

## Repetitive Muscle Stress

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**Repetitive Muscle Stress** (or **RMS** for short) is turning out to be a major problem of the budding 1990's. This is being triggered by the rapidly increasing computer key board usage, causing such problems as numb fingers, painfully stiff wrists (often diagnosed as "carpal tunnel syndrome"), stiff and sore arms, shoulders, back, etc.

Actually **RMS** has been around for a long time. Ask the beauticians who can't hold their arms up at the end of the day or comb their own hair or brush their teeth. Or ask the grocery checkout clerk who can't put on a pullover sweater. Or ask the meat and poultry packers who find themselves in such pain that they are unable to continue working and find themselves on disability unemployment. Or ask the dentist who works limited or half days because his arms and wrists go weak when he works too long. The list goes on and on.

The increasing occurrence of **RMS** with its very debilitating symptoms is resulting in increasing legal action, employees suing employers, and increasing statutory regulation by the state and federal governments. This is resulting in an increasing morass for businesses large and small that mostly translates into more forms, more fines, and more bucks.

Most efforts to reduce the effects of **RMS** center around reducing the repetitive activity impact. These efforts include "optimal" workstation design, braces and splints, frequent rest periods, and job rotation. They all do help to reduce **RMS** but often at a cost of significant loss in productivity.

**However the bottom line** is restoring the loss in muscle balance and strength triggered by the repetitive activities. Major factors in **RMS** are **Reactive and Frozen Muscles**.

In a typical repetitive activity, certain muscles soon tire. As the activity is continued the muscle tone, or energy level, is altered to compensate. Gradually more and more reactive muscle interactions are set up. A

reactive muscle is a muscle that weakens, when another muscle is activated. Often the person has the feeling of getting weaker and weaker as they continue to attempt to perform an activity, while other parts of their body tighten up.

In the case of stiff or painful wrists, with the degradation of the muscle balance in the arms due to the repetitive activity, the wrist structure, including the carpal tunnel, is no longer properly supported by the musculature, and the integrity of the carpal tunnel collapses resulting in irritation of the nerves and tendons passing through it.

Correcting the reactive muscle imbalances and any frozen (hypertonic) muscle conditions, immediately relieves the stress on the wrist structure, allowing it to return to normal. Typically much of the pain and stiffness disappears almost immediately, and most of the rest disappears in 12 to 24 hours as the injured tissues quickly heal once the stress is removed.

We have been helping people with **RMS** for over 10 years balancing Reactive and Frozen Muscles. Until we discovered the **Reactive Muscle Basic Balance** and the **Frozen Muscle Basic Balance** in 1988, such balancing required considerable skill and time because the layers of specific reactive and frozen muscle combinations needed to be identified and balanced in priority order. Now the **Basic Balance** routines eliminate the need to identify the specific muscles involved, making it easier for the therapist to achieve effective results quickly and opening the door to simple **self-help** routines.

The **do-it-yourself** aspect of our **Basic Balance** exercises makes it possible for workers to do this balancing on the job without the assistance of a muscle balancing therapist. The exercises can be done beforehand, or on the job, or afterwards.

Also involved in some cases are **Muscle Knots** (localized muscle spasms) limited

**Range of Motion** (due to overly tight muscles fibers), and **Shock Absorbers** (tight joints). In some cases residual **Structural Imbalances**, deriving from the muscle imbalances, may also be an important factor. When present these factors must also be dealt with for complete relief.

Additional factors whose importance we have become aware of more recently include **Muscle Control Circuit Imbalance** (contralateral and homolateral muscles) and **Mixed Modes** (including Frozen Reactives, Structural Reactives, and Frozen Structure). These too can be corrected with simple do-it-yourself exercises.

**RMS** is also a factor in many athletic activities. We have seen these balancing exercises together with our **Five Finger Quick Fix** improve basket ball, golfing, hiking, and aerobic exercise performance and would expect significant improvement in most other athletic and dance activities.

All of the Balancing Exercises and Muscle Testing routines required to balance **RMS** and related imbalances are described in the 64-page version of our book, *Self-Help for Stress and Pain*, (Ref. 6).

The original version of the Five Finger Quick Fix can be found in Ref. 1. The updated version can be found in Ref. 2. The Basic Balance Exercises for reactive and frozen muscles are discussed in Refs. 3 and 4. Homolateral and contralateral muscles are discussed in Ref. 5.

#### References:

1. Barhydt, Elizabeth and Barhydt, Hamilton, *Some New Ideas in Muscle Testing and Energy Balancing*, page 56, Touch for Health International Journal, July 1986.
2. Barhydt, Elizabeth and Barhydt, Hamilton, *Update on Electromagnetic Balancing, Food Testing, and Reactive Muscle Procedures*, page 13, Touch for Health International Journal, July 1988.
3. Barhydt, Elizabeth and Barhydt, Hamilton, *New Techniques for Balancing Reactive and Frozen Muscles*, page 19, Touch for Health International Journal, July 1988.
4. Barhydt, Elizabeth and Barhydt, Hamilton, *The Basic Balance Concept*, page 18, Touch for Health International Journal, July 1990.
5. Barhydt, Elizabeth and Barhydt, Hamilton, *Balancing Homolateral and Contralateral Muscles*, page 5, Touch for Health International Journal, July 1991, & I-ASK Journal 1991.
6. Barhydt, Elizabeth and Barhydt, Hamilton, *Self-Help for Stress and Pain* Loving Life, 3rd edition, September 1990.

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