

## Tools of the Technique and Principles of Treatment for Posterior Upper

Class Handouts

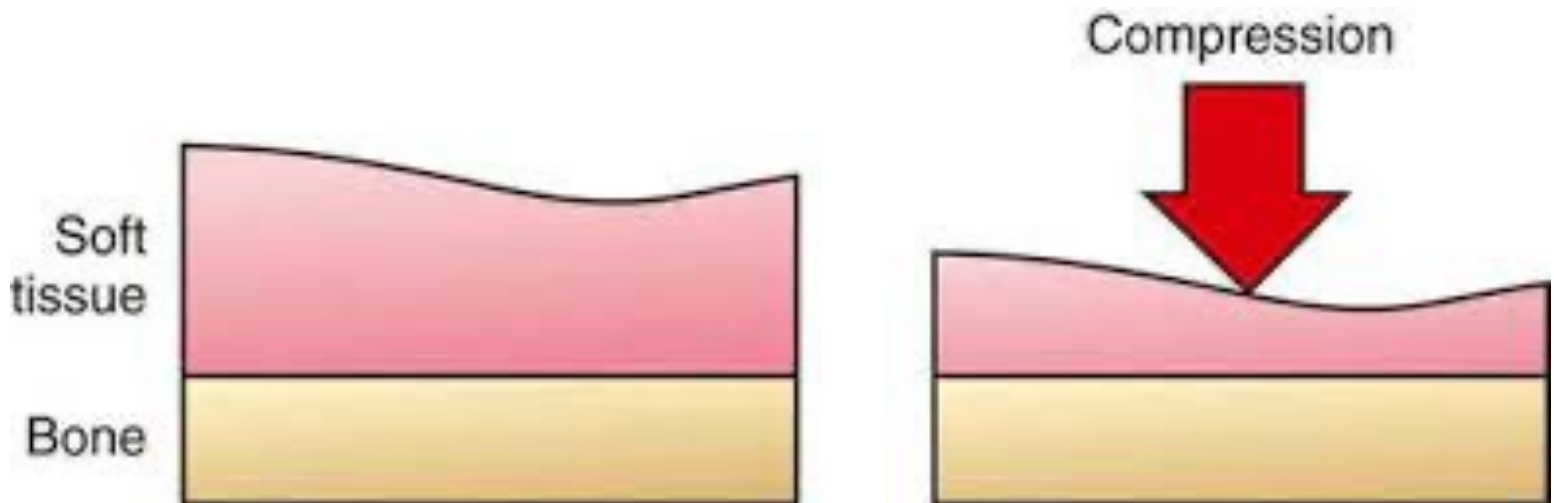
# Myofascial Release Fundamental Principles

- Absolutely NO lubricant is used in this technique
  - The client's skin must also be free of any lotions prior to receiving work
  - A small cup of water or a spray bottle may be used to apply to the practitioner's working tool in order to give some extra traction



# Myofascial Release Fundamental Principles

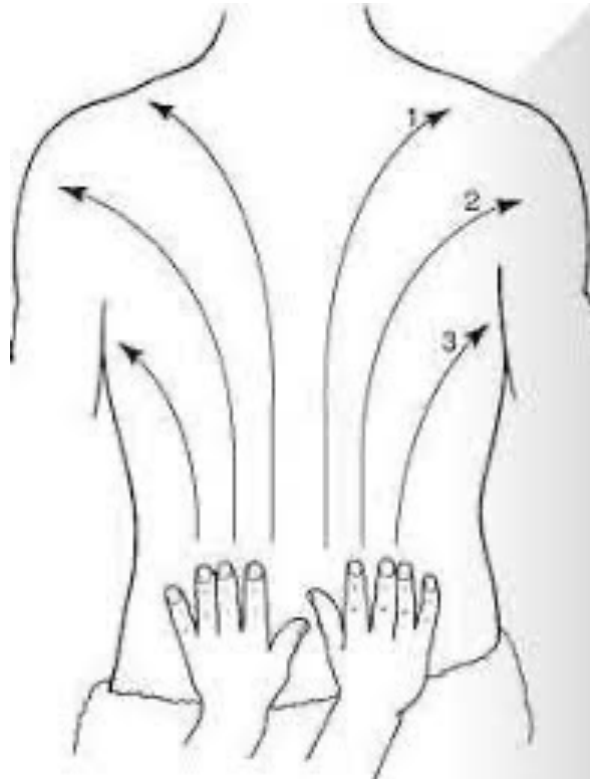
The direction of force is not vertical (compression)





# Myofascial Release Fundamental Principles

The direction of force is **not** horizontal (effleurage)



# Myofascial Release Fundamental Principles

The direction of force is **OBLIQUE**

- Only by working at an angle to the tissues can we attain the desired fascial stretch
- Visualize working through the body, not into it or across it





# Body Mechanic Basics that apply for every moment in MFR

Engagement of one's whole presence is essential –

Without presence of mind, body, and spirit, boundaries and safety cannot be maintained.

*This includes awareness of your own body!*

Feeling, sensing, & palpating are far more important than thinking –

Listen with your hands.

***LEARNING MFR IS KINESTHETIC, NOT COGNITIVE!***

***DON'T THINK.***

**FEEL.**

# Body Mechanic Basics that apply for every moment in MFR

The same principles apply to every working tool!

Fingertips



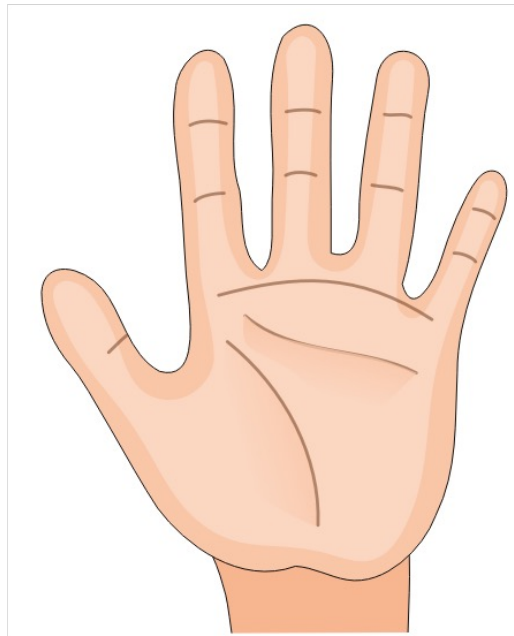
Palm



Soft Fist



Ulna





# Body Mechanic Basics that apply for every moment in MFR

- All you need are a few basic “moves,” though I may show you more as alternatives for your comfort
- You can do the same “move” repeatedly, and with varying success with different tools
- If you feel good doing the work, chances are the client will feel good
- Explain to the client, if they are unfamiliar, that they might feel a pull but that the intensity will lessen as the session goes on
- Start with broader, lighter moves before doing more concentrated sections.
- For hairy body parts, use shorter, slower strokes or simply hold.



# Body Mechanic Basics that apply for every moment in MFR

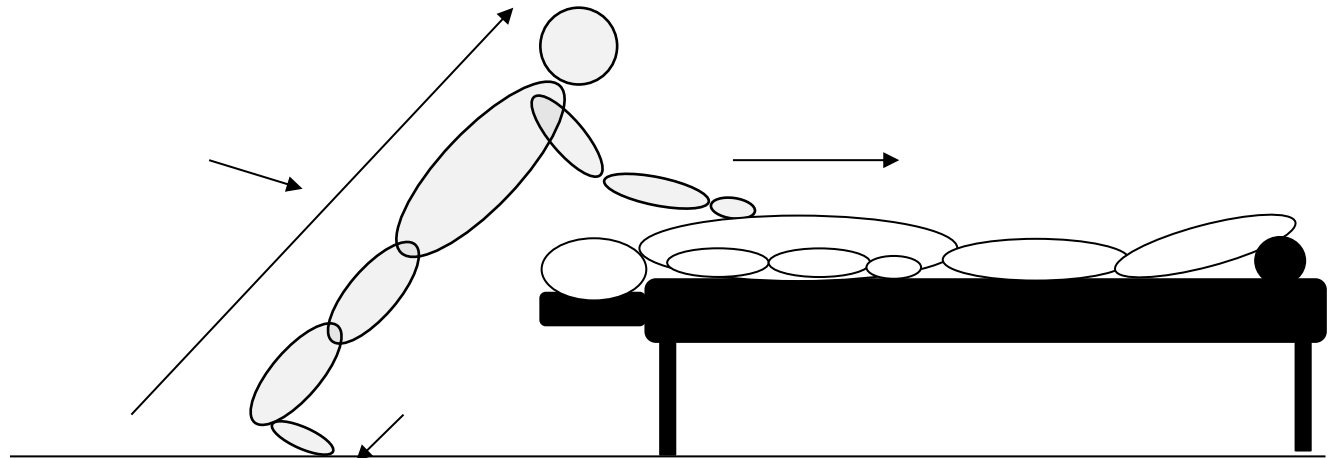
- Your body should be aligned, relaxed, and grounded
- Use gravity to apply controlled body weight into the client
- Use an oblique angle to “hook in” to the fascia and stretch it
- Move as one body unit, as in yoga. Lengthen your body as you work
- Work in short excursions – this work is meant to be very slow and to be done without continuous “flow” as in Swedish Massage
- When the desired excursion is reached, disengage completely from contact to allow the work to take effect
- If it hurts the client, reduce force and distance or choose a broader tool

**\* ALL PRINCIPLES MUST BE APPLIED SIMULTANEOUSLY TO BE EFFECTIVE AND TO PROMOTE CHANGE IN THE CLIENT. \***

*If one principle is compromised, they're all compromised!*

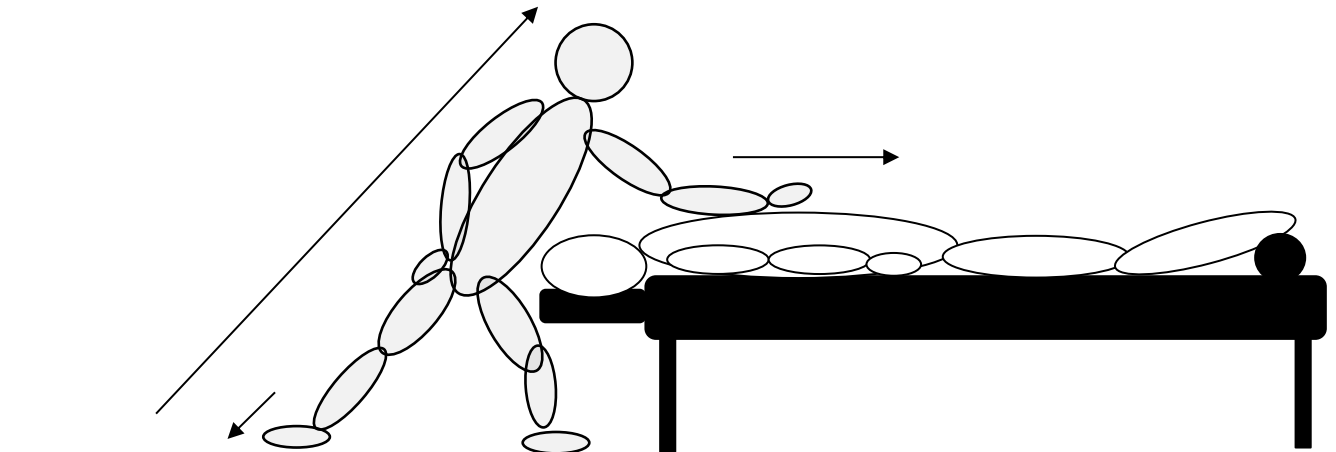
# Practitioner Positioning – Front-facing

- Reach through top of head into space
- Shoulders relaxed
- Arms spanning from torso, elbows slightly flexed
- Straight plane from hand to wrist through forearm
- Pelvis squared and dropping forward in lunge
- Lifting from plantarflexion



# Practitioner Positioning – Side-facing

- Top of head reaching into space, face forward, not looking at client
- Chest toward wall
- GH joint supported by axial frame
- Forearm parallel to direction of stroke
- Straight line from leg through neck and head
- Lift from plantarflexion of back leg







## Step 1 – Align with your client

- Decide which approach (front or side-facing) is appropriate for the intended work
- Make deliberate contact
- Palpate & assess the fascia to determine which path to take



## Step 2 – The Hook

- Hook in to the tissues by fully contacting the skin and taking out its slack in the direction you want to stretch the fascia
  - The tool you choose (palms, soft fist, ulna, etc) should feel a fascial “pull” in the opposite direction. Hooray! This means you are getting MFR as you’re giving it!



## Step 3 – Position behind your work

- Get into your position of graceful verticality, with a straight line from the top of your head through your back foot
- Check-in with each of your joints, from head to hip to foot and from shoulder to fingers
- Let go of any tension holding you back



## Step 4 – Drop in

- If in front-facing, drop your pelvis forward while envisioning your lumbar spine pulling back, engaging your core
- If you are in a lunge, you may bring your front foot back to join your back foot if you feel stable enough
- Your weight should be completely on your back foot, with your heel on the floor



## Step 5 – The Lift Forward

- Plantarflex your back foot (or feet) into the ground by lifting your heel(s)
- Your body should move as one unit, gracefully forward on a diagonal



## Step 6 – The Journey

- Envision the fascia under your hands or arm stretching as a fabric
- Remember to relax your neck, your arms, your breath
- Continue to engage your core muscles (iliopsoas) as you allow gravity to move your body through your client's fascial stretch
- Listen with your hands and ears for release or working signs (breath change, sigh, a twitch) and let it inform you

Is what you're doing comfortable for the client?

- Check in with your client



## Step 7 – Stop the Train

- When you feel you have reached the end of your excursion, shift your body weight onto your front leg.
- If you have been using both legs in a plank position, bring one leg forward and shift your weight onto this leg
- Disengage from your client once your weight is no longer dependent on them



## Step 8 – Unwind & Check-In with your own body

- Take this opportunity to truly move your body while disengaged
- Check in with your neck, arms, back, legs and notice any areas of tension

## Step 9 – Palpate for Change

- Reassess the client's fascia for changes

## Step 10 – Repeat as Necessary



# Myofascial Release – Double Palms Down the Back





# Myofascial Release – Double Palms Down

1. Using your front-facing position, standing at the head of the table, place both palms on the upper back, between the scapulae and spine
2. **Hook in**, directing force inferiorly
3. Walk both legs (or one, if that is more comfortable) back and **drop in**
4. Plantarflex into the ground, to **lift forward**
5. When excursion is reached, **stop the train**. Shift your weight the the front foot and disengage.
6. **Unwind** and **check in** with your own body, **palpate for change**, **repeat** as necessary

*\*This technique may also be used unilaterally between scapula and the spine.\**

# Myofascial Release – Unilateral Soft Fist Down the Back





# Myofascial Release – Unilateral Soft Fist Down the Back

1. Using your side-facing position, standing at the head of the table, place a soft fist, thumb side up, on the upper back, between the scapula and spine;
2. **Hook in**, directing force inferiorly
3. Turn your body to the side, supporting your G/H joint with your torso. Ensure there is a straight line from your back leg through your neck and head
4. Plantarflex into the ground, to **move forward**
5. When excursion is reached, **stop the train**. Shift your weight the the front foot and disengage.
6. **Unwind** and **check in** with your own body, **palpate for change**, **repeat** as necessary
7. Hook in to the fascia, directing force inferiorly



# Myofascial Release – Unilateral Ulna Down the Back





# Myofascial Release – Unilateral Ulna Down the Back

1. Using your side-facing position, standing at the head of the table, place your forearm, ulna side down, with relaxed wrist on the upper back, between the scapula and spine;
2. **Hook in**, directing force inferiorly
3. Turn your body to the side, supporting your G/H joint with your torso. Ensure there is a straight line from your back leg through your neck and head
4. Plantarflex into the ground, to **move forward**
5. When excursion is reached, **stop the train**. Shift your weight the the front foot and disengage.
6. **Unwind** and **check in** with your own body, **palpate for change**, **repeat** as necessary
7. Hook in to the fascia, directing force inferiorly

# Myofascial Release – Unilateral Palm Up the Back





# Myofascial Release – Unilateral Palm Up the Back

1. Using your side-facing position, standing at the side of the table, place your palm on the Thoracolumbar Fascia, superior to the Iliac Crest.
2. **Hook in**, directing force superiorly, away from the Iliac crest
3. Turn your body to the side, supporting your G/H joint with your torso. Ensure there is a straight line from your back leg through your neck and head
4. Plantarflex into the ground, to **move forward**
5. When excursion is reached, **stop the train**. Shift your weight the the front foot and disengage.
6. **Unwind and check in** with your own body, **palpate for change**, **repeat** as necessary

**\*\*\*NOTE: Use caution when working near or over the floating ribs\*\*\***



# Myofascial Release – Unilateral Ulna Up the Back





## Myofascial Release – Unilateral Ulna Up the Back

1. Using your side-facing position, standing at the side of the table, place your forearm, ulna side down, with relaxed wrist in the lamina groove, parallel to the spine at the iliac crest (\*This may also be done perpendicular to the spine, but do NOT go over the spine)
2. **Hook in**, directing force superiorly, away from the Iliac crest
3. Turn your body to the side, supporting your G/H joint with your torso. Ensure there is a straight line from your back leg through your neck and head. You may even want to sit on the edge of the table.
4. Plantarflex into the ground, to **move forward**
5. When excursion is reached, **stop the train**. Shift your weight the the front foot and disengage.
6. **Unwind and check in** with your own body, **palpate for change**, **repeat** as necessary

\*\*\*NOTE: Use caution when working near or over the floating ribs\*\*\*



# Myofascial Release – Principles and Posterior Upper Recap

\*No lubricant is used!

\*Oblique Angle of Force to stretch the tissues

\*Don't think. Feel.

\*Engage your whole body to use gravity, not strength

\*Disengage after each stroke

Work away from areas of concentration – away from a joint

**\*All principles are used together with every stroke\***

## Posterior Upper Tools:

1. Double Palms Down
2. Unilateral Soft Fist Down
3. Unilateral Ulna Down
4. Unilateral Palm Up
5. Unilateral Ulna Up



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