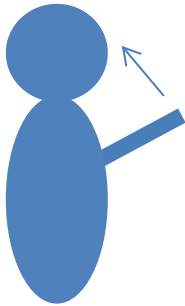




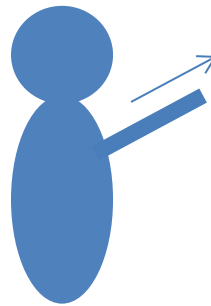
## Myofascial Self Treatment

Myofascial stretching is different from traditional stretching and vastly more effective. Rather than forcing the “end range”, or pushing through “the barrier”, myofascial stretching engages with the tissue restrictions by mindfully and gently moving into them. Then, gentle elongation or telescoping is used to facilitate and follow the tissue as it releases. Every body is absolutely unique and so what feels right for you may be quite different to what feels right for someone else. Trust your FEELING. Myofascial stretching is a great way to learn to listen to what YOUR body needs and what is right for YOU.

Myofascial stretching requires TIME. The deeper aspect of the fascia, (which when released leads to lasting changes), does not *begin* to release for at least 90-120 seconds. The stretch/release should then be continued for 3-5 minutes for maximum benefit. You can never over-stretch fascia, provided you are working mindfully, listening to your body and not pushing in to pain. Be patient. Soften. Wait for the releases. It may help to visualise the restrictions softening; like butter melting, or stretching, separating and flowing in three dimensions.



**Traditional Stretching**



**Fascial “Telescoping”**

**To the barrier (where you very first feel resistance or any sensation) and then elongate/telescope**

If you find that you are bracing or tensing up to get into or stay in a particular position, modify it so you can relax and soften. Tissues that are in a protected, holding state will not release. “No pain, no gain” is not relevant here. The fascial system is the body’s defence mechanism; if it feels threatened in any way, it will not release. You may experience the “good hurt” that comes with MFR, but never “bad” or injurious pain. If you feel this, STOP. QUALITY is always preferable to QUANTITY. Rather than trying to do loads of different stretches, you may want to limit yourself to just doing two or three per session, allowing yourself to really BE in your body and experience the feel of the tissues as they release.

Try to do these stretches in a quiet and comfortable space. It may help to put on some relaxing music to help you shift your focus from the incessant internal chatter we all live with and to help focus on the *sensations* of the tissues releasing. You may also find you want a pillow to hand in case you need to scream, cry, grip or punch something! Tissue memory is powerful stuff!

To help bring awareness into your body, it may be helpful to do a brief body scan before and after you self-treat. This can be done lying down, standing up or sitting.

Get comfortable, then ask yourself:

- How am I making contact with the floor? What parts of the body are touching the ground?
- Where am I tense/tight/holding? Head? Face? Jaw? Neck? Shoulders? Arms? Elbows? Wrists? Hands? Chest? Stomach? Back? Pelvis? Hips? Thighs? Knees? Calves? Ankles? Feet?
- How am I breathing? How does my breath affect my body? Where can I feel my breath?

Make a mental note of your answers before and after you self-treat. This is not an opportunity for self-judgement or criticism, it is merely to give you a reference for how you felt before and after. There is no right or wrong, it is YOUR experience. Remember, your awareness is powerful. Bringing this awareness into the body can make a huge difference for you and your body! Give yourself the time you deserve.