

# Structural Integration (ATSI)

*An educational handout for clients considering or beginning an Anatomy Trains Structural Integration 12-Series*

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## A Client Guide to the Anatomy Trains 12-Series

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### Structural Integration at a Glance

#### **What it is:**

A whole-body approach to improving posture, movement, and ease by working with the connective tissue (fascia) and movement patterns.

#### **How it works:**

A structured series of sessions (most often 12) combining skilled myofascial work with movement education and awareness.

#### **What makes it different:**

Rather than treating isolated symptoms, Structural Integration addresses how your *entire body* organizes itself in gravity.

#### **Your role:**

Active participant and co-therapist. Your awareness, feedback, and integration between sessions are essential.

#### **Common reasons people choose SI:**

- Chronic tension or discomfort
- Postural or movement limitations
- Desire for lasting change rather than short-term relief
- Curiosity about how the body adapts and heals

#### **Time commitment:**

Typically 12 sessions spaced over 3-4 months.

#### **Is it right for you?**

Structural Integration is best suited for people who are willing to engage thoughtfully in a process of change rather than seeking a quick fix.

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# An Overview of Structural Integration

Structural Integration (SI) is a form of manual therapy and movement education that works with the body's connective tissue—known as fascia—to improve alignment, balance, and ease of movement. Rather than focusing on isolated muscles or symptoms, Structural Integration looks at the *whole body* and how it organizes itself in gravity.

Anatomy Trains Structural Integration (ATSI) is one school within the broader field of Structural Integration. It grows out of the pioneering work of Dr. Ida P. Rolf and was further developed by Thomas Myers, author of *Anatomy Trains*. ATSI uses a systematic, multi-session approach—most often a 12-session series—combining slow, precise myofascial work with movement re-education.

Over time, life experiences such as injuries, surgeries, repetitive movement, emotional stress, and cultural habits (like prolonged sitting or device use) can shape how we move and hold ourselves. What begins as a simple response can become a habit, then a posture, and eventually a structural pattern held within the fascial network. Structural Integration is designed to gently unwind these long-held patterns, allowing the body to reorganize toward greater length, balance, and efficiency.

ATSI is often described as an “old-world craft with a 21st-century understanding of anatomy.” Sessions are guided by careful visual assessment (called body reading) and by an understanding of the body’s myofascial continuities—the lines of tension and connection that link distant regions of the body into a coherent whole.

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## The Goals and Benefits of Structural Integration

The primary goal of Structural Integration is to reduce unnecessary strain in the body so that movement and posture require less effort. By addressing the fascial fabric that organizes muscles, joints, and bones, ATSI aims to create changes that are not only noticeable but lasting.

Clients often report benefits such as:

- Improved posture and alignment without conscious effort
- Greater ease and efficiency in everyday movement
- Reduced chronic tension or discomfort
- Increased body awareness and coordination
- A sense of feeling more “at home” in their body

Because fascia adapts to long-standing patterns of use and stress, working with it can support changes that go beyond symptom relief. Rather than repeatedly “putting things back into place,” ATSI works with the connective tissue relationships that *hold* the body in place, so new alignment becomes part of how you naturally stand, walk, and move.

Structural Integration is often complementary to other forms of care, such as massage therapy, chiropractic, or osteopathy. While each approach has its own focus, ATSI emphasizes whole-body integration and long-term pattern change.

It is also worth noting that some clients experience emotional or perceptual shifts as physical patterns change. These experiences are generally temporary and are understood as part of the body's process of letting go of old holding patterns.

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## Practitioner–Client Partnership: A Co-Therapeutic Process

Structural Integration works best when it is approached as a **co-therapeutic process**. While your practitioner brings expertise in anatomy, fascial relationships, and skilled hands-on techniques, *you* are the expert on your own body—your sensations, history, responses, and lived experience.

Each session is a collaboration. Your feedback about pressure, sensation, comfort, and perception directly informs how the work unfolds. The practitioner listens with their hands and eyes; the client participates through awareness, communication, and curiosity. When both roles are actively engaged, the work is more precise, safer, and more effective.

This partnership continues between sessions. Noticing changes, responding to your body's needs, and gently applying awareness in daily life all support the structural changes initiated in sessions. Structural Integration is not something that is *done to you*—it is something you actively participate in.

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## Is Structural Integration Right for You?

Structural Integration tends to suit people who are curious about their body, open to change, and interested in understanding how posture, movement, and life experience are connected. You do not need to be flexible, athletic, or free of pain to benefit.

You may be a good candidate if you:

- Have long-standing tension, discomfort, or movement restrictions
- Notice habitual postures or movement patterns you would like to change
- Feel that previous treatments have helped temporarily but not created lasting change
- Are interested in developing greater body awareness

Before beginning a 12-Series, it helps to have a few things in place:

- **Time and continuity:** Structural Integration works best when sessions are spaced consistently, allowing each one to build on the last.
- **Willingness to participate:** While the practitioner provides the manual work, your awareness, feedback, and attention are essential parts of the process.
- **Openness to sensation and change:** The work can be deep at times, but it is always collaborative. Communicating your experience helps guide the session.
- **Capacity for integration:** Simple practices such as walking, resting when needed, and noticing changes between sessions support better outcomes.

Structural Integration may not be appropriate if you are looking for a quick fix, are unable to commit to a series, or have medical conditions or acute trauma that would make deep or sustained manual work unsuitable without medical clearance. Your practitioner can help you determine whether this work is appropriate for you.

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## How to Get the Most from an ATSI 12-Series

The ATSI series is a process of realigning your body, educating your kinesthetic sense, and reclaiming ease in movement. Each session has a particular focus, yet the series unfolds as a whole, with changes accumulating over time.

### Before and after sessions

- Allow time for a short walk before and after your appointment. Walking helps you sense changes and supports integration.
- Consider keeping a journal. Noting sensations, emotions, posture, movement, or even dreams can help you track subtle and meaningful shifts.

### During sessions

- Stay present and communicate. If pressure feels too intense or you notice yourself bracing, let your practitioner know so the work can be adjusted.
- Remember that you are the expert on your own body. Collaboration leads to better results than endurance.

### Between sessions

- Listen to your body's signals. You may feel drawn to move more—or to rest more—as your system adapts.
- Break up long periods of sitting with gentle movement or stretching.
- Warm baths, especially with Epsom salts, can ease residual soreness.

## **Awareness and posture**

- Avoid forcing yourself into what you think is “good posture.” Structural Integration is designed to help your body find balance without effort.
- If you are given awareness practices or simple movements, approach them gently and frequently rather than holding positions rigidly.
- One of the most powerful tools is simply noticing when old patterns return—and allowing them to soften again.

Changes may feel most obvious immediately after a session and subtler as the week goes on. This does not mean the work has disappeared; rather, your body is integrating it. Many clients continue to notice positive changes for months after completing the series.

Above all, the ATSI 12-Series is an opportunity to explore how your body organizes itself in gravity and movement. Approached with curiosity, patience, and active participation, it can be a deeply informative and rewarding process.

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## **Contraindications, Scope of Practice, and Professional Boundaries**

Structural Integration is a form of manual therapy and movement education. It is **not a medical treatment**, and it does not diagnose, prescribe, or treat disease. Your practitioner works within their professional scope of practice and training.

Structural Integration may need to be modified, postponed, or avoided in certain situations, including but not limited to:

- Acute inflammation or infection
- Recent fractures, surgeries, or severe injuries (unless cleared by a medical professional)
- Certain vascular, neurological, or systemic conditions
- Situations where deep or sustained manual work is medically contraindicated

It is important to inform your practitioner of any relevant medical conditions, medications, or recent changes in your health. When appropriate, Structural Integration can be complementary to medical care, physiotherapy, chiropractic, or other therapeutic approaches, and may be undertaken concurrently with those services.

Your practitioner will always work collaboratively, respectfully, and within ethical and professional boundaries. You are encouraged to ask questions, voice concerns, and participate actively in decisions about your care.

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# Client Consent & Expectations for Structural Integration

Structural Integration is a collaborative, educational, and experiential process. By choosing to participate in an ATSI series, you acknowledge and agree to the following expectations:

- I understand that Structural Integration is not a medical treatment and does not diagnose or cure disease.
- I understand that results vary and depend on my participation, awareness, and integration between sessions.
- I agree to communicate openly about sensation, comfort, boundaries, and any physical or emotional responses.
- I understand that discomfort, temporary soreness, or emotional responses may arise and are usually short-lived.
- I understand that I may pause, modify, or stop a session at any time.
- I agree to inform my practitioner of relevant medical conditions, medications, or changes in health.
- I understand that Structural Integration works best as a series and that spacing and continuity matter.

This process works most effectively when practitioner and client engage as respectful collaborators, each bringing their expertise to the work.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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*This handout is intended for educational purposes and to support informed decision-making. It does not replace medical advice. If you have questions about whether Structural Integration is appropriate for you, please consult your healthcare provider and discuss your individual circumstances with your practitioner.*