



## **EDUCATIONAL CONTENT POWERED BY EPT RECOVERY**

### **Active Release Therapy**

#### **What is Active Release Therapy / Technique (ART)?**

Active Release Therapy is a non-invasive manual therapy. The technique combines tissue manipulation and movement. Active Release Therapy is used to correct any soft tissue restrictions in the human body, aimed at the muscular system and the connective tissue.

#### **Who will make use of ART?**

A number of healthcare providers are trained in ART, including:

- Chiropractors
- Physiotherapists
- Massage therapists
- Physicians
- Biokineticists

#### **Why do therapist use ART?**

Active release therapy is used to remove any tissue restrictions that can possibly cause pain and /or mobility issues. These providers use ART to treat back pain, headaches, and other symptoms caused by soft tissue conditions and injuries.

#### **What is the goal with ART?**

The goal is to break down scar tissue and adhesions in order to optimize normal biomechanics and bodily function. ART entails identifying, isolating, and targeting the affected area to break up scar tissue. This promotes blood flow and faster healing of injuries. ART can be used to treat problems with your: muscles, ligaments, tendons, and nerves.

#### **What is target areas for treatment?**

ART can be used to treat pain and other symptoms caused by injury or damage to:

**Fascia:** This is fibrous connective tissue that protects and supports muscles and organs throughout your body.

**Major muscle groups:** Strains and pulls from overuse or trauma can affect any of your major muscle groups.

**Tendons and ligaments:** Tendons connect muscles to bone and ligaments connect bone to bone. Injury to either can cause pain and decrease range of motion.



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### **What conditions are treated?**

- lower back pain
- chronic neck pain
- tension headaches
- shoulder strains (including frozen shoulder)
- carpal tunnel syndrome
- shin splints
- sciatic nerve pain
- plantar fasciitis
- bursitis
- tennis elbow

### **How active release technique works?**

ART works by breaking up adhesions, which are dense collections of scar tissue that form when muscles and connective tissues are injured. When the scar tissue binds between your muscles, it limits flexibility, causing pain and stiffness in muscles and joints.

Sometimes adhesions can also entrap nerves. The manipulation of the soft tissues through ART breaks up the adhesions so your muscles, joints, and nerves can move freely again.

During an ART session, your healthcare provider will feel the area and identify the location of the scar tissue. They will use the technique to isolate and target the area, manipulating it to break up the scar tissue and restore proper blood flow so the area can heal.

The following are signs that you may have an accumulation of scar tissue that may benefit from ART:

- stiffness in your neck, elbow, hands, knees, or back
- increased pain when exercising
- sharp pain in the bottom of your foot near the heel
- pain, numbness, and tingling in your fingers
- reduced flexibility and limited range of motion
- decreased strength
- inflamed joints
- tingling, numbness, or weakness

### **Treatment goals:**

The goal of ART is to break up the adhesions and restore your range of motion and improve your pain. By breaking up scar tissue, muscles and joints are able to glide and move freely again without pain and stiffness.

Specific protocols are used along with specific activation and tensioning techniques to hereby treat the affected tissue.



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### Benefits of active release technique:

ART offers many benefits for anyone who has pain and other symptoms caused by soft tissue injuries either from sports, overuse, or trauma.

Benefits include:

- increased flexibility
- increased range of motion
- decreased lower back pain
- improved chronic neck pain
- relief of tension headaches
- management of carpal tunnel
- management of shin splints
- management of plantar fasciitis
- management of tennis elbow
- improvement of sciatic symptoms

**There are other soft tissue treatments similar to ART.** Here's a look at each one and their key differences:

- **Deep tissue massage:** ART combines active movement with pressure, similar to a deep tissue massage.
- **Rolfing:** In this type of therapy, manipulation and deep stretching of the soft tissues are used to improve alignment and posture.
- **Graston Technique :** This patented technique is very similar to ART. It also targets adhesions and improves blood flow but uses handheld instruments to provide tissue mobilization (focusses more on fascia than soft tissue)
- **NeuroKinetic Therapy:** This corrective protocol uses a system of muscle tests to identify failures which are then corrected using adjustments. It does this by changing the programming of your motor control center, the part of your brain that's responsible for coordinating your body's movements.
- **Dry needling:** Trigger points are hard "knots" in a muscle that can cause widespread pain. In dry needling, a thin needle is pushed through your skin to stimulate a trigger point, which may release the "knot" in tight muscle to improve pain and stiffness. It's often used with other treatments, such as physical therapy.

### What to expect from active release technique?

ART involves very precise pressure and can be very painful. If you have a low tolerance for pain, then you will likely find a treatment session to be uncomfortable. It can work in as little as one session for some, though some people may need more than one.

ART should only be performed by a certified provider. You can find certified ART providers in your area on the ART website.

For more information on the above article or to speak to an EPT representative, kindly contact > [admin@eptrecovery.com](mailto:admin@eptrecovery.com)