



## INFORMED CONSENT with Definition and Description of Procedure

### DEFINITION of The John F. Barnes' Myofascial Release Approach® (JFB MFR®)

Fascia is the connective tissue that surrounds each muscle, tendon, ligament, bone, and organ, and branches out to extend deeply into these structures to eventually surround each cell of the body with a single continuous web that holds tissues and organs together, allows them to smoothly glide past each other during movement, and is believed to serve as a communication system for information within the body that is faster than the nervous system.

Myofascial Release (MFR) is a generic term for a wide range of hands-on manual therapy methods to release (loosen and soften) the restriction (tightening and hardening) of fascia that results from surgery, injury, and dysfunctional unconscious or subconscious holding patterns (habitual ways that a person holds their body in space due to past trauma, repetitive activities or inactivity, pain, emotions, and thought patterns). These restrictions cause stiffness, pain, poor circulation, and many other problems due to the 2000 lbs/square inch of pressure that they have been shown to be able to exert on entrapped nerves, blood vessels, muscles, tendons, ligaments, and organs.

John F. Barnes, PT, LMT developed *his* specific approach to Myofascial Release (JFB MFR®) over 50 years ago and taught over 100,000 practitioners with his gentle, safe, and effective form of MFR prior to his passing on December 17, 2025; some of the other non-Barnes methods of MFR can be aggressive, painful, or injurious.

This process can help your body to relieve itself of tension, pain, numbness, and discomfort, allowing greater ease, freedom of movement, improvement in posture, and overall wellbeing. Results are usually cumulative with repeat sessions, as you more fully allow yourself to become embodied (feel sensations and emotions that come up as an area of your body is being treated).

Like all forms of manual therapy, JFB MFR® can be practiced by several types of licensed doctors and other healthcare professionals (such as MD, DO, DC, PT, OT) who have completed any number of courses of live hands-on training in the techniques. JFB MFR® has no formal certification process; various levels of training in JFB MFR® are used in the practice of the therapist's licensed profession.

Although many studies have been published to document its effectiveness and what is known so far about how it works, it is not yet widely accepted as a legally-defined "scientifically-proven", "evidence-based", "standard-of-care" treatment procedure by our current healthcare system in the United States. Therefore, it is officially considered by today's current medico-legal system to be a complementary treatment method, *not* intended to replace traditional examination, diagnosis, and treatment with standard therapies of medication, surgery, or standard physical therapy, but ideally to be used *in addition* to any of those other forms of treatment that may be prescribed by your other healthcare providers.

Patient Initials \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIPTION of a typical Initial Evaluation & Treatment Session

The treatment/instruction time during your Initial Evaluation & Treatment session will be 75 minutes.

Subsequent sessions can be scheduled for various session durations, generally between 60 and 120 minutes.

Evaluation is performed with you wearing the clothing that you wish to be treated in... ideally underwear with short loosely fitting elastic-waist shorts, and a bra or sports bra for women. Evaluation consists of observing and feeling your body symmetry, posture, movement, scars, and tissue texture/mobility... at first while you are standing, from the front, back, and each side, and then further evaluating some areas after you are lying on the table and throughout your session.

Treatment is done without lotion or oil, directly on the skin of nearly any part of your body that is in pain and also areas that are *not* in pain, since fascial restrictions in that area may be causing or contributing to your pain.

Specific placement of my hands, fingers, arms, elbows, and occasionally a knee or foot depends on the area being treated.

If touch near/on more private areas (such as buttocks, breasts, or groin area) is important for treatment, I will briefly discuss this each time and specifically request your permission to move clothing and touch the area, because of varying personal history and emotional sensitivities of patients, and the extra care needed to ensure that this hands-on treatment is not misunderstood to be a sexual violation, suggestion, invitation, or service.

Internal areas of the body can be treated, if it would be beneficial for you, after discussion and with your permission. These may include the inside of the mouth or nose. For requested treatment of tissues within the vagina, anus, or rectum, you will sign a separate written consent form.

You will lie comfortably on a padded treatment table, in a private room, with relaxing music, with a sheet or blanket if you prefer, depending upon your level of modesty and comfort level with the room temperature, although being able to see more of your skin is helpful, since areas far from the area currently being treated can become red or hot, which are signs that they also need to be treated.

Treatment of any area begins with gentle pressure with the skin of my hands into uncovered skin (or with gloved hands for internal tissues) until a physical resistance or "barrier" is felt. Then, while continuing the gentle compression, stretch/traction is usually also applied, waiting for an extended time (at least 5 minutes) until it releases/relaxes, and then following in the direction of release and holding at a new "barrier". This is repeated, never forcing, until the tissue has sufficiently released its restrictions.

You will feel mild-to-moderate pressure, stretching or pulling, and sometimes burning or pinching, depending upon the area of the body, and especially if the fascia in the area is particularly restricted. **You are in charge of the intensity.** I'll ask you to tell me if you need me to decrease the pressure. This will allow you to relax and avoid tensing or guarding, which inhibits fascia from releasing.



A tolerable level of "therapeutic pain" is often necessary for healing. You will be encouraged to feel whatever physical sensations and/or emotions arise in you, *becoming aware of any connection between sensation and emotion.*

Although it is best to keep talking to a minimum, feedback at any time about what you are feeling at the treated area and anywhere else helps me to direct treatment more effectively, and I will ask you often about what you feel.

During the hold time with each hand placement, your tissue will soften and relax a little at a time. You will often be able to feel this softening, or can learn to feel it, as well as muscles relaxing that you didn't realize that your body or mind were tensing. You can help this to happen by quieting your mind and focusing on what you feel during the treatment, imagining the area softening and melting.

Other types of gentle techniques are also used to engage and release tissues, including mild compression and craniosacral techniques.

Inside your tissues, abnormal thickened stiff bands of restricted fascia begin to gently divide into more flexible fine strands and tubules, and tissue fluid begins to move more normally through them and around them. At approximately 5 minutes of a sustained hold, anti-inflammatory chemicals *begin* to be released by your tissues, which is believed to be one of the reasons that JFB MFR® usually has more long-lasting effects than other forms of MFR or other bodywork that sustain holds for a shorter period of time.

Benefits, starting with the first session, can range from very subtle to very noticeable. Most patients heal best with a series of frequent sessions, followed by regular maintenance sessions, with improvement increasing over time. Occasionally, short-term conditions can resolve in one or a few sessions. But most conditions developed over a long period of time in your life, so lasting improvement usually takes longer and is aided by at-home self-treatment techniques that I will teach you.

Self-treatment is specific for your condition, as well as for general preventive maintenance, and includes all three aspects of JFB MFR®: Structural Work (various slow, gently maintained stretches and application of gently maintained pressure with various tools), Rebounding (jiggling), and Unwinding (guiding and allowing your body to move spontaneously to release restrictions).

**Patient Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

**I may ask at times to take before-and-after photographs, with your permission at that time,** of a part of your body to share with you for educational and visual feedback on your progress. Photos will be as discrete as possible and will avoid your face, when possible. Photos are taken with the camera of either your mobile phone or mine, per your decision, and deleted at your request at any time.

**Patient Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Possible Benefits**

Although I can make *no* guarantee of healing or long-lasting improvement of your condition from JFB MFR® treatment, studies suggest that release of restrictions in the fascia takes pressure off of restricted muscles, nerves, blood vessels, and ultimately, organs. This improves blood flow and nerve conduction, which promotes healing, decreasing pain, numbness, stiffness, and discomfort, and improving posture and mobility.

Improvement in any area of the body generally benefits other areas of the body as well, since the body's fascial system is one three-dimensional web that interconnects every cell in the body.

Most patients also notice a general improvement in overall physical and mental wellbeing.

Patients become more aware of their own body and emotions and empowered to take charge of their treatment and healing by learning to love to self-treat in between sessions, adding to the benefits obtained from their scheduled sessions.

*Healing "Crisis":* This is listed under Possible Benefits, rather than Possible Disadvantages or Possible Risks, because this desirable and temporary process can happen with any type of manual therapy or other healing modality. It can speed up your healing.

Healing Crisis can include any or all of the following:

(1) Temporary soreness or pain (lasting hours or days) can occur in your soft tissue, bones, or joints. This can occur in the area treated and may also occur in another part of your body, because treatment may cause you to hold your entire body in a more balanced posture, using muscles differently than they are used to.

(2) Increased sleepiness, heightened emotions, unusual dreams, and re-surfacing of old memories (pleasant or unpleasant) can occur.

(3) Any pre-existing psychological symptoms may be more noticeable, usually temporarily, as you begin to consciously or subconsciously remember traumatic events and mentally and physically process the information.

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### **Possible Disadvantages**

It is not possible to know how many sessions a patient may need to benefit, and *no specific benefit is guaranteed.*

Most conditions are chronic, months or years in the making, and usually benefit from a series of several frequent sessions, followed by regular maintenance sessions, as well as a program of self-treatment. You will be taught and encouraged to self-treat in between sessions. Some patients may consider this to be a disadvantage, preferring to have the therapist "heal" them.

Some patients are accustomed to, and may prefer, the higher degree of intensity and discomfort of deep massage and other more aggressive forms of manual therapy and may be disappointed in JFB MFR®, believing that the therapist is not doing enough or not doing anything beneficial at all.

Although this is relatively gentle work, the sensitivity of every patient and every part of the body is different. Some areas may be so restricted that they require somewhat higher-pressure mobilization techniques before gentle JFB MFR® techniques can be effective. You are encouraged to, and responsible for, telling me if the intensity of the work at any time is too uncomfortable or painful, so that I can adjust the level of pressure, stretch, or force. However, some discomfort is considered to be "therapeutic pain" (discussed above).

Any of the "unpleasant" aspects of the "Healing Crisis" may occur (discussed above in the Possible Benefits section).

A treatment session takes a lot more time than a typical doctor's appointment.

**Patient Initials** \_\_\_\_\_



#### **Possible Risks**

The area directly over any implanted device, such as a pacemaker, artificial joint, shunt, or mesh, to name a few, must be treated with caution due to a possible risk of disrupting the placement or attachment of the device.

MFR can interfere with healing surgical scars and fractures that occurred less than 6 weeks ago.

**You are responsible for informing me of any implanted devices and all surgical procedures that you have ever had.**

Temporary skin redness or mild bruising occurs occasionally because of the long hold times for the hand positions and use of bony prominences for leverage in some techniques. This is more likely if you have very frail delicate skin, take anticoagulant ("blood-thinning") medications, usually bruise easily, or require some initial mobilization of tight tissues.

If you are in any type of litigation for an injury or are applying for or receiving disability insurance benefits and/or Workers Compensation benefits, any improvement in your condition may affect that litigation or those payments. You know this on some level and may subconsciously resist healing.

**Patient Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Other Treatment Options**

Depending upon your condition and the diagnosis and medical advice of your primary care provider(s), other treatment options may include medication, physical therapy, surgery, or other standard or alternative treatment procedures.

**Patient Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Possible Consequences of NOT Receiving JFB MFR® (included only for legal completeness of a fully informed consent)**

If you decide not to receive JFB MFR® treatment, you will not receive any of its possible benefits.

You will be limited to the results and possible side effects of any other treatment(s) that you do choose to receive from other healthcare providers.

**Patient Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **My Education, Training, Credentials, & Experience**

I am trained as a conventional allopathic physician. I earned my MD degree in 1983 from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and am board-certified in Anesthesiology and in Anatomic & Clinical Pathology. I have been licensed to practice medicine in the state of Florida since 1989. My previous traditional medical practice was in Anesthesiology for 8 years and then in Pathology for 28 years.

As of 4-13-2025, I have been trained in JFB MFR® for a total of 540 hours of live hands-on training, in seminars that are taught by John F. Barnes and his training staff of Expert-Level Therapists and while working side-by-side with John and his therapists on their patients in each of his two clinics. I have received certificates of completion for each of these seminars, qualifying me as an Expert-Level Practitioner of JFB MFR®. My seminars include the 25-hour Women's Health Seminar that includes internal pelvic floor treatment techniques that can benefit both female and male patients. I have been treating patients with JFB MFR® since January 2020, as well as treating and being treated by many JFB MFR® therapists in order to continually improve my treatment skills and my experience of receiving treatment.

I have also enhanced my skills by completing the Upledger Institute's four-day courses CranioSacral 1 and CranioSacral 2 (a total of 48 hours of live hands-on training that includes some techniques taught by John Barnes), and I hold certificates in Reiki 1 (from 2 different teachers), Reiki 2, and Reiki Master.

**Patient Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Limitations of My Professional Services to JFB MFR® Therapy**

I limit my medical practice to providing manual therapy treatment with The John F. Barnes' Myofascial Release Approach® (JFB MFR®), ideally for previously diagnosed medical conditions and previously evaluated symptoms.

I do not provide primary medical care to patients, screen for cancer, perform complete physical examinations, provide treatment for medical emergencies (unless they were to occur while in my office), prescribe any medications, or order laboratory or radiological testing.

I do not diagnose the cause of any pain or discomfort that you wish me to treat with JFB MFR®.

I advise obtaining testing and a diagnosis from a primary or specialist healthcare provider for your condition before or while receiving JFB MFR® treatment from me.

**Patient Initials** \_\_\_\_\_



#### **Your Responsibility for Obtaining Other Medical Care**

Since I do not practice primary care medicine, if you consent to receive JFB MFR® as my patient-client, you agree that you are responsible, at your discretion, for also having another licensed primary or specialist healthcare provider diagnose and recommend/provide any other appropriate treatment for your condition, signs, and symptoms, as well as provide any other necessary ongoing general medical screening, examinations, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment for/of *any and all* other medical conditions, signs, and symptoms.

**Patient Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Confidentiality & Exceptions to Confidentiality**

You will be asked to sign a separate Notice of Privacy Practices form that outlines your privacy rights in more detail.

Your Protected Health Information (PHI), such as Intake Forms, my medical records of your sessions, and billing and payment information, will be kept secure in a lawful manner.

Under certain circumstances that are mandated and/or allowed by federal and state laws, your information may be required to be provided to a government agency or another party without your consent. These include, for example, situations where you may be at risk of harming yourself or others, a legal subpoena for records, etc.

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#### **Waiver Of Liability**

Except in the case of gross negligence or malpractice, you, or your representative(s) agree to fully release and hold harmless Karen F. Harris, MD from and against any and all claims or liability of whatsoever kind or nature arising out of or in connection with her treatment session(s).

**Patient Initials** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **PATIENT-CLIENT CONSENT FOR TREATMENT WITH JFB MFR® THERAPY**

I was provided this Informed Consent document prior to my Initial Evaluation & Treatment session.

I understand the Definition of JFB MFR®, the Description of a typical Initial Evaluation & Treatment Session, Possible Benefits (including "Healing Crisis"), Possible Disadvantages (including "Healing Crisis"), Possible Risks, and Other Treatment Options.

I understand the Education, Training, Credentials, and Experience of, and the Limitation of Services provided by Karen Harris, MD, and my responsibility to seek other providers, at my discretion, for *any and all* other usual standard primary and specialty medical care for examinations, disease screening and treatment, and diagnosis and treatment for the condition for which I am requesting JFB-MFR® treatment.

I understand my Waiver of Liability for JFB MFR® treatment provided by Karen F. Harris, MD.

I understand that JFB MFR® manual therapy is a form of alternative healthcare, and the touch involved is not to be mistaken for any type of sexual abuse or violation, suggestion, invitation, or service.

I have read and discussed this document and any questions that I have with Dr. Harris. I am fully satisfied that I have all the information that I need in order to make an informed decision whether or not to consent.

I understand that I can revoke my consent at any time after it is given and discontinue treatment.

Therefore, prior to my Initial Evaluation & Treatment session,

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (sample form only), have initialed each section, filled in the blanks, and signed below, hereby agreeing to receive evaluation and treatment by Karen F. Harris, MD, of Real Relief Myofascial Release, LLC, using The John F. Barnes' Myofascial Release Approach® (JFB MFR®).

Patient-Client Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (sample form only) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ (sample form only) \_\_\_\_\_