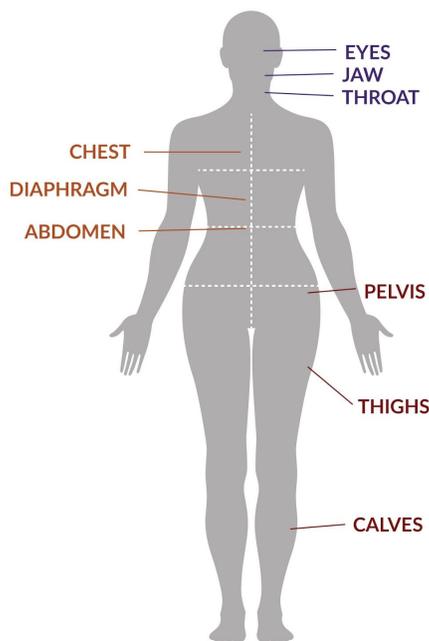


Somatic Bands of Protection

First, here's a brief introduction to Wilhelm Reich, considered the founder of somatic psychology. He was an Austrian doctor of medicine and psychoanalyst and the author of several influential books. His idea of muscular armor—the expression of the personality in the way the body moves—shaped innovations in psychology.

Reich was a member of the second generation of analysts after Sigmund Freud. With Freud and his approach to psychoanalysis, the mind was everything. Reich was the first to bring the body into psychoanalysis. He believed that the body's outward appearance is an accurate reflection of what's happening inside. There is a basic mistake in the idea of, "I think, I am." You can't change your thoughts at a basic level without a change in your body, in what you do.



Character Armor Can Be Reflected in Life-Patterns

Blocks are the contractions in the organism which prevent the free flow of energy. It appeared to Reich that these appear as rings or bands at a number of points in the body.

1. OCULAR (Forehead, eyes, cheekbones, tear duct glands): Reflected by the inability to open eyes wide.

2. ORAL (Lips, chin, throat): A person may find it hard to cry, grin, or grimace.
3. NECK: When armored, a person holds back from crying or expressing anger.
4. CHEST: Reflected by self-control and restraint with suppressed emotions such as anger or longing.
5. DIAPHRAGM: Blockage in this area cuts the body in two, cutting all the sensing of the lower segment. Not only does it restrict the expression of anger, fear, pain, and grief. It also inhibits feelings of excitement, strength, and empowerment.
6. ABDOMINAL CONTRACTIONS: The gut is often the first to fire sensations of uneasiness. It is also the center of all feelings about trust, nourishment and being nourished.
7. PELVIC REGION: When excitement reaches a place that is blocked, the pleasure that comes from the flowing of the energy turns into rage.