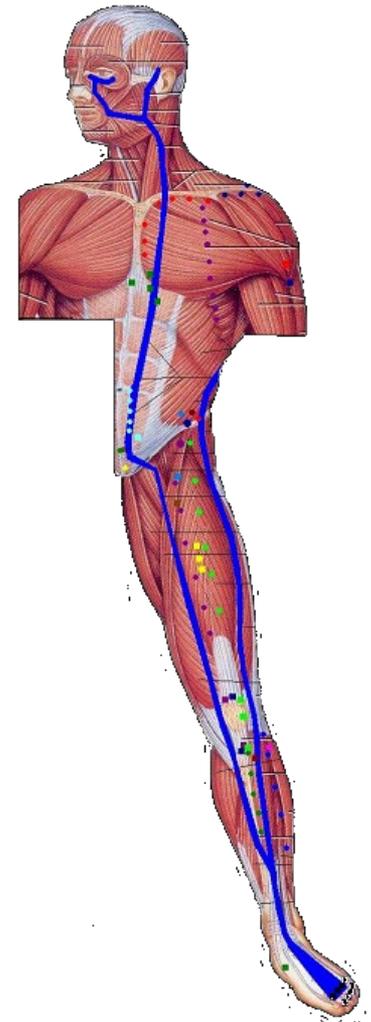


JING JIN 经 筋

THE MUSCLE CHANNELS



Giovanni Maciocia ©

CHINESE MEDICINE

MUSCLES 筋

SINEWS 筋

HUANG 育 (these are only in the abdomen)

WESTERN MEDICINE

MUSCLES (Striated)

TENDONS

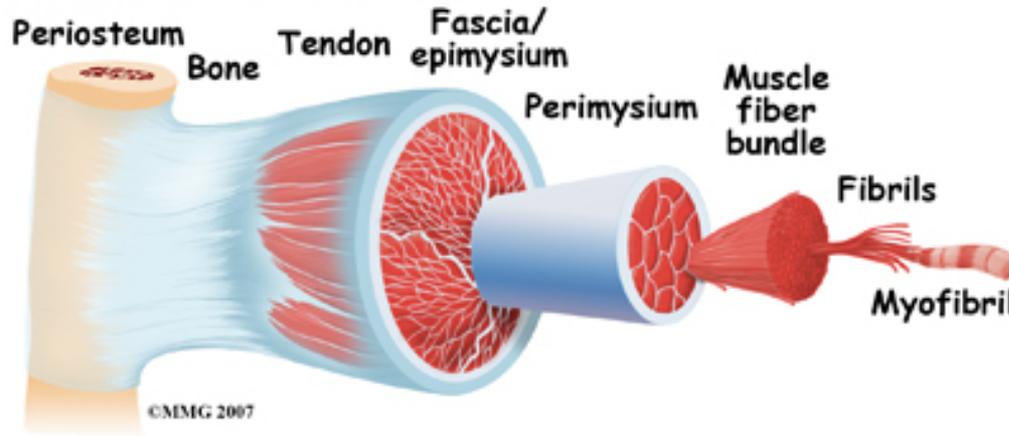
FASCIA

LIGAMENTS

CARTILAGE

Connective tissue

Muscle Structure



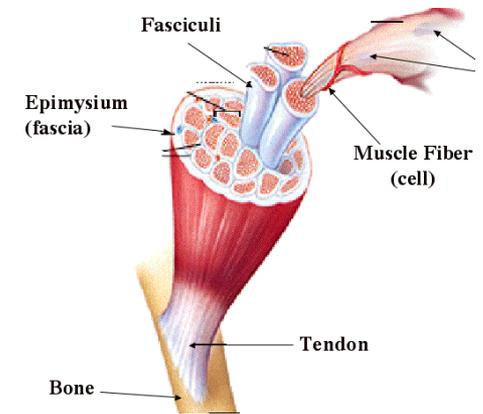
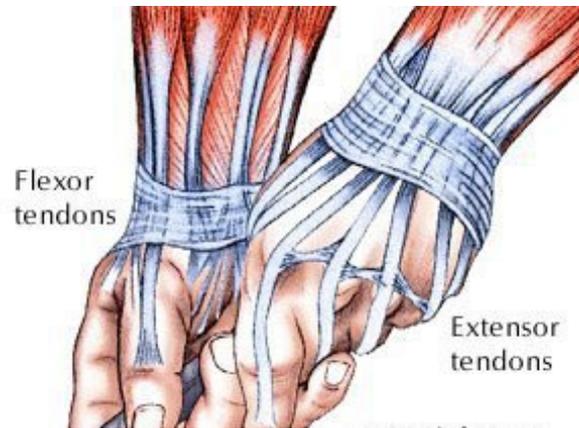
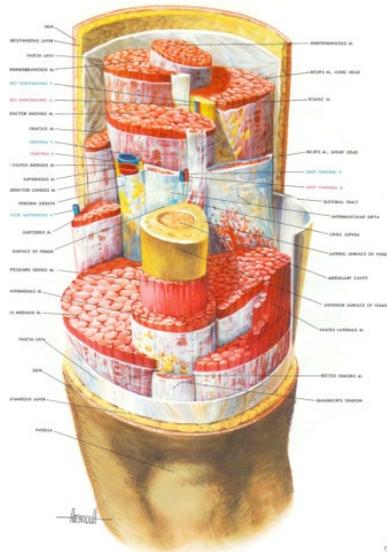
Fascia is a form of connective tissue. Its job is to provide a sliding and gliding environment for muscles, to suspend organs in their proper place (in the abdomen), to transmit movement from muscle to the bones they are attached to, and to provide a supportive and movable wrapping for nerves and blood vessels as they pass through and between muscles.

In its non-stretchy form, it's the substance that makes up tendons, which attach muscle to bone, and ligaments, which attach bone to bone.

Muscles are composed of muscle fibers that are each wrapped in a thin, tight sheath of connective tissue known as fascia. Bundles of muscle fibers are then over wrapped with a slightly thicker layer, then bundles of bundles are similarly wrapped and then the total muscle is wrapped again with another layer of fascia.

As the muscle nears its end at a bone, the size and number of muscle fibers significantly decreases, narrowing the circumference of the muscle, but the fascia that has been wrapping those muscle fibers continues, becoming the tendon that attaches the muscle to bone.

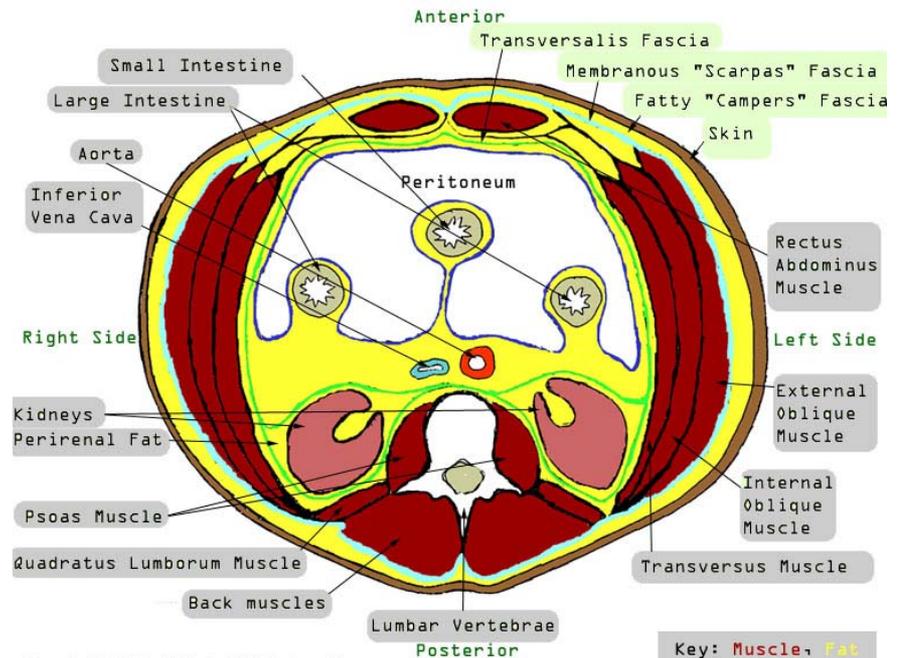
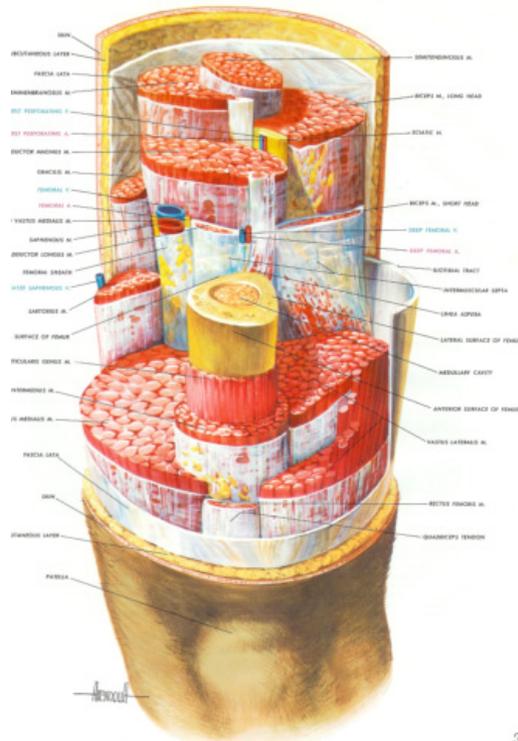
‘Huang’ is connective tissue (fascia) but only that in the abdomen, not the limbs. The connective tissue of the limbs is either “muscles” or “sinew” of Chinese medicine.



馬
節
經

Fascia in limbs: sinews or muscles (both called “jin” 筋)

Fascia in abdomen: *Huang* Membranes



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Key: Muscle, Fat

馬
師
傳

筋

JIN

竹

Bamboo

月

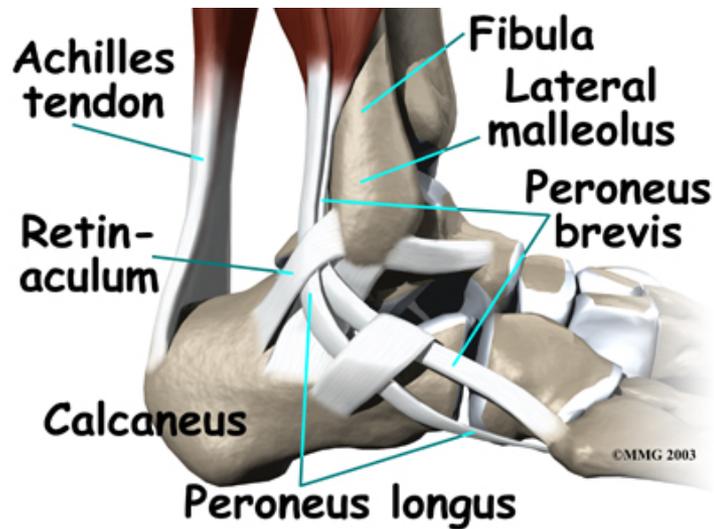
Organ

力

Strength

TENDONS, LIGAMENTS, CARTILAGE

Therefore “muscle” (jin) in “Muscle Channels” includes fascia, cartilage, tendons and ligaments. If we analyze the Chinese character it is more “tendons” than “muscles”.

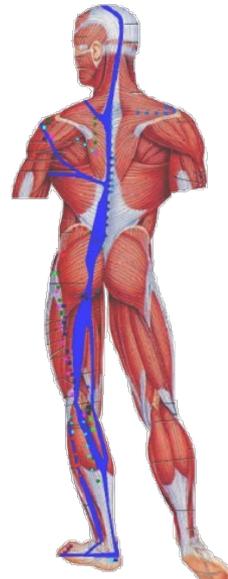
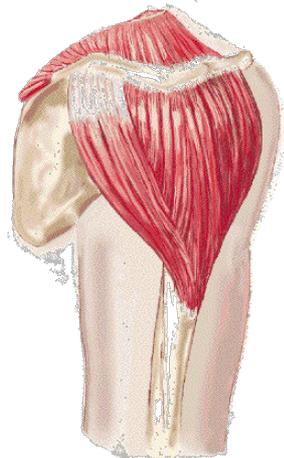


MORPHOLOGY AND PATHWAYS OF THE MUSCLE CHANNELS

They are discussed in chapter 13 of the “Ling Shu” called *Jing Jin* [经筋] “channel-like muscles” or “muscles of the channels”. Note that they are called *Jing Jin* i.e. “channel-muscles” (or “channel-like muscles”) rather than *Jin Jing* i.e. “muscle channels”.

Muscle channels are essentially the skeletal muscles of the body as seen in ancient Chinese medicine.

However, they are much more than just skeletal muscles as they form an integral part of the channel system and perform specific important functions in the circulation of Qi and Blood and in the adaptation of the body to the external environment.

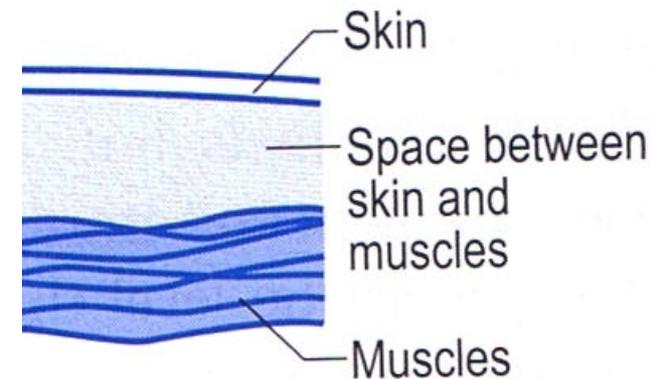
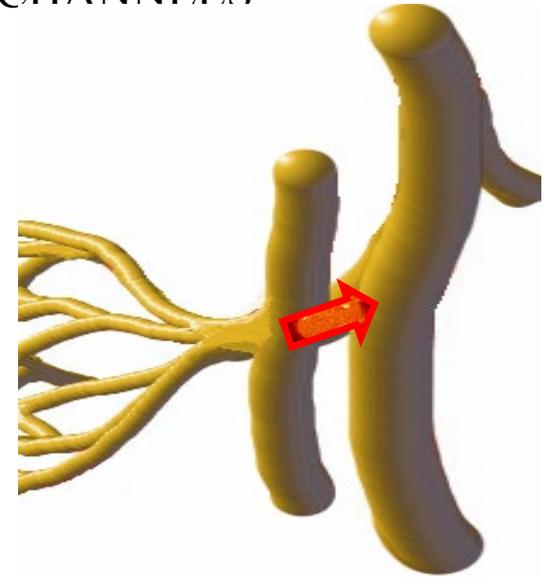


DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MUSCLE AND LUO CHANNELS

The Luo channels are directly connected to the Main channels and, indeed, they are the main route through which pathogenic factors may penetrate into the Main channels.

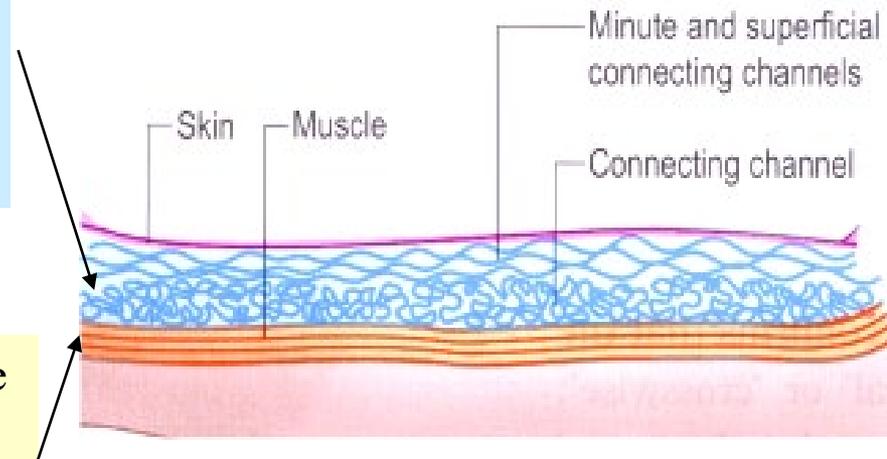
The Luo channels also run in the space between the skin and muscles which, again, should be intended more in an energetic than an anatomical sense.

Therefore, in this context, the “muscles” as in the “space between the skin and muscles” are not the same “muscles” as in the Muscle channels.



The “muscles” as in the “space between skin and muscles” signify primarily an energetic layer and indicate a certain energetic depth, i.e. one that is between the energetic layers of skin and sinews;

The “muscles” as in Muscle channels are the actual skeletal muscles some of which are next to the skin and some of which are deeper.



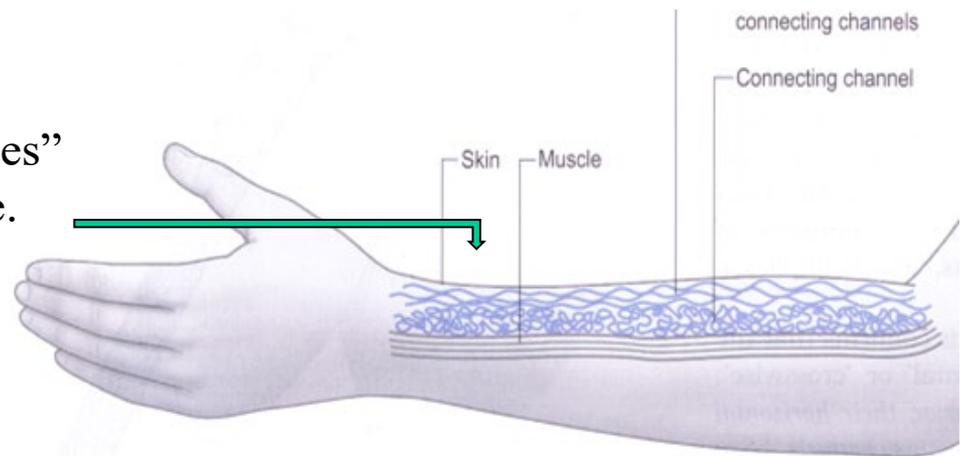
By contrast to the Luo channels, the Muscle channels are part of the “Exterior” of the body more in anatomical than energetic sense.

Muscle channels are also easily invaded by external pathogenic factors: however such invasions manifest primarily with muscular symptoms such as ache, pain or stiffness without the general symptoms of invasion of the Wei-Qi portion (aversion to cold, fever, sore throat, etc.) which occur when the Luo channels are invaded.



The *Cou Li* 腠理 is the space between skin and muscles. The Luo channels are more superficial than the Main channels and they run in all directions, horizontally rather than vertically. Amongst other spaces, they fill the *Cou Li* space, i.e. the space between skin and muscles.

“Space between skin and muscles”
in energetic, not anatomic sense.
“Exterior” of body in energetic
sense.



Muscles channels are the
muscles (but they also have an
energetic significance, i.e.
they are also channels!).
“Exterior” of body in
anatomical sense.

