

Alternative application for MSTR®

By MSTR® practitioner Paul Looby



I have always been a therapist who will take the tools that I receive from training and potentially use them differently, much like using a kitchen knife as a screwdriver!

The following account isn't in any way scientific of course, and that was not my intention, but I think it is interesting and perhaps interesting for other therapists.

For the past 3 years or so, I have been privileged to work as part of the medical team with the Bulgarian National Mens XV Rugby team.

Back in March 2022, we had a 4-day training camp in France. I should say that the majority of the players are amateur players who, at club level, do not have a great infrastructure here in Bulgaria to support them. Therefore, they will arrive with injuries both old and new with the aim to avail themselves of the support that my colleagues and I can give to them. This ranges from Strength and Conditioning advice to Nutrition and of course, bodywork treatments.



I am sure that many of us will have seen super tight leg muscles, especially in athletes and when there are 34 or more of them and you have limited time sessions, time is of the essence.

As I am not one for hard work, especially these days when I have a range of fascial techniques to make my life easier, I wondered what the response would be for tight muscle fibre bundles to MSTR®. I had a little experience of this from October of last year when one of the players came to me with a painful upper right arm. He couldn't pass the ball properly and had been suffering for a few months without treatment. This was on the way to the training field. I applied 2 'passes' of MSTR® to a tight section of his deltoid, and he is still thanking me - amazed at 'how easy it was to cure my arm'.

That set the mental cogs turning for me and I applied the technique to various leg muscles as they appeared in the treatment room during the rest of the camp.

Just applying the technique as we normally do, 2-3 'passes' was sufficient to produce a softening of the tissues with

a few of the players immediately noticing changes and making comments such as 'it feels like there is blood flowing into my muscle'. Over the period of a few days, these changes seemed to stabilise and hold well. For the more chronic or older injuries, I had the benefit of being able to re-check them and to reapply MSTR®. A second session would almost always clear the extreme tightness and allow other techniques to be applied, or allow the athlete to be able to stretch properly.

This past week, we gathered again for a home game against Turkey.



The players were training on an artificial pitch that had absolutely loads of rubber chips in the 'grass'. That made it impossible to train wearing trainers (sneakers) due to slippage.

This meant that they all wore boots on a super hard surface. As a result of that, I had a procession of tight calves and hamstrings and I had one guy with a 4 month old quad injury. I was applying MSTR® whenever I found a tight bundle of the muscle which was painful for the patient when palpated. Therefore, localised and specific treatment.



In this environment, I have the opportunity to follow up as I like but especially during physio sessions. I should note that one of my responsibilities is to assess whether players can play or not for medical reasons - so they are pretty compliant.

The guys aren't interested in what you do to them, they just want to be able to play. That sounds a bit brutal but that is how it is. For the previous international, I had previous commitments and one of the other physios "beat us up".



Within the confines of the group, I was able to ask the players how they were 8 weeks on and it was pretty much 95% success, which impressed me.

As with any group, there will be one or two who will present with persistent tightness in muscles, because they don't warm up or warm down properly will

usually be the cause. This gave me another opportunity to use MSTR® and evaluate the results.

On follow up, some of the muscle fibres were retaining their new state where some needed a second or even third session but what I was finding is that there were gains each time. These gains tended to hold well and could be built upon.

The boys destroyed a decent Turkish team, with a score of 54-13. Always good to get a victory.



We won't gather together until after the summer, when they will have been playing 7's or other sports and I will be interested to hear and see where they will be then.

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