

## 7 Super Cool Muscle Facts

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They look lovely during a shirtless pull up, keep you warm when its snowy outside, help your blood get back to your heart, coordinate to allow us to execute a killer down dog. Muscles are amazing.

Here are 7 super cool muscle facts that will knock your unicorn-print deadlift socks off!

1. The smallest muscles in the body can be found in the ear - stapedius and tensor tympani. These muscles act to dampen sounds from our external environment (like that noisy neighbor) and from our internal environment (like the sound of chewing organic kale chips).
2. A muscle cell contracts because of specialized structures within the cells called sarcomeres. Remember grade 9 science class? Of course you do. Remember when you were taught what a cell looked like, and it was filled with all these squiggly lines and shapes? Well some of those squiggly things include sarcomeres, and that's where you'll find protein filaments that slide along each other to either shorten a muscle, or return it to its resting length.
3. Palmaris longus, a muscle found in the forearm BUT is absent in an estimated 10-15% of the population, on both sides or just one. Weird.
4. The longest muscle in the body is sartorius, a muscle of the thigh. This muscle crosses the hip and the knee, and its name means "tailor" in Latin which was given to this muscle since its action is to allow us to sit cross-legged like a tailor would when working.
5. The muscles that attach to our skeleton tug at their bony attachments and stimulate bone growth. As a muscle gets larger, its tendon tugs on the bone with more force requiring the bone to get bigger to support the growing muscle. Take a look at the clavicles (collarbones) of males and females. Generally, males have larger clavicles because their pectoral muscles (found in the chest) are also larger. This is how muscles contribute to making our bones stronger, and preventing conditions like osteoporosis.
6. One of the muscles that lots of people know by name is iliopsoas. It makes me a little sick to type that cuz IT'S NOT AN ACTUAL MUSCLE! In the 1950's a medical guy said that the iliacus and psoas muscles did the same thing because they share a common lower attachment site, and started this whole iliopsoas business. That couldn't be farther from the truth. These muscles do very different things, and need to be assessed and treated separately. Iliacus is a short, one joint crossing, beautiful and powerful hip flexor (brings the front of your thigh closer to your chest). Psoas is an enchanting stabilizer of the lumbar spine and pelvis that crosses many joints, including vertebral segments and the hip. They are two muscles, so call them by their real names and know that they are very different but like to come together for a second in one spot.
7. The word muscle comes form the Latin musculus which means "little mouse." This term came about because, upon contraction of the bicep, the muscle shortening resembled a mouse crawling under a rug (a skin rug). Kinda gross.

Muscles are such amazing structures, in fact, our bodies are filled with amazing wonders. We are beautiful skin sacs full of miracles, mysteries and marvels.