

# Psoas

---

## *So What?*

**Phil Nuttridge**

---

November 2016

*philnuttridge@aol.com*

1

### The 'plan':

What does Google say about **psoas**?

The **psoas** as a (western) muscle

The **psoas** and meridians, acupoints and Chinese medicine

The **psoas** in other contexts

The **psoas** and YOU?

2

### What does Google say about psoas?

"The psoas is so intimately involved in basic physical and emotional reactions, that a chronically tightened psoas continually signals your body that you're in danger, eventually exhausting the adrenal glands and depleting the immune system."

"Deep within our physical body emerges a bio-intelligent tissue called the Psoas. This mysterious tissue is defined within the biomechanical paradigm as a core stabilizing muscle, yet the Psoas, like the tongue, is more of an organ of perception than it is an anatomical or functional muscle. It is the filet mignon of the human body – juicy, delicate, tender, and very responsive."

"The psoas is like a super highway that transmits energy from our day to day experiences to and from our energy meridians."

3

### The 'plan':

What does Google say about **psoas**?

The **psoas** as a (western) muscle

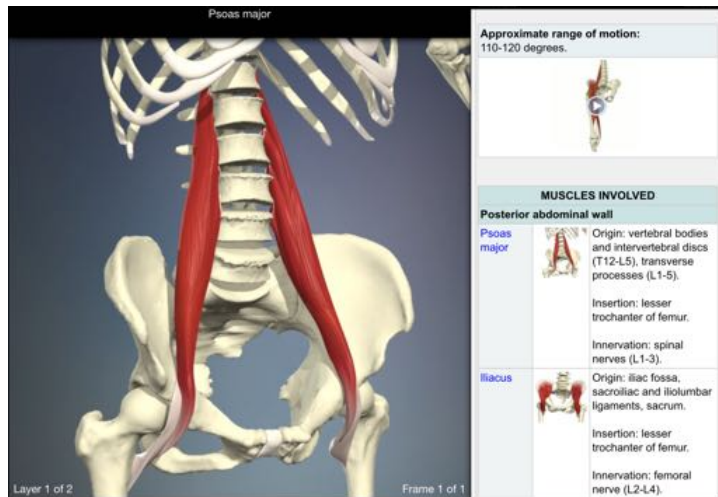
The **psoas** and meridians, acupoints and Chinese medicine

The **psoas** in other contexts

The **psoas** and YOU?

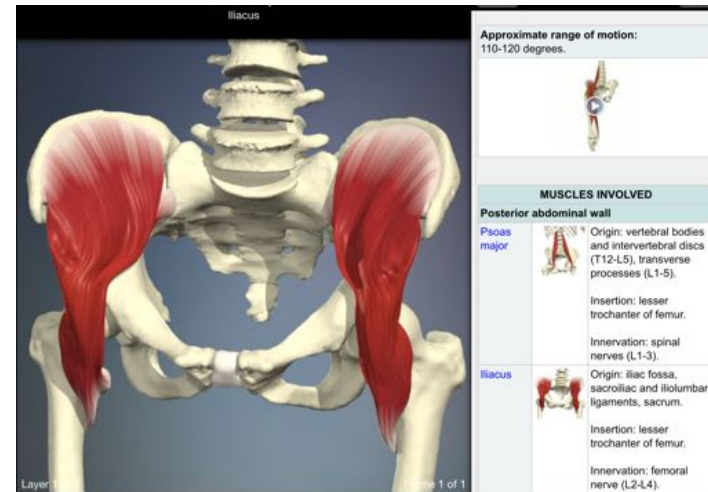
4

## The psoas as a (western) muscle



5

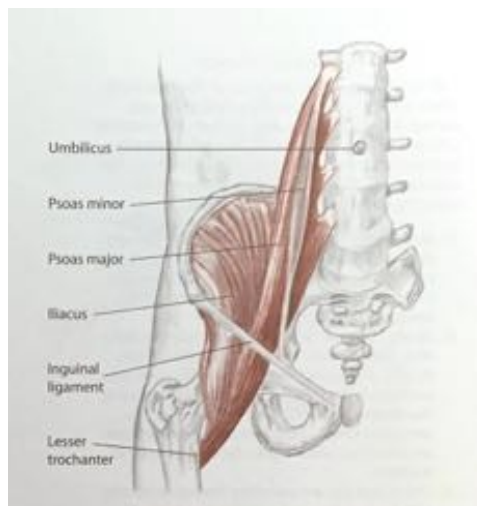
## ...don't forget Iliacus



Psoas + Iliacus = Iliopsoas

6

## ...and don't forget psoas minor



7

## Observations on psoas

Deepest muscle of the body

Only muscle that connects legs directly to the spine

Continuous with diaphragm

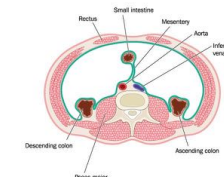
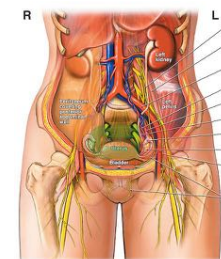
Direct connection to the **limbic** system

Forms a shelf for internal organs

The **limbic** system supports a variety of functions including emotion, behavior, motivation, long-term memory, and olfaction! Emotional life is largely housed in the limbic system, and it has a great deal to do with the formation of memories.

Links to:

- IBS
- Infertility
- Bladder infections



8



### **Actions of psoas**

- Flexion of the hip
- Lateral (and medial) rotation of the hip
- Extension (and flexion) of lumbar spine
- Lateral flexion of spine
- Contra-lateral rotation of lumbar spine

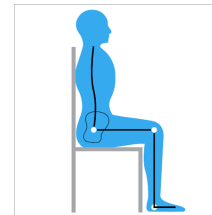
9

### **Consequences/Observations of psoas**



- Stabilisation of hip joint, SIJ and lumbar spine
- Compression of lumbar spine
- Becomes shortened on prolonged sitting
- Increases lumbar lordosis on shortening

### **Often implicated in back pain**



10

### **Hallmarks of back pain linked to psoas**

- Pain that is worse when going from sitting to standing
- Pain that improves on movement
- Pain that increases when lying fully supine
- Pain that is relieved by sleeping in foetal position
- Observably increased lumbar lordosis

**Can be caused by psoas shortness or weakness or both**

11

### **Assessing psoas for shortness**



### **Thomas Test**

Can find false negatives - use palpation

12

### Indicators of short psoas

Increased lumbar lordosis

Stiffness in the lower back - rotation and side bend

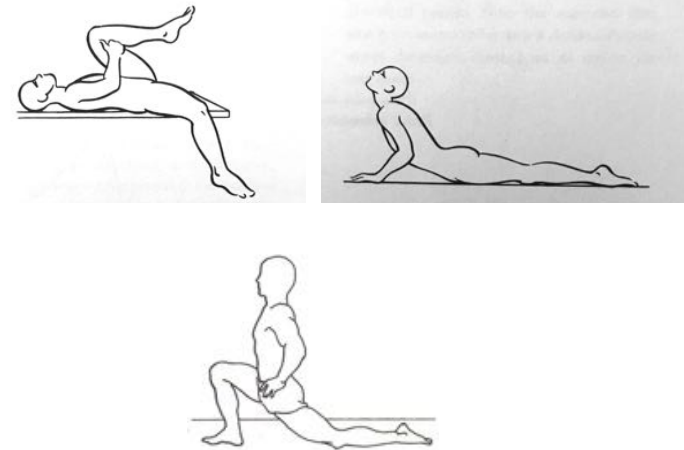
Pain around SIJ area

Stiffness in the hip

Rib cage lowered and rotated to short side

13

### Lengthening a short psoas



14

### Lengthening a short psoas



15

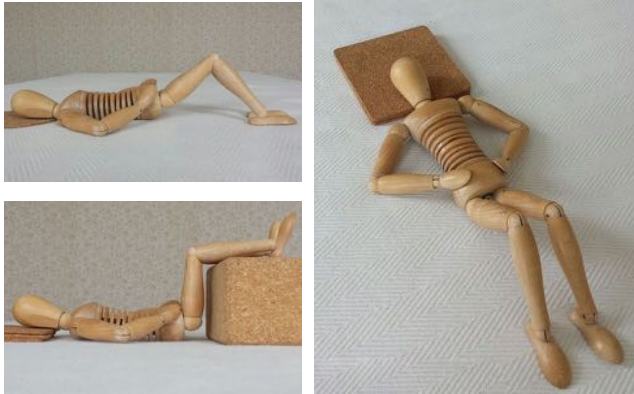
### Lengthening a short psoas

[Demonstration of therapy on the psoas]

16

### Giving a short psoas a rest

Often we need to teach **psoas** to “let go”



17

### Giving a short psoas a rest

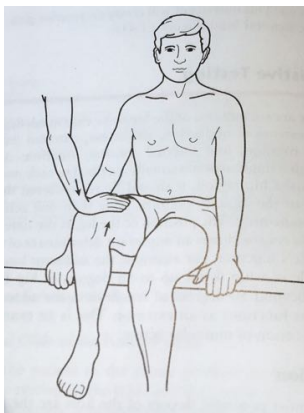
The “Pendulum”



The Guide for those in sedentary jobs

18

### Assessing psoas for weakness



The diagram is wrong -  
*hands out of the way!*

19

### Indicators of weak psoas

- Decreased lumbar lordosis - flat back
- Hip low on the weak side
- Foot turned in on the weak side
- Pain and difficulty in rising from sitting
- Pain and difficulty walking on an incline and climbing stairs

20

## Strengthening a weak psoas

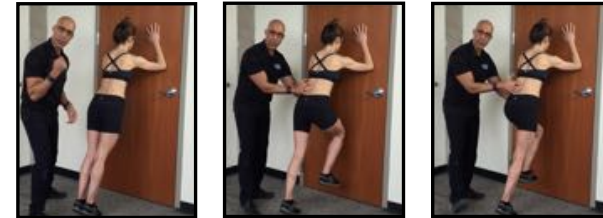
The test becomes the exercise



21

## Strengthening a weak psoas

Functional exercise - working the anterior chain with psoas



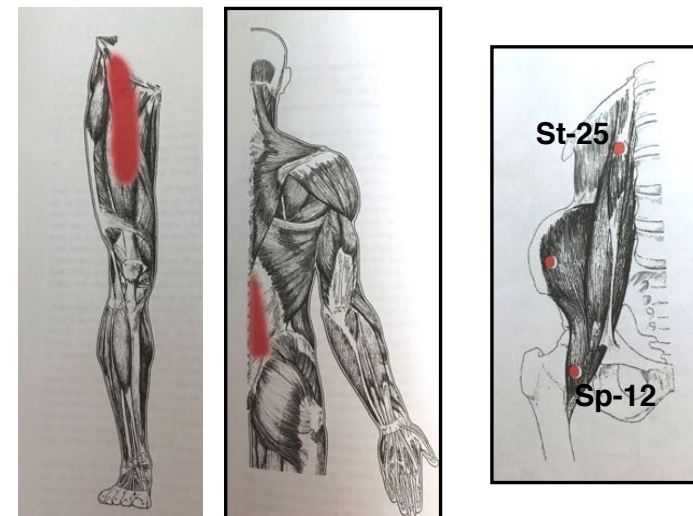
22

## Trigger point referral patterns of psoas

A **trigger point** is a locally sensitive area in a soft tissue (usually muscle or fascia) that is hyper-irritable to palpatory pressure and when pressed, causes referral patterns of sensation (often pain) to other areas of the body

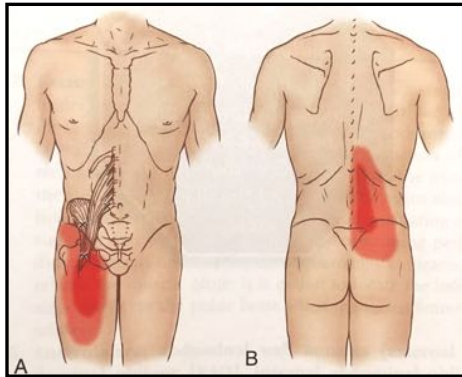
23

## Trigger point referral patterns of psoas



24

## Trigger point referral patterns of psoas



Notice the extension into gluteus medius

25

## The 'plan':

What does Google say about **psoas**?

The **psoas** as a (western) muscle

The **psoas** and meridians, acupoints and Chinese medicine

The **psoas** in other contexts

The **psoas** and YOU?

26

## The psoas and meridians, acupoints and Chinese medicine

The three(ish)-minute guide to Chinese medicine!

### Qi — Meridians — Acu-points

Dis-ease (Symptoms)	Qi Flow Disturbed	Treat Meridians & Acupoints	Qi Flow Restored	Well-being Restored
------------------------	----------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------	------------------------

27

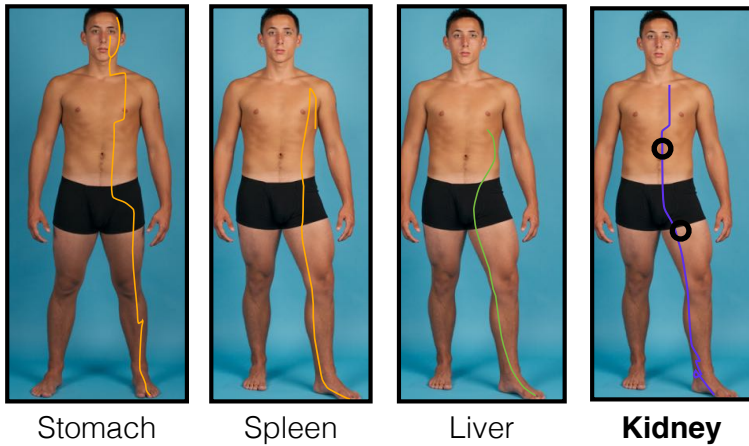
## The psoas and meridians, acupoints and Chinese medicine

Meridians are named after internal organs and given  
'ministerial roles'

- Lung is the *Prime Minister*
- Large Intestine is the *Minister of Elimination*
- Stomach is the *Minister of the Mill*
- Spleen is the *Minister of the Granary*
- Small Intestine is the *Minister of Sortation*
- Heart is the *Emperor*
- Sanjiao is the *Minister of Dykes and Dredges*
- Pericardium is the *Emperor's Protector*
- Bladder is the *Minister of the Reservoir*
- Kidney is the *Minister of Power*
- Gall Bladder is the *Honourable Minister*
- Liver is the *Chief of Staff*

28

### The psoas and meridian pathways



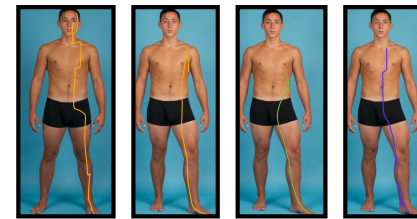
Stomach

Spleen

Liver

Kidney

### The psoas and meridian pathways



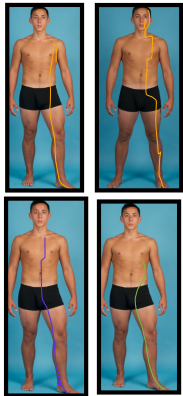
**Kidney**  
Liver  
Spleen  
Stomach

Four meridians pass through the psoas

The concept of **reciprocity** means that pathology in psoas will affect Qi flow in those meridians; poor Qi flow in those meridians will affect psoas

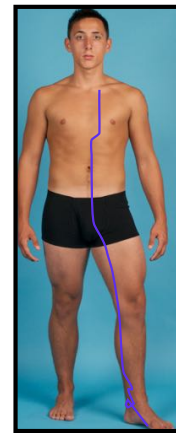
Restoring Qi flow in those meridians will improve psoas; improving psoas will improve Qi flow in those meridians

### The psoas and meridian pathways



- Lung is the *Prime Minister*
- Large Intestine is the *Minister of Elimination*
- **Stomach is the Minister of the Mill**
- **Spleen is the Minister of the Granary**
- Small Intestine is the *Minister of Sortation*
- Heart is the *Emperor*
- Sanjiao is the *Minister of Dykes and Dredges*
- Pericardium is the *Emperor's Protector*
- Bladder is the *Minister of the Reservoir*
- **Kidney is the Minister of Power**
- Gall Bladder is the *Honourable Minister*
- **Liver is the Chief of Staff**

### The psoas and meridian pathways



#### **Kidney** - the Minister of Power

Kidney (kidney) function

Musculo-skeletal areas on the pathway

Bones, teeth, ears and hair

Our '**pilot light**' - constitution, energy reserves

Brain, memory and mental function

**Fight or flight** response - **FEAR**

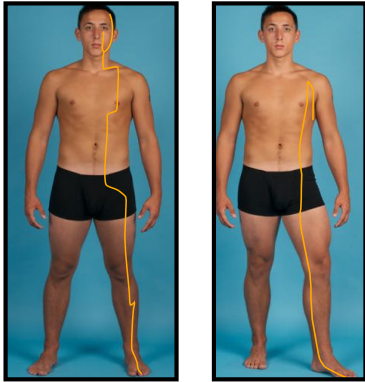
Sexual vitality



## The psoas and meridian pathways

### Stomach and Spleen

Ministers of the Mill and the Granary

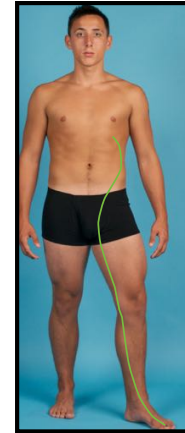


- Stomach (stomach) function
- Musculo-skeletal areas on the pathway
- Poor relationship with food & diet
- Heaviness in the limbs, swelling, oedema
- Excessive worry, over-thinking, self-doubt
- Hernias and prolapses

33

## The psoas and meridian pathways

### Liver - the Chief of Staff



- Liver (liver) function
- Musculo-skeletal areas on the pathway
- Insight, wisdom, planning and assessing situations
- Poor drive, resilience, ambition, inflexible, easily frustrated
- Poor control of cycles (digestion, menstruation, jet lag, sleep)

34

## The psoas and meridian pathways

So which acu-points do we use to improve function of psoas and improve the associated Qi flow?

**Great Points** on Kidney, Stomach, Spleen and Liver meridians  
**K6, St36, Sp6, Lv3**

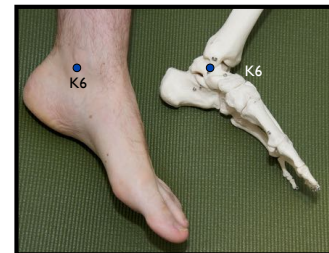
**Start and end** points of Kidney meridian - **K1** and **K27**

**Back Transporting Point** for Kidney - **B23**

**'Special'** points - **B52** and **St25**

35

## The psoas and meridian pathways



### Kidney-6

The Great Point

In the depression inferior to the inferior border of the medial malleolus

36

The **psaos** and meridian pathways



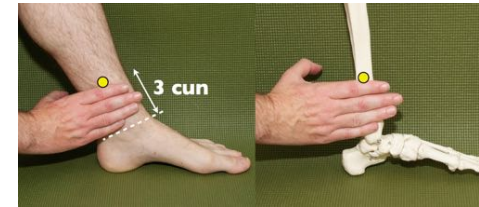
**Stomach 36** *Great Point*

3 cun below the lower margin of the patella and one middle finger width lateral to the crest of the tibia.

Place four finger widths of one hand against the lower margin of the knee cap. Trace the lower edge of the fingers outwards away from the crest of the shin bone and the point is in the first soft depression

37

The **psaos** and meridian pathways



**Spleen 6** *Great Point*

On the medial side of the lower leg 3 cun superior to the prominence of the medial malleolus in a depression close to the medial crest of the tibia

38

The **psaos** and meridian pathways



**Liver 3** *Great Point*

On the dorsum of the foot in the hollow just distal to the junction of the first and second metatarsal bones.

39

The **psaos** and meridian pathways



**Kidney-1**

On the sole of the foot in the depression that appears when the toes are flexed, on the line connecting the web between the second and third toes with the base of the heel. The point is located approximately one third of the distance from the web to the heel.

40

The **psoas** and meridian pathways

**Kidney-27**



In the depression on the lower margin of the clavicle approximately 2 cun from the midline.

41

The **psoas** and meridian pathways

**Stomach 25**



Level with the naval and 2 cun lateral to the midline

42

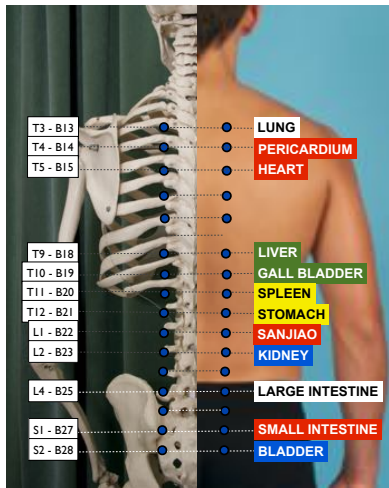
The **psoas** and meridian pathways

**Bladder 23**

1.5 cun lateral to the midline, level with the lower border of the second lumbar vertebra. Approximately level with the naval.

**Bladder 52**

3 cun lateral to the midline, level with the lower border of the second lumbar vertebra. Approximately level with the naval.



43

The **psoas** and acupoints

So how do we use those points?



Stimulate: Firm digital pressure and rocking movements

Hold and wait

“Balance”

44

## The 'plan':

What does Google say about **psaos**?

The **psaos** as a (western) muscle

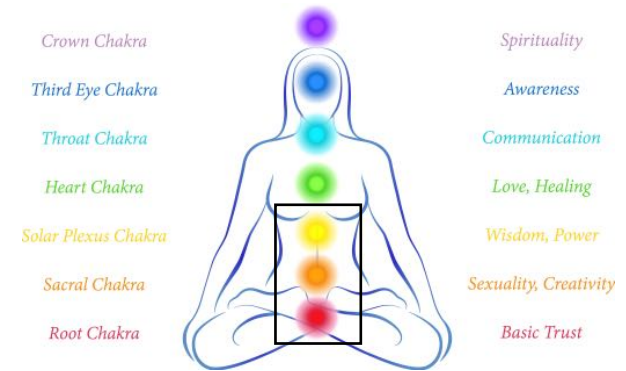
The **psaos** and meridians, acupoints and Chinese medicine

The **psaos** in other contexts

The **psaos** and YOU?

45

## The **psaos** and Chakras



46

## The **psaos** and Applied Kinesiology

A method of diagnosis and treatment whereby key skeletal muscles are associated with meridian and organ systems of the body. Weakness in these indicator muscles indicates imbalance in those systems. Restoring strength to those muscles restores balance to those systems.

**Psoas — Kidney**

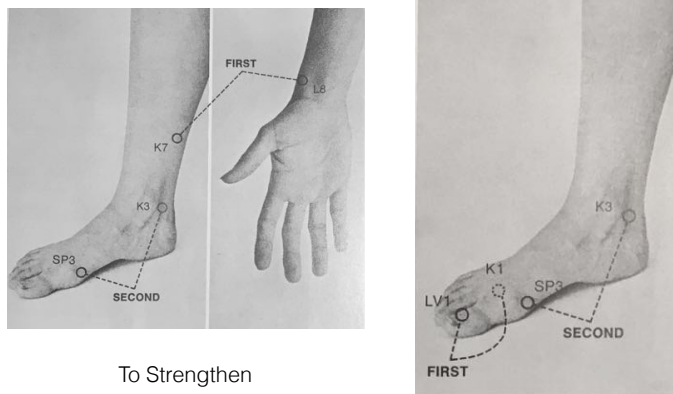
47

## The **psaos** and Applied Kinesiology



48

## The **psaos** and Applied Kinesiology



To Strengthen

To Weaken

49

## The 'plan':

What does Google say about **psaos**?

The **psaos** as a (western) muscle

The **psaos** and meridians, acupoints and Chinese medicine

The **psaos** in other contexts

The **psaos** and YOU?

50

## **Psoas and YOU?**

## The 'plan':

What does Google say about **psaos**?

The **psaos** as a (western) muscle

The **psaos** and meridians, acupoints and Chinese medicine

The **psaos** in other contexts

The **psaos** and YOU?

51

52

# **Psoas**

---

*So What?*

**Phil Nuttridge**

November 2016

*philnuttridge@aol.com*