

The ART of Healing

Active Release Technique: A New Trend In Body Repair, Helps Injured Athletes Get Back In Action Fast.

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When you're a veteran of 15 centuries and 20 stage races, and multiple triathlons running through discomfort is familiar territory. So when Rebecca 43, of Boulder, CO developed a painful tightness in her glutes, she didn't stop training--even when her cadence slowed, her knees started to hurt, and her right leg felt numb. New shoes, bike fit and orthotics didn't help, nor did six months of physical therapy. Desperate to get better, Rebecca turned to Steve Black, an Active Release Techniques (ART) provider. ART is a rigorous and interactive form of therapy in which a practitioner applies pressure to the affected area while moving the surrounding muscles through a full range of motion.

Rebecca's breakthrough came when she was introduced to ART. The hand on technique searches the muscles for "adhesions"--places where injury, repetitive motion, and inflammation has left dense, tight scar tissue. Then pressure is applied into the scar tissue, and along it in one direction as the patient is instructed to move through a prescribed set of motions. The adhesions are "released" and the problem is solved. Typically 4-6 treatments are necessary with remedial stretching, strengthening and exercises prescribed. Rebecca's case was more chronic so 10 sessions were necessary to return her to competition. A controlled, periodized training program with strict adherence is a requisite for all in order to completely resolve the initial injury and prevent reoccurrence.

ART is effective in the relief of most muscle, nerve and mechanical dysfunctions. The key is in the biomechanical evaluation which reveals the treatment. Problems such as plantar fasciitis, carpal tunnel, piriformis syndrome and other cycling related over-use and acute injuries can be effectively treated with ART.

More Facts on ART:

ART changes the basic understanding of soft tissue injuries, giving the doctor the insight necessary to identify and correct the root cause of a problem. For example, in cases of carpal tunnel syndrome, the doctor may check for injury along the entire length of the nerve, including the forearm, arm, and neck. This allows for identification and treatment of all involved areas, often resulting in a complete and quick resolution.

When a muscle, tendon or ligament is torn, the healing process involves the creation of scar tissue. This is necessary to connect and bind the torn tissue. Unfortunately, the healing scar tissue often sticks to surrounding structures (think of it as glue) overworking healthy tissue, entrapping nerves, and limiting motion, strength and speed. Scar tissue can also result from overuse. Overuse causes the tissue to increase in tension; this decreased the blood supply and releases free radicals. Free radicals attract the cells that produce scar tissue. This means that poor posture, athletic pursuits, and repeated use can all result in scar tissue.

ART is a hands-on, meaning that treatment is done exclusively with the doctor's hands. Therefore, there are no surgical complications or unwanted side-effects from medication. In some cases these adjunct therapies maybe necessary but since ART is non-invasive it is worth a try first. If surgical intervention is indicated ART should be undertaken following the surgery to diminish the effects of scarring and restore normal biomechanics.

For further information on ART or to find a practitioner in your area visit www.activerelease.com. There are approximately 4000 ART practitioners world-wide. For further information on Steve visit his web site at www.clubcoach.net. Steve not only is an ART practitioner, he provides on-line coaching, VO2/Threshold testing with exercise prescription, and lecture and workshop opportunities.