

Monica Caspari trained as a Rolfer in 1989, completing the Rolf Movement training in 1992 and advanced Rolwing training in 1993. She joined the Rolf Institute® faculty in 1994. She has taught in Brazil, the United States, Germany, Ireland, Australia, South Africa, and Japan. Monica holds a BA in Nutrition from Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil, a specialist degree from Uniúitalo, São Paulo, worked as a doula (midwife) for nineteen years; taught Hatha Yoga, and has studied Therese Bertherat's Antigymanastics, Gerda Alexander's Eutony, Kum Nye, Emily Conrad's Continuum, Godelieve Denis Struyf's G.D.S. Muscular Chains, Stanley Keleman's Formative Process, and Peter Levine's Somatic Experiencing®.

Kevin McCarthy holds a BA in English from Macalester College and worked as an EMT prior to obtaining his Rolwing certification in Boulder in 2007. While pursuing his practice in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Kevin became increasingly interested in the effects of emotion and metaphor as they relate to structural integration. His interest in these aspects of the work led to him pursuing his Rolf Movement training with Monica Caspari in Brazil in 2014, where this interview took place. He maintains a blog on Rolwing SI and all things related at www.informrolwing.com.

Reviews

Notes from the Fascial Revolution

The MELT Method by Sue Hitzmann (HarperOne 2013)

Fascia: The Tensional Network of the Human Body edited by Robert Schleip, Thomas Findley, Leon Chaitow, and Peter Huijing (Chuchill Livingstone 2012)

Why Fascia Matters by Brooke Thomas (ebook)

Reviews by Szaja Gottlieb, Certified Advanced Rolfer™

Revolution denotes dramatic change. Here are two books, *The MELT Method* and *Fascia: The Tensional Network of the Human Body*, that reflect the seismic shift occurring among researchers, clinicians, practitioners, patients, clients, and the general public in understanding fascia and therapies using it. They can be considered in a sense the low brow and high brow of this revolution and are both relevant to practitioners of Rolwing® Structural Integration (SI) for differing reasons.

A *New York Times* bestseller, *The Melt Method: A Breakthrough Self-Treatment System to Eliminate Chronic Pain, Erase the Signs of Aging, and Feel Fantastic in Just 10 Minutes a Day!* is written by Sue Hitzmann, an exercise guru and somatic practitioner who is spearheading a new self-care fitness system whose principal tools are foam rollers and small rubbery balls, as well as selling related items, training MELT Method® instructors, and holding workshops in the U.S. and most certainly eventually all over the world. No matter one's opinion of the system, it is the first (to my knowledge) in popular culture explicitly based on the health of fascial tissue and one of the first in the new field of 'fascial fitness.' The first part of the book is specifically related to the latest discoveries concerning fascia, in particular the significant role that water plays in the fascial tissue universe and how dehydration of fascial tissue results in pain and how rehydration of fascia relieves it.

The imprint of SI permeates MELT – from the introduction by former practitioner Gil Hedley (who created Somanautics dissection workshops) to the acknowledgment at the end of the book of the “pioneering Rolfers turned researchers,” including Tom Myers,

Robert Schleip, and Tom Findley. In between Hitzmann introduces the MELT system, an acronym for myofascial energetic length technique. Essentially, MELT is a self-maintenance system whose innovation is its introduction of a technique using foam rollers and rubber balls to decompress and rehydrate fascia. The premise of the book is simply that fascia, neglected until now, is a primary source for health and potential ill health. Sound familiar? Should be, since most of MELT's ideas concerning the fascial universe are echoes of SI. Certainly, ideas such as “domes and arches” and “two-directional lengthening,” both claimed by Hitzmann as her own, will elicit a smile from SI practitioners reading her book.

Of greater concern is a certain diffuseness and repetition in the 300-page book, making it hard to follow. Written in a first-person subjective style, the personal history, ideas, and techniques seem to pile on one another. These problems will probably be solved when the DVD, currently in process, is released, thus removing all the unnecessary verbiage. Astonishingly, despite the derivative nature of MELT from SI, the key idea of lines of transmission of force through fascial planes, as presented, for example, by Tom Myers in *Anatomy Trains*, is lacking in terms of application. From an SI point of view, as expressed by Myers, the user could apply the foam roller along geometric lines of transmission – the lateral line, back line, superficial front line, etc. A client, for example, could work his lateral line, which would include peroneal compartment, the iliotibial band, small glutes, etc. Suggesting working an entire myofascial plane with the foam roller is never broached by Hitzmann. The result is a technique that has difficulty expanding beyond specific locations of pain to move the client into a more integrative vision of the body.

That said, SI practitioners need to be familiar with MELT. It and other coming fascial fitness modalities will be a gateway for prospective clients to SI. Using foam rollers to maintain some of the gains from SI sessions is obvious, but the idea of being able to maintain fascial fitness through three ten-minute sessions per week, as MELT promises, seems inadequate. I say this as a daily foam-roller user and as a practitioner who introduces clients to the foam roller as a maintenance tool in their initial session.

In *Fascia: The Tensional Network of the Human Body: The science and clinical applications in manual and movement therapy*, the researchers who formed the background of MELT move to the foreground. Edited by Robert Schleip, Thomas Findley, Leon Chaitow, and Peter Huijing, the book offers a breathtaking excursion into the latest discoveries and thoughts of fascia researchers and clinicians, presented in and stimulated by the International Fascia Research Congresses in 2007, 2009, and 2012. This publication of forty-seven articles written by 100 scientists and clinicians is momentous, a watershed event in our field. Fascia emerges as being an incredibly active component of all facets of anatomical function usually reserved for other myofascial elements such as muscle, tendons, and ligaments. This expanded definition will make it increasingly difficult to maintain the traditional view of fascia as local and passive, since it is clear that the fascial web is critical both in terms of carrying and spreading load and as an integral part of the body's communication system.

The book is organized into eight parts: "Anatomy of the fascial body," "Fascia as an organ of communication," "Fascial force transmission," "Physiology of fascial tissues," "Fascia-related disorders," "Diagnostic procedures for fascial elasticity," "Fascia-oriented therapies," and "Fascia research: Methodological challenges and new directions." There are twenty-four articles in the section on fascia-oriented therapies, the largest in the book and of obvious interest to our community. The chapter by our own Monica Caspari and Heidi Massa, "Rolfing structural integration," is a thorough presentation of the ten-session series based on the concept of organizing fascia in gravity. Many other therapies, both hands-on and -off, such as Graston technique, connective-tissue massage, trigger-point therapy, acupuncture, prolotherapy, yoga, and Pilates are also discussed. There is also the inclusion of Robert Schleip and Divo Müller's prescient article on fascial fitness, which is a touchstone for the field. I found the article on surgery and scarring of special interest. Clients after surgery, particularly joint surgery like rotator cuffs, always complain about their shoulders not feeling quite right no matter how many visits to the orthopedist and physical therapist – an obvious opportunity for an SI practitioner to reintegrate tissue and reinstall a ruptured communication system. I will make no pretense of having

read the many dense articles in depth. There are nuggets everywhere and whole veins to mine, a pleasure to look forward to.

With all these new developments in the field, both in terms of research and application, it makes sense that SI practitioners will need to refine their explanations of the role of fascia and how to maintain myofascial health. Rolfer Brooke Thomas has done just that with a free e-book entitled *Why Fascia Matters* (available at www.liberatedbody.com), aimed specifically at new Rolfing clients. In simple language, Thomas explains what the new discoveries in fascia research mean to the potential SI client. The author also has started a website called Fascia Freedom Fighters (www.fasciafreedomfighters.com; now folded into www.liberatedbody.com) to encourage the maintenance of healthy fascia, mainly through movement. Still needed is a chapter on using the foam roller and other implements, particularly from an SI point of view.

Standing in the midst of a change it is good to take a deep breath in thanks to those practitioners such as Tom Myers, Robert Schleip, Tom Findley, and others responsible for stimulating this new stage of growth in SI. Many in our field have for many years complained of Rolfing SI's inability to move towards the mainstream. Perhaps they never considered the other possibility – of the mainstream, with a little help, moving closer to us.

Titles by Rolfers™

Walking Meditation 1 by Gael Rosewood (audio resource)

Review by Stefan Knight, Certified Advanced Rolfer™, Rolf Movement® Practitioner

I am fortunate to have a busy practice that is comprised, fairly exclusively, of one-hour sessions. Not luxurious ninety-minute sessions in which I can transition the client into the world with lots of well-grounded perceptual homework, as much as I might enjoy that. Only in the past few years have I felt truly competent incorporating – i.e., leaving time to set up – movement homework for the client in a way that evokes meaningful exploration in the one-hour model.

The written word is a tricky medium for the average client to find new and refreshing nuance in movement due to

the fact that you are relatively glued to the page with your hands full. Video feels a step up but is still both location- and visually-fixed. Having one's hands and eyes free in the environment of your choice and full freedom of movement with the convenience of headphones opens up a lot of opportunity for movement exploration.

In *Walking Meditation 1* (2013), her nine-part, forty-two-minute guided meditation (available as an audio download from iTunes or Amazon, or as a CD from Amazon.com), Certified Advanced Rolfer and Rolf Movement Practitioner Gael Rosewood (formerly Ohlgren) invites client and practitioner alike to find hope and supported fluidity with curiosity, awareness, and a sense of play. She begins with some general principles, bringing reflection to how stress and life demands accumulate in our structure and inhibit healthy flow in our gait. Additionally, she calls for reflection on our clothing choices and the myriad ways our movement begins to lack variety over time. In the following sections, Rosewood alternates between guided movement exploration and some wonderful thoughts to engage the listener in new ways of thinking about standing and walking. Her silky voice asks "what flows" in our gait and what lacks flow. She lightly peppers the recording with theory for substance, coaxing the listener through the concepts of embodying our kinesphere, the "where brain" versus the "what brain," and appreciating our inside (introception) in relation to our outside (extroception).

One of my few difficulties with the presentation was that while it is clearly meant to be reasonably and methodically paced, the content is so rich that I would want to be there with my clients to ensure that they appreciate the full value of her words; I can hear myself asking them, "Did you get what she just said?" and "Can you feel the implications of that possibility?" There were times that I just needed a little more time to fully appreciate it myself – and I live this stuff everyday. At one point I was starting to think that it was just too much to embody in the time allotted between invitations, but then Rosewood chimes in "Are you feeling overloaded by all these questions?" The answer was "yes," and her query was just in time to refresh my own sense of play and a 'you get what you get attitude.'