

Purpose of this self-care practice:

For training muscles how to rest and shifting our nervous system into “rest and digest” mode. For helping boost the body’s natural healing process by releasing excess tension and thus increasing circulation. Excess tension can be viewed as residual & stagnated effort, it accumulates and becomes an obstruction.

Concepts for brain-food:

Stability vs. mobility

- We need tension, just not too much in any one spot or we’ll feel stiff/stuck (too much stability). Too little is not great either, that feels insecure/unsteady (too much mobility). The key lies in understanding that the ‘perfect’ amount of tension is always changing, every moment is different. Practice learning how to detect what the sensation of bodily-balance feels like and you’ll be skilled at promoting balance wherever you need it most.

Compression vs. extension

- Emphasize *exhales with compression* (aka massage) and *inhalas with extension* (aka stretching).
- To ease especially tight muscles, alternate between compression and extension to ‘untie the knot.’

The Edge

- With strong sensations, the edge is just enough to feel effectual while not too much to feel harmful. It’s subjective, slow down on an edge to increase discernment. Ride the edge like surfing a wave, being aware of how the balance points fluctuate in every moment. Link the edge’s *flow* with breath.

Massage and Yoga Therapy techniques:

Positional Release

- To slacken a tight muscle, position yourself so the ends of the muscle are closer together, passively.

Gravity stretch

- Position your body so it’s lifted, supported, and at rest. Breathe slowly and deeply, allowing gravity’s weight to accumulate with every exhale. Notice your body sink/settle into the ground beneath you.

Pin and stretch

- Pin down a tight spot while stretching the muscle to aim where the stretch goes. Notice the tension paths which connect your body parts together, like trails. Draw a mental map of your tension paths.

Pin and rotate

- Akin to *pin and stretch* but emphasizing rotational stretching movements. Tension often spirals.

Yoga Therapy is:

A helpful method for resetting excess tension back to a relaxed state. To me, Yoga Therapy is anything which cultivates ease and embodiment by combining breath, intention and presence.

These are a few examples of common lines of tension which connect body parts together.

Research the term *Myofascial Meridians* to learn more.

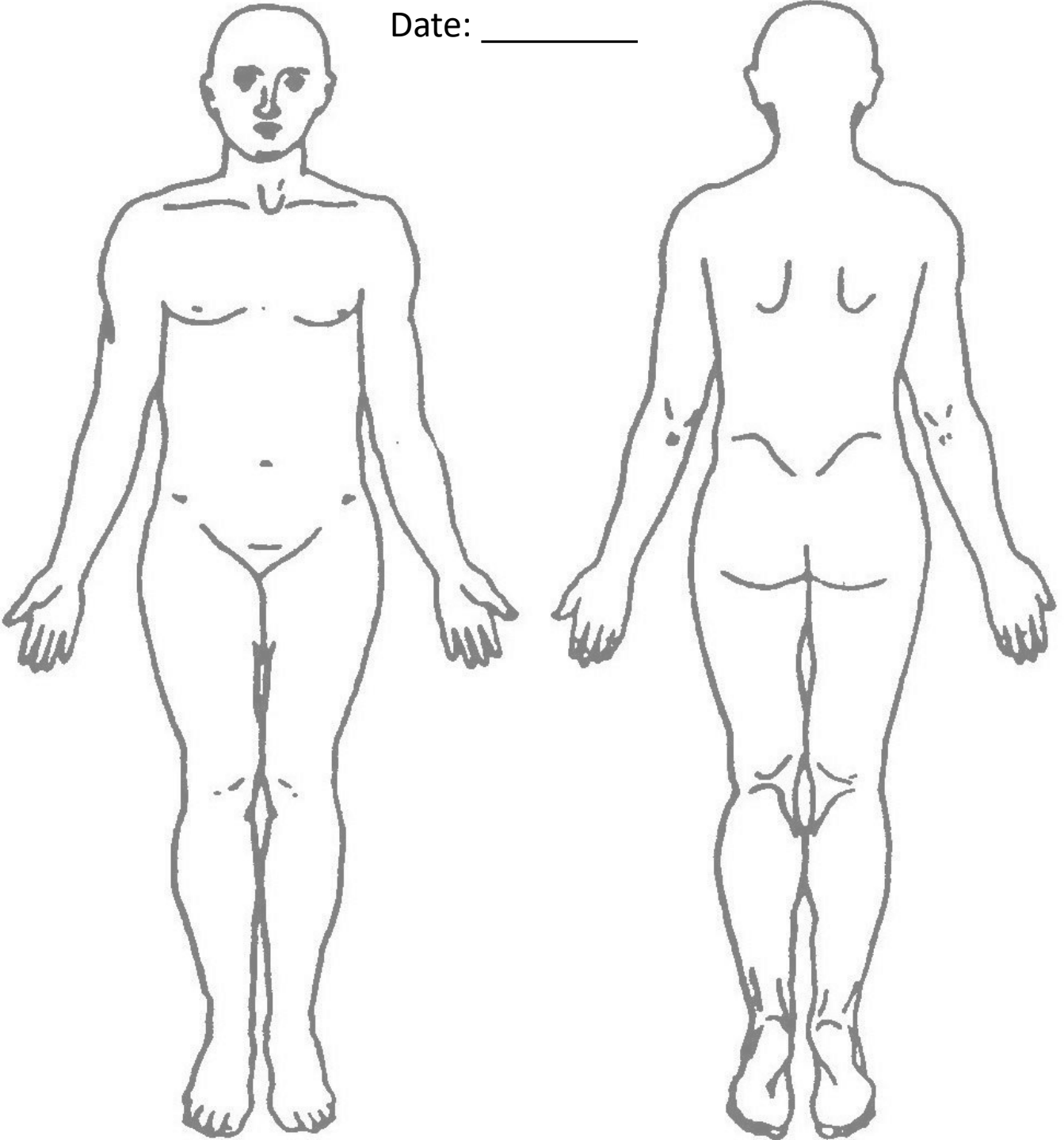


Images from ‘Anatomy Trains’ by Thomas Myers

Map out your tension patterns!

1. Mark the spots where you feel notably strong or absent sensations in your body.
2. Connect the dots to reveal patterns.
3. Observe and record interesting details about your patterns. How do they relate to the concepts described on the other page? Which therapeutic technique(s) feel useful?
4. Check back in a week or so to learn how your tension map changes with time.

Date: _____



Questions/comments?

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