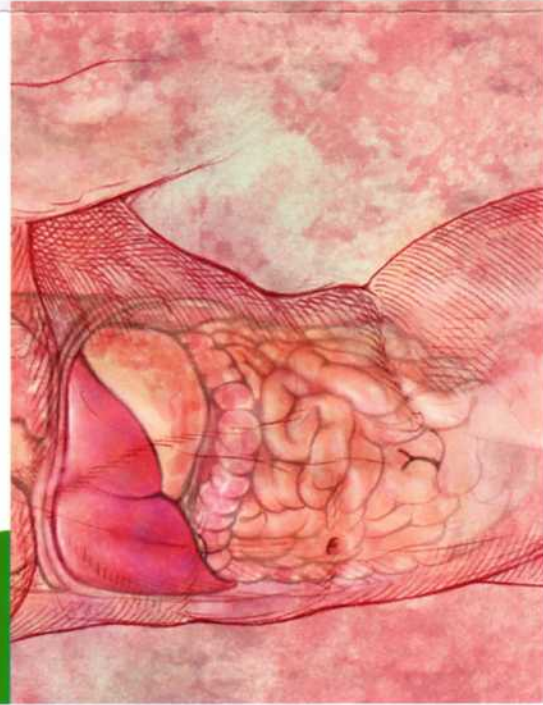


The Digestive System

Organs that make up the digestive tract are the mouth, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, large intestine—also called the colon—rectum, and anus. Inside these hollow organs is a lining called the mucosa. In the mouth, stomach, and small intestine, the mucosa contains tiny glands that produce juices to help digest food. The digestive tract also contains a layer of smooth muscle that helps break down food and move it along the tract.

Two "solid" digestive organs, the liver and the pancreas, produce digestive juices that reach the intestine through small tubes called ducts. The gallbladder stores the liver's digestive juices until they are needed in the intestine. Parts of the nervous and circulatory systems also play major roles in the digestive system.

The large, hollow organs of the digestive tract contain a layer of muscle that enables their walls to move. The movement of organ walls can propel food and liquid through the system and also can mix the contents within each organ. Food moves from one organ to the next through muscle action called peristalsis. Peristalsis looks like an ocean wave traveling through the muscle. The muscle of the organ contracts to create a narrowing and then propels the narrowed portion slowly down the length of the organ. These waves of narrowing push the food and fluid in front of them through each hollow organ.



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Core & Digestive System Massage



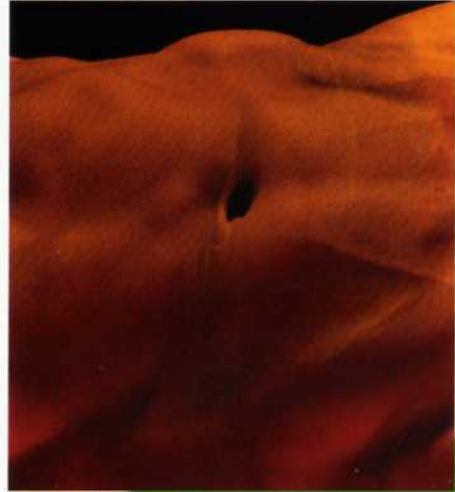
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Core Muscles

The core muscles include not only those in your abdominals and back, but also muscles in your pelvic floor and hips. Many of your core muscles can't be seen because they're buried underneath other muscles. The transverse abdominis, for example, is hiding underneath your rectus abdominis (your six-pack, if you've got one) and encases, or hugs the whole area below the belly button. While the rectus abdominis is sitting on top looking good (that is, if you've been doing your crunches), the transverse abdominis is working hard, keeping your posture upright and protecting many of your internal organs.

You can't see the erector spinae, either - it's behind you, supporting your back. And did you know that those pelvic floor muscles aid in stabilizing your spine? All these muscles, and more, work together to keep your trunk stable while your limbs are active. Strong core muscles keep your back healthy. They hold your body upright, improve your balance and enable you to really put some oomph in your arm and leg movements. If the core muscles are weak, your body doesn't work as effectively, and other muscles have to pick up the slack. This can result in injuries such as a twisted knee, a pulled shoulder, or your classic "bad back." A weak core can make you old before your time. With a strong core, you may be old in years, but you won't walk old. If you're young and active in sports, a strong core will aid you in your power moves, and your whole body will function more effectively.



Core & Digestive System Bodywork

Not only does your core need to be strong with stamina, it needs to be flexible enough in the connective tissues to allow organs to function efficiently and allow the organs to move. Trigger Points and scar tissue from past injuries, surgeries and even stress can prevent organs from moving and doing their job. Your digestive system cannot function properly if it cannot MOVE!

Proper nutrition plays a big role, but without special bodywork being done, nutrition may not get to the cells and processed properly. There may be blockages in the tissues preventing the body from using food efficiently.



Here I am gently working into the abdominals and into the ribcage. Allowing the tissue to let me in at its own pace. The Liver, Gall Bladder, Stomach, Spleen and pancreas all are within the area of the ribcage and lining of the diaphragm muscle.

Knots in the abdomen can cause abdominal pain, back pain, hip/leg pain, migraines, pain anywhere. Most of the internal organs are muscular (small intestine, large intestine, bladder, gall bladder, heart, spleen, stomach, uterus). These muscular viscera can become tense, causing pain in the abdomen. Trigger points can form in the tense muscle fibers, creating tension and/or referred pain in any other part of the body.

The liver is often hardened and glued to the respiratory diaphragm. Releasing the adhesions allows the diaphragm to move more easily, so breathing deepens. Liver function may improve as well. The liver and gall bladder can have trigger points that refer pain to the neck and shoulders.



Releasing the iliopsoas (pronounced ill-e-o so-as) muscle, which is one of your deep core muscles that you cannot see.

The Iliacus is a flat, triangular muscle, which lies deep within in the pelvis. It attaches from the pelvis to the thigh bone (femur). Its primary action is to flex and rotate the thigh.

It is considered one of the muscles that make up the hip flexors; a group of muscles that bring the legs and trunk together in a flexion movement.

The Psoas Major is a large powerful muscle that helps move the upper leg (femur) and the torso closer together in a flexion movement.

The Psoas muscle attaches on the lower spine (lumbar vertebrae) and passes in front of the hip-joint, underneath the inguinal ligament and to the top of the long thigh bone (the femur).

