WHAT STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION CAN DO IN SPORTS MEDICINE FOR THERAPY & ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE... THAT COMPLEMENTS YOUR OTHER THERAPIES Includes lots of key Testimonials

by Louis A. Gross BSEE

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WHAT IT IS

Structural Integration Bodywork is a very specialized manipulation of the soft connective tissue of the body, called fascia (fah shah). This is the gelatinous material that surrounds and goes through all our muscles, holding all the muscle fibers, blood vessels and nerves together. It's made of tiny protein fibers in a fluid, and it's malleable.

Fascia's shape can be changed. Everyday activities, athletics and especially intense work outs make it shorter and

more compressed. This treatment makes it longer again.

From a Sports Medicine perspective this treatment does two things. It lengthens tight muscles faster, and often further, than any other technique and gets at the deeper ones that most other techniques can't. It also detects and removes "systemic" patterns of tightness that other treatments rarely detect or resolve.

In addition, the Structural Integration "process," applied through a "series" of treatments, organizes the whole body toward maximum economy of effort and most integrated and least restricted movement.

Used as a therapy for removing tightness, it is also an athletic performance enhancer.

- For a 13-printed-pages, in-depth explanation of the how and why, see my <u>Athletic Performance</u> <u>Enhancement Booklet</u>
- For a 20-page detailed explanation of how developing tightness, over time, causes pain, (and how to effectively correct it) see my <u>Fixing</u> <u>Accumulated Shortness Booklet</u>

Lou makes my body work the way it's supposed to work. The treatments allow me to do what I do, easier, and more fluently. After each session my flexibility, range of motion, speed and balance are all better. After the third session, I had the best workout I

ever had in my life.

Mike Powell, WORLD RECORD HOLDER Long Jump 1988 & 1992 OLYMPIC SILVER MEDALIST

HOW IT'S DIFFERENT, YET... HOW IT ADDS TO WHAT YOU ALREADY DO

There are two major differences in approach, between this work and almost any other kind of treatment you may be familiar with. Almost all other Sports Medicine treatments, including chiropractic and stretching, are "neuro-muscular, bone and joint" oriented, and are usually locally focused. If you have a problem in the leg muscles, you treat the leg muscles.

On the other hand, this method, formally known as the Structural Integration Method of Connective Tissue Manipulation, is "soft connective tissue" oriented and is both locally and systemically oriented.

Practitioners like me know that pulls, stiffness and tightness are not only local in origin, but are part of tightness and structural imbalance in the whole body. This is especially true of back problems.

We also know that many muscle and joint problems are actually caused by soft connective tissue problems, specifically: short and hard soft connective tissue in and around the muscles that is rarely stretched out and almost never massaged out.

For example, pain over the kneecap is often in the tendon of the quadriceps muscles on the top of the thigh. But the cause of that tendon pull is the shortness in the fascia of those muscles and in their "interconnected" muscles on the front of the pelvis. These get bunched up, for instance, with a lot of running and cycling, especially with the effort needed to go uphill.

In addition, those muscles are also being held tight by the shortness of the hamstrings on the back of the thighs and the adductors on the inside of the thighs. Further, the thigh muscles are held in tightness by the lower leg and torso muscles.

What Structural Integration does is follow a knowledgeable sequence to unravel all this interconnecting tightness so that all the muscles' fascia spreads out. Then pain in the tendon can go away because the tightness that is pulling on the tendon is gone.

This inter-connected unraveling approach, along with the fact that we're actually spreading the fascia itself, gives very good benefits to hamstrings and other hard to lengthen areas. Hamstrings are part of an interconnected muscle and bone network through the entire leg. To lengthen them the most, we need to lengthen the fascia of all the leg muscles.

Tight shin or adductor muscles on the inside of the thigh will keep hamstrings from re-lengthening back to their full shape.

This system is "designed" to loosen large amounts of tightness and create lots more flexibility.

I can assure you that Lou has a wonderful understanding of the human body. He has a knack for not only treating a particular problem but helping to correct the cause. Often times, that cause is far away from the site of pain.

Lou has complemented the work we do in the training room with his own special brand of health care. We all work on flexibility programs, but Lou really attacks the problem and usually has wonderful results. I can honestly say that I would not hesitate to send any of my athletes to Lou. He can be an enormous asset to athletes and medical professionals alike

> Rich Riehl, HEAD ATHLETIC TRAINER Pepperdine University Trained to work on Olympic Athletes

THE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO RE-LENGTHENING AND RE-ORGANIZING THE WHOLE BODY

While this technique is a very powerful therapy for lengthening individual parts, the greatest and longest lasting effects come from treating the entire body.

We can think of muscles and bones as distinct pieces that we can massage or put ice packs on. But with fascia, what we're re-lengthening and re-organizing is a totally interconnected substance that's "everywhere."

Each part affects every other part. Shorten one place with intense effort and the whole body gets "worse." Re-lengthen it and the whole body gets "better."

Make each part of the body better through a sequence of sessions, and each of the parts, in turn, will also make all the other parts better, too.

As more of the body is loosened up, people actually feel a further

release in an area distant from where I'm currently working. The upper part of the torso, for instance, might relengthen and relax while I'm in the process of relengthening a part of the lower leg.

The soft connective tissue "network," called fascia (fah sha), goes around and through every muscle. It starts on the outside of the body just under the skin and goes through the deepest muscles inside the torso, limbs and head. So the fascia from place to place is not a set of separate chunks. It is more like a continuous interconnected web. It's like a set of multilayered body-suits all woven together. This gigantic, human shaped piece of fascia makes up the shape of the whole body. And inside it, are our muscle fibers, bones, organs, blood vessels, nerves and so forth.

So shortness or distortion anywhere in this network pulls and stresses muscles and bones everywhere else. The whole shape gets distorted. It's like a knot in a sweater or a bunch-up in a shirt.

And we all develop lots of these shortnesses, all over. Because even children tighten up and fall, everyone grows up with a somewhat randomly organized body structure, with varying degrees of shortness and misalignment pulling and twisting at various angles from various parts.

The purpose of the Structural Integration "system" is to organize this network by re-lengthening all the fascia back to the "designed" length of our muscles. Then the whole structure becomes a more integrated set of parts. And that relationship of bones and muscles gives us the best performance.

This improved organization simultaneously aligns us with the constant, and very influential, force of gravity. Instead of using up muscle effort and energy to keep standing up straight, this change lets us use those muscles much more fully for our athletic efforts. Gravity is even thought to then add energy to our own neuro-muscular activity, and to our internal physiology and energy fields.

Everything actually works together better, and so, economy of effort is greatly increased. Muscle "groups" actually work together better, which adds more power, and without having to work at control so much. Organizing the structure by changing the shape of the fascia also improves physiology in many ways. It expands the volume of air we can get into our lungs, it increases neurological and organ function, and it greatly improves the rate and efficiency of cell respiration.

A structure of this type maintains itself at a higher energy level that is also more coherent, or clearly and more harmoniously organized. This has a tendency to ward off disease, lends itself to creating a positive emotional outlook, raises the level of mental clarity, alertness and intuitiveness, and adds both power and sensitivity to movement. It also works toward refining artistic expression.

In this regard, we are creating more efficient and higher performing individuals who are less troubled by pain, exhaustion and injury.

From just the first 3-hr session I had more flexibility, my leg stretch was longer and easier and my technique was better. I also jumped farther than I thought I could. My 275 lb bench press went up a lot easier, the first time I'd done it really clean.

Overall, I no longer had the negative pulls that kept me from executing the way I'm trying to.

My recovery time was also better. The warm-up had been wearing me out; this time I wasn't as fatigued. And after my previous jumping workouts, I had been feeling "beat up," and didn't want to do anything for a couple of days. This time I didn't feel anywhere near as bad and I felt like I could jump again the next day.

My lower back would also be tight for 2-3 days and I'd need a chiropractor to put my back and hip in. I also wasn't as tight as usual and I didn't need a chiropractic adjustment.

> Gordon Laine, Long Jump, U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM alternate All-American Triple Jumper

The most incredible result has been my very fast and easy recovery. I now have no problem completely recovering from a marathon in just 3-4 hours, to where I would enjoy running again if I wanted to. The next day I feel just normal tightness, no muscle soreness, no change in gait, no limp, and no tender walking. I feel like I'm totally back to normal in two days.

My performance has also increased, including the fact that I pass people at the end of the marathon, going up hill.

Dr. BP, Dentist, age 28 MARATHON RUNNER

My warm-up stretches before soccer were 4-5" longer, with no effort. I was faster, and my timing was better in relation to speed and action. It gives me better control, better balance and a better center. I feel this is how my body should be.

The pains that had been hurting me regularly in my right shoulder since a 60 mph motorcycle accident 1-1/2 yrs ago are now totally gone, and I now have more strength in my shoulder than I'd had since the accident. I'd had no power in it at all.

> Mr. CG, LONG TIME SOCCER PLAYER, Film/TV Actor, age 26.

HOW IT'S COMPATIBLE

Structural Integration Bodywork is not a substitute for other Sports Medicine treatments. Yet, by improving the "competency" of the myo-fascial component, it increases the effectiveness of almost every other treatment and skill.

Lengthening the fascia of the muscles allows them to release back to their full muscle fiber lengths when the action

has been completed. This allows every neuro-muscular and joint manipulation therapy to work with freer and more accessible muscles.

It also improves the physiology of interstitial fluid, just as massage does on the outer fascia of the skin and external muscles. Only the Bodywork does in **down through all the muscles to the bones**.

This is an established method taught in a number of schools and applied by thousands of practitioners on many continents over the past 40 years. It was developed after much research and practice by a physiologist-biochemist with in-depth knowledge of yoga, osteopathy and other body methods.

It directly fixes "spasm" injuries. And while its purpose isn't to treat already damaged tissue, it does remove tightness that directly causes injury, that "spreads' the pain and that aggravates tissue that needs to heal. It also makes stretching much easier.

It helps for groin and shoulder problems.

Hamstrings benefit A LOT. It breaks up old scar tissue and it prevents tightness from becoming an injury.

This is such a great thing you're doing. We really do need more of this. I've had chronic hamstring problems since high school. And I'm just coming off a hamstring injury. This really helps. It pushes all that old stuff out, and the stuff from everyday training.

Getting off the table and immediately bending over, I could keep my knees locked and touch my palms flat to the floor, with room to spare. Getting right off the table, with my legs cold in the outdoors like this, I wouldn't have been able to do that before.

The next day before my event I felt great! And afterwards, when I warmed down and stretched, I felt better than I had felt after any race. It's been a long time since I felt that way, too.

Lynda Tolbert, 100 meter hurdles, Nike International team 1988 & 1992 U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM Became 4-TIME OLYMPIAN The main benefit is that two days after the first long session, I didn't have any problem with my left hamstring, which had been troubling me for nearly three weeks. The treatment cured my hamstring condition, and it improved my overall condition as well.

This bodywork let me train so well and still not have the tightness, in the hamstring and in the rest of my body.

Christina Cahill (Nee Boxer), 800/1500 meters 6- TIME BRITISH CHAMPION 3-TIME OLYMPIAN

I'd had chronic Achilles tendon tightness and operations for tears on both ankles. The bodywork broke down the tightness in my calves and they now move fluidly. Scar tissue had built up in the subdermal tissue and that got broken up.

The treatment was key to also breaking up and loosening the scar tissue under my buttocks at the top of the hamstrings. I was doing cleans weight lifting 1-1/2 to 2 years ago and pulled too hard, so I tore my upper hamstring, and it was never the same. Every time I did cleans, it would hurt. Now, it feels a lot better. My thighs are looser and lighter, and they move easier and faster. I've noticed I'm picking up speed in my training.

I'd also had a misalignment; when I lifted my right leg it didn't come up straight but twisted outward after it was half way up. That, too, was corrected.

Willie Banks WORLD RECORD HOLDER Triple Jump 3-TIME OLYMPIAN

WHAT THE TREATMENTS ARE LIKE AND HOW THEY MAKE YOU FEEL

My Sessions are 1-4 hours long. (Typically, other people's sessions are shorter, 1 or 1-1/4 hours long, and less frequent.)

Most practitioners do a visual "body reading" and often use Polaroid photos or a tall mirror to show the person where the tightness is, how it's hindering his or her movement and how it's causing pain or setting up an injury.

Then we manipulate the soft connective tissue of the muscles with our fingers, hands and arms, following a muscle group by muscle group organization. We spread the tissue as if we're working with putty, rather than squeezing, stroking or pressing it as is done in massage. A number of practitioners also teach special stretches and "integrated" movement techniques that add to the Bodywork improvements.

Each session creates improvement in the area worked. And each succeeding session builds on the work before it by working on other, related muscle groups. We start on the outside of the body and as each layer of tissue loosens and lengthens, we work into the next deeper sections.

As more and more parts of the body are treated, all the parts benefit further and the whole body maintains the benefits longer. At various times we compare photos from different sessions to see the progress that has been made and compare what we see with what the person feels.

Typically, people notice that they're standing straighter, without effort, and their reach and stride are longer. Everything feels "lighter," more alive and loose, even parts they didn't know were tight.

Even top athletes noticed breathing was fuller. The spine, pelvis and shoulders moved more flexibly when they breathed. They then realized how tight they'd been without realizing it.

As we lengthen each of the body parts like legs, abdomen and chest, people feel their backs lie flatter on the table. This means they're getting more aligned as well as looser.

This greater looseness and longer muscle length now becomes the regular condition. And there is also a feeling of much greater relaxation. People say they can stay relaxed even in the midst of intense activity, like running or handling many activities in a busy work day. The session is educational. Sometimes you feel tight or loose and you don't really know why. In the session you become more aware of why something feels tight or loose. And you learn which muscle groups affect others.

When you get tight somewhere, you often feel that the actual point of tightness is the problem, and you don't realize that it's being caused by tightness and a problem elsewhere. Lou would work on one area and I'd feel it become looser somewhere else.

In fact, I really didn't know I was stiff in some areas. But now that I've had the bodywork I can feel it's a lot freer, even though I didn't know it was tight before.

Christina Cahill (Nee Boxer), 800/1500 meters 6- TIME BRITISH CHAMPION 3-TIME OLYMPIAN

The series of bodywork sessions has been an educational experience. I'm more conscious of my structure and more knowledgeable of how the various parts are interconnected and interact with each other.

When one part gets tight and out of alignment, I understand what effect it has on other parts and have a pretty good idea what needs to be done to correct the situation.

Mr. RM, Retired Housing & Urban Development Manager, AGE 60

Almost everyone feels some improvement from the first session, especially from my own method of long sessions. In each, I work to improve a number of different body areas together. An increasingly significant improvement happens even from the first 8-10 hrs. A complete structural alignment for an average size person takes about 15-20 2-hr sessions.

Improvements are long lasting: Very noticeable benefits from even the first few sessions last for weeks, months and even years.

In all cases, any chronic shortness and lack of flexibility or

"stretch-ability" that was removed, is now gone. New tightness from current activity can then usually be removed easier and faster than it took to loosen the old accumulations.

One of the features of my own unique hands-on method is that I can do long sessions, and even a number of long sessions in a week or two. 3-4 hour sessions for serious athletes are common. I once did 10 hours in the first week for an Olympic jumper. His leg and foot spring got a lot better while their tightness and his chronic low back problems got a lot less.

I also add other practices we do right while I'm doing the Bodywork. These include concentration breathing exercises that increase both mental focus and body relaxation at the same time.

And I show people my Structural Bodywork method of getting more out of their stretches. In fact, my stretching positions add benefits beyond what they've gotten from the positions most people already know.

Athletes say my treatments feel great! They do a lot quickly. "And they make you feel good right after, even so loosened up that you're ready to start workouts." When I worked on some 10K runners right after their race, they said they felt they could go right back out and run again.

I never had this quick a response to any treatment, and I've been dealing with the same lower back problem for 20 years. Usually, when it hurts it lasts for 4-5 days and I have to totally rest. When I walk around I have extreme difficulty.

What's so different about this treatment is how rapidly it makes big improvements. I had a 3-hour session. I'm standing up straighter with less pain. I notice a big improvement in flexibility in my neck, shoulders and chest. My hips, pelvis, and calves are much looser. Overall, I feel I'm better aligned.

I even feel more peaceful inside. And I feel carefree and at ease in a situation that usually gets me tensed up.

> Mr. KB, Counselor, Former College FOOTBALL LINEBACKER

I've been an athlete for 15 years and had a lot of people work on me. This is the most unique kind of bodywork I've ever had. It's different from massage and very innovative.

From the first 2-1/2 hrs I had a deep relaxation and felt energized at the same time. I felt solid in my stance. I also got a lot from the concentration breathing exercises we did during the bodywork. It brought me down into my body and it also relaxed me faster.

After the second session I didn't feel as if I'd just had four hours of work on me (plus 2-1/2 hrs the day before). Judging from the other kinds of bodywork I've had, I think I would have been dead or wiped out, and I wasn't at all. We had combined more breath and energy concentration practice with this bodywork and instead of feeling wiped out I felt really focused and like I was ready to start workouts on schedule 1-1/2 days later. I also felt more centered.

> Gwen Loud, Long Jump, Keiser Track Club US OLYMPIC TRIALS FINALIST 1980-1992 3rd in U.S. at age 30, 1984 NCAA Champion

In my general approach to the body, I tailor the typically followed "recipe" of sessions to a person's specific needs. So I won't be doing just one set of prescribed strokes per session as a number of other practitioners do. I work on the overall body integration and alignment while I'm also working on specific issues.

And I try to do a lot in each session so people's benefits come sooner.

I also do tune-up sessions between or before games, events or performances. I can even work on-site; and even on a chair, couch or rug. My special hands-on technique enables me to do good work through clothes, too.

These sessions can immediately remove tightness, especially on the back, neck and shoulders. They not only restore, but sometimes increase, range of motion, flexibility and speed. They can, of course, lessen the chance of pulling a hamstring or other muscle. And while they do create some of the benefits of a massage, they are also re-alignment tune-ups.

I accompanied an elite college track team to the state championships. While there, the top long jumper came to me with a bad spasm in one leg. After a significant relengthening of mainly that leg, his next jump took second in the meet.

After I broke my shoulder, I had this Bodywork. Because of the treatments, I was able to have full range of motion in my shoulder which the doctor had thought would be impossible. I also returned to work a month earlier than the doctor had predicted.

I'd also worked out in a gym after the injury was fixed to build myself up, but I also tightened myself up significantly again. A few more Bodywork hours corrected that, too.

> Ms. JS, Registered NURSE, Recreational Athlete, SKIER, SPEED HIKER, WORKS OUT Regularly, age 47

I work out in the gym and now have faster recuperation from intense efforts. It doesn't seem to hurt as much; I'm not really sore afterwards as I used to be. I had thought that pain was "normal."

I'm more flexible. And when I do leg lifts my flexibility increases, whereas before I would just tighten up more.

And my chronically tight neck has stayed much better.

Ms CE, Store Manager, GOLFER, WORKS OUT Regularly, age 42 My whole way of running feels smoother and looks smoother to others. It's also more fluid and my legs move with less effort.

The chronic tightness and bone rigidity in my feet is greatly corrected and my lower legs are much looser and more flexible. The pains I was having in my lower back and hips are gone. I feel less tight and looser all over my body and my bones and muscles are much more in alignment. Even my spine, where I was told I had a protruding disk, looks better.

Ms AB, MARATHON RUNNER, age 46, Engineer & Business Owner

WHAT ELSE THIS TREATMENT CAN DO FOR YOU

We can generally say that getting Structural Integration makes people look better, feel better and perform better!

It noticeably improves mechanics, accuracy, coordination and mental concentration. People say they don't have to work at control as much; it just comes. And as you'd expect from greater looseness, there's more speed, power, flexibility and dexterity.

It improves balance, posture and "bearing." It raises the center of gravity for better movement. Yet it lowers the concentration center so people are more grounded. They are also more energetically centered, from top to bottom, and also from outside, now to deeper inside.

Athletes and dancers who have gotten very tight, even over many years' time, have regained quite a lot of their flexibility, muscular range of motion and even endurance, just by getting loosened *a lot*, and somewhat integrated.

This treatment also improves the physiology of the fascia and many other metabolic functions. There's less compression on the blood and lymphatic channels and even on the organs. There's also more fluidy and open spaces in the tissues around the muscle cells themselves. So we can get a noticeable increase in the speed and volume of cell respiration, blood nourishment and waste removal.

Besides the fact that a better neuro-muscular function increases people's economy of effort during activity, the metabolic and physiological improvements increase it, too.

And it often took people a lot less time to recover from intense workouts or performance. One 50 year old chiropractor said, after just six hours of treatment, that he was no longer wiped out after his 90 minutes squash workouts.

To draw perhaps an obvious conclusion, because this kind of body "processing" can increase performance and lessen chance of injury, it not only can keep a person "healthier" during the length of a season, but it could also lengthen their careers.

Musicians, singers, actors and even TV and Radio newscasters can express themselves with greater power of projection that comes from more of their body. It is also centered further down, in the "hara," and their expression sounds calmer and more "even." Even if it's with an instrument, our own energies "operate" that instrument.

The overall muscle system is looser and more powerful at the same time. That gives them a larger range of emotional expression. And they are more articulate in their speech and even hand movements. The face looks less stressed and maybe even younger, and facial expressions can be more animated. The head itself is less tight, as are the neck, shoulders and back.

Since more of the body's cavities are available to resonate, and resonate further, singers can experience a broader range of verbal tone and octave, with less strain.

One actor said just his character now came out. "He" wasn't in the way.

Another actor said the body-oriented, vibratory tension release sounds, and the energy center strengthening sounds, both did a lot for him right before his performance. He said they did a lot more than the usual speech enunciation exercises he'd been taught in his acting training. Lou did an outstanding job and was a great contributor to our winning both the cross country and track and field state championships. This was the first time that any community college had ever accomplished this feat and could only be done by having our athletes healthy throughout the entire season.

I found Lou to be very dedicated to his profession as well as extremely knowledgeable. His enthusiasm was contagious and carried over to all of the student athletes with whom he worked. The athletes were extremely impressed and looked forward to working with him in order to not only reduce whatever ailments they might have, but also to prevent them from occurring in the first place.

I have the fondest regard for Lou and can truthfully recommend him to any coach or instructor who wishes to reduce injuries in athletes and students.

Ronald J. Allice, HEAD TRACK AND FIELD COACH Long Beach Community College Now Head Coach at University of Southern California At LBCC he'd created a Dynasty, winning the California Jr. College State Championship for many years

As I said at the beginning of this article, compared to other many loosening methods, this one works fast. In just a few hours treatment it can remove weeks, months, years and even decades of bunched up tightness, including tightness people weren't even aware they had, but had been unconsciously limiting their performance.

It routinely removes accumulated stress, tension, soreness, and fatigue usually right away.

As more of even just the outside muscles are spread back out, the size of the area in pain from injuries, or very tight spots, will often become smaller.

As the range of motion gets bigger, people find they only get "that pain or tightness" when they move their neck, arm, back or leg further than they could before.

And, as you read at earlier, it breaks up scar tissue from old injuries.

Because of this "big" re-lengthening, it significantly decreases the chance of non-contact injuries such as back spasms, disk problems, and leg problems such as hamstring, Achilles tendon and groin pulls. And to some degree, if the muscles in the whole, long, interconnected areas are lengthened, it can lessen the chance of shoulder separations, and knee and ankle sprains.

I was absolutely ready to schedule back surgery for a severe extruded disk in my lower back at L5-S1 (12 millimeters). (My spine surgeon said even 6-8mm is considered bad.)

I'd had low back pain on and off over the years which had gotten very bad in the previous 3-4 months before the bodywork. I also had sciatica in the right leg for the previous 2 months.

I had 5-hrs of Bodywork in two sessions. About two weeks after the second session the pain completely subsided and I had full use of my right leg.

Two years later I am still well.

Mr. N. S., Interior Designer & Firm Owner, age 38

I've had a lower back problem off and on for 30 years.

Lou's treatments that corrected a chronically tight, spasming and painful right leg have also corrected this back problem. It even used to hurt when I coughed. Now it hasn't bothered me for months.

Doing my work is easier. I don't have to strain, I can twist my body without it being tight, and I'm more flexible. I **can do my own exercises and stretches** and demonstrate them for my patients, and I couldn't do that before. Stuff moves now.

Dr DS, DC, CHIROPRACTOR and Advanced Kinesiologist

I RECOMMEND MY TWO BOOKS

Back Fix Bodywork - Understanding the Cause of Back Pain & How to Fix it.

How to Make Your Body Work Better & Do More for You

If you're an athlete or performing artist, or you work with these people, you can learn from these books.

Their unique "engineering analysis" approach explains how to improve performance and remove pain so that you can use the information in your own work or training.