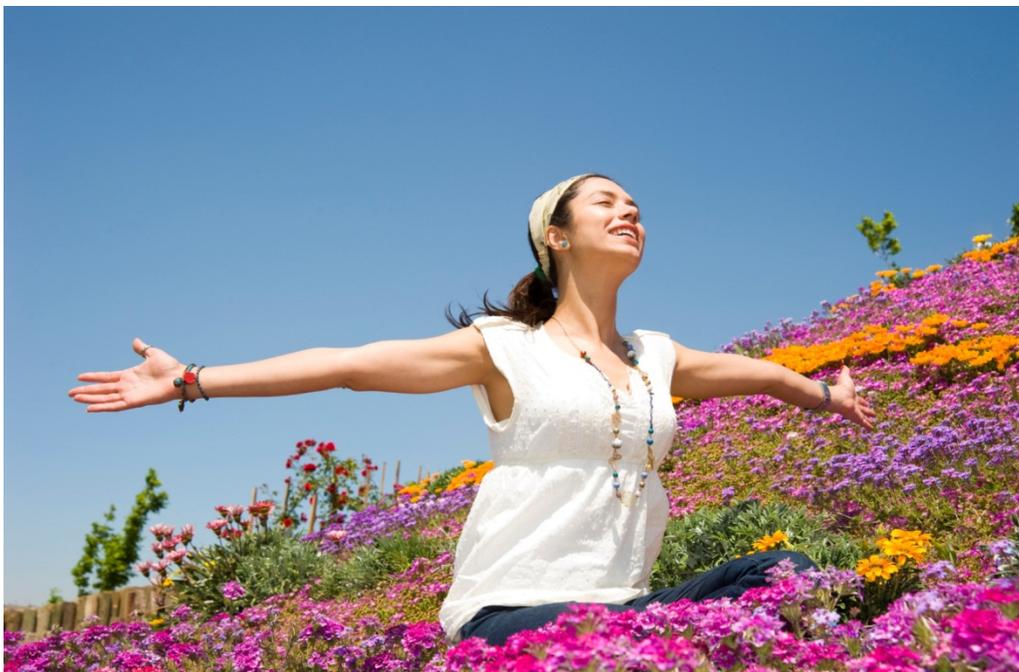


# Headaches:

*How to Break Free!*



 **PHYSIO**  
PHYSICAL THERAPY AND WELLNESS

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# There are 5 different types of headaches:

- Tension
- Cluster
- Sinus
- Rebound
- Migraine



Type of Headache	Symptoms	Causes
Tension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constant pain in the temples, back of the head, and suboccipital area</li> <li>• Pressure on the sides of your head as if your head is caught in a clamp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stress</li> <li>• Hunger</li> <li>• Muscle Strain</li> </ul>
Cluster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shooting pain on one side of the head</li> <li>• Pain in the eye</li> <li>• Occurs sporadically over a period of time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor posture</li> <li>• Sitting too much</li> <li>• Looking at smart phones and laptops</li> <li>• Typing a lot</li> <li>• Long commute to work</li> </ul>
Sinus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure in areas around the cheekbones, eyes, forehead, ears, and nose</li> <li>• Worse pain with movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infection</li> <li>• Allergy</li> </ul>
Rebound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occurs every day</li> <li>• Comes back as soon as medication wears off</li> <li>• Worse with physical activity</li> <li>• Neck pain</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Difficulty concentrating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overuse or misuse of pain medication</li> <li>• Taking medication in excess of what is instructed</li> <li>• Not following doctor's instructions</li> </ul>
Migraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pain at one side of the head</li> <li>• Sensitivity to light and/or sound</li> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Described as the worst headache you've ever had</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certain foods</li> <li>• Muscle strain</li> <li>• Intense physical activity</li> <li>• Hormonal changes</li> <li>• Environmental changes</li> </ul>

# Headaches: How to Break Free!

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Headaches can feel like a prison. Many people describe them as disabling, miserable, and life-altering. A girl I know had her very first migraine when she was 21 years old and it lasted 7 days. She would sometimes lose sight in one eye, become nauseous, and get dizzy. Her head was always stuffed under a blanket to avoid the light, and at the moments of the worst pain her body would shake and sweat. She was in the hospital 3 times that week, off work for a whole month, and left with no answers after several tests. Even after the nightmare of getting the pain under control, her headaches still occur often. Does this sound like something you've experienced before?

Approximately 90% of the American population suffers from occasional headaches. Not everyone knows where to go for help. Not everyone understands why they happen, let alone how to fix them. If you or someone you know is battling headaches, this guide is for you.

Learn about the different types of headaches, and find solutions to the one that's affecting you. Discover reasons you should be wary when seeking treatment, and prepare yourself for the journey you can take to break free from your headaches.

## What's Causing Your Headaches?

- Poor posture
- Sitting too much
- Looking at smart phones and laptops
- Typing a lot
- Long commute to work
- Taking too much medication
- Infection and allergies
- Certain foods
- Hormonal changes
- Environmental changes
- Stress
- Hunger

While some of these causes are pretty obvious, some are not exactly common knowledge, let's discuss why these things cause headaches.



## Sitting For Too Long

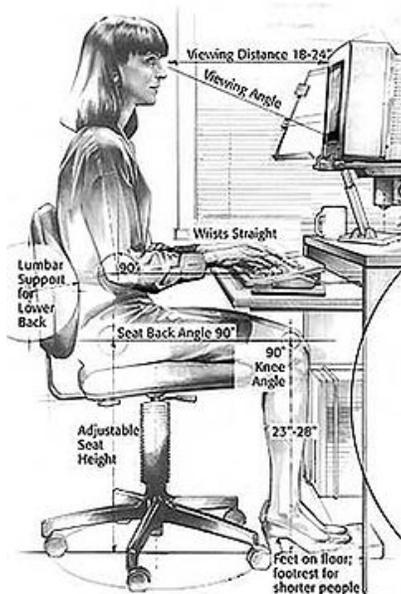
Even while sitting with good posture, **sitting for too long** can cause changes in the hips, abs, and spine. It creates adaptive shortening of the hip flexor muscles, which are attached to the front of the lumbar spine. This shortening causes stress on the lower back and hips, and the pelvis is then tilted forward. The abs are therefore affected because the pelvis pulls the abs down, making them elongated and weak.

# Ergonomics

If you have an office job, don't think they are just yanking your chain when they talk about having proper ergonomics. Headaches and eye strain are two of the biggest signs of bad ergonomics. If your computer screen is not at eye level, it can place too much strain on your neck. If your keyboard is too high, your shoulders could be affected as well. When it comes to ergonomics, your productivity can even be affected. It's all about comfort and efficiency.

### Follow these steps:

1. Computer screen should be at eye level.
2. Elbows should be at sides at a 90 degree angle.
3. Lower back should be supported.
4. Seat should be adjusted so that knees are at a 90 degree angle.
5. Feet should be flat on the ground.



promote better ergonomics.

### You can find these items in stores:

- Mouse
- Desk
- Chair
- Keyboard
- Monitor accessories
- and many other things...

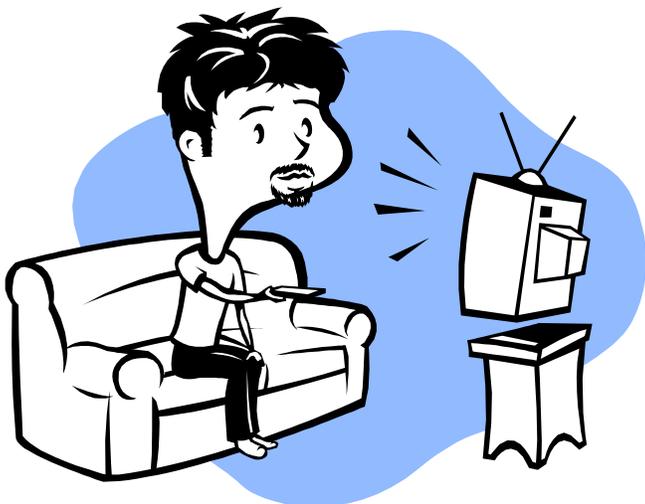


# TV and Computer Screens

When you are watching TV, the screen is showing about 24 frames per second. However, each of those frames is being illuminated about 2 to 3 times before the next frame is shown. Even though it doesn't look like it, the screen is flickering at you at an extremely fast rate, and your brain is picking up on that. This flickering causes strain on your eyes, which in turn causes a **headache**.

Type of Screen	What it is	How it affects your eyes
<b>LCD</b> <b>Liquid Crystal Display</b>	A screen that makes use of the way liquid crystals modulate light. The liquid crystal is placed between two surfaces and an external light is used to illuminate it	Staring at anything for too long can be bad for you because it causes you to blink less. Blinking less can cause your eyes to develop dryness and put strain on them which can in turn create a headache. Take frequent breaks by looking away from the screen or closing your eyes for a few seconds.
<b>LED</b> <b>Light Emitting Diode</b>	Semiconductor light sources which release energy in the form of photons	
<b>PDP</b> <b>Plasma Display Panel</b>	Small cells containing electrically charged ionized gases	

Photosensitive epilepsy affects about 1 in 4,000 people. Television-induced epilepsy is the most common type because of the rapid flickering images. If TV can cause a seizure in this many people, think about the effects it could be having on you. While there is still much to learn about early brain development, there are links between ADHD and television. The American Academy of Pediatrics has even warned parents to limit the amount of time their children spend watching television. In 1999, they practically suggested a ban on TV for kids under the age of two!



## Brain Waves and TV

If you've ever felt like your mind is foggy after watching TV for a long period of time, it's not just you. Herbert Krugman proved in 1969 that watching TV caused the brainwaves to switch from Beta to primarily Alpha waves.

**Beta Waves** – used during your normal waking hours when your brain is active. They are used for critical thinking, alertness, and logic.

**Alpha Waves** – used during deep relaxation and meditation. Too much time spent in this state can cause you to lose focus and have a hard time concentrating.

# Typing

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Follow these steps:

1. Clench your hand into a fist and hold it for 20 seconds.
2. Compare your clenched fist to your other hand (take note of the difference in color)
3. After 20 seconds, release your fist.
4. Wiggle your fingers.

Did you notice how the knuckles in your clenched fist turned white? Did your hand feel weak after you released your fist? This is because the blood flowing to your hand is limited when that much strain is put on your muscles. It's just like pinching a straw when liquid is trying to flow through it.

Now follow these steps and pay close attention to how your neck and shoulders feel the whole time:

1. Stand up and let your arms hang at your sides.
2. Raise your arms in front of you, but keep your elbows at your side.
3. Crane your neck forward (as if you are getting a closer look at your computer screen)

Did you notice the way the muscles in your shoulders and neck felt?

When your head and neck is in a neutral position, they are stacked on top of the vertebrae and ligaments. When your head moves forward out of the neutral position, the extensor muscles in your neck start working. Extensor muscles are anaerobic muscles and are not meant for long term strain. Therefore, blood flow becomes limited and this can cause a **headache**.

## Two Types of Muscles

Aerobic	These muscles are postural and meant for long term use, like when running a marathon.
Anaerobic	These muscles are for short term use, like when sprinting.

# Commuting

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Surveys have shown traffic jams as the biggest cause of stress for people today. While the position of your arms is already causing strain for your neck and shoulders, being stuck in traffic can make it even worse because that is exactly where most people carry their stress. Think about it. When you are stressed, do your shoulders get tense? Do your fists ball up in anxiety? All of this causes those muscles in your neck and shoulders to become overworked and limit the blood flow in that area. Therefore, a headache occurs.



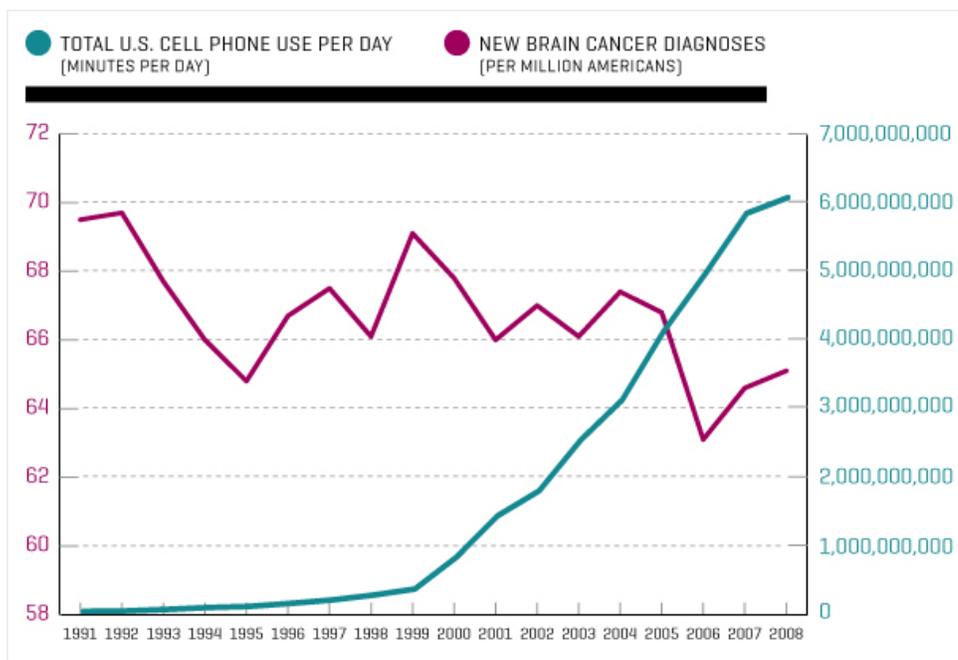


Some people think that cell phone radiation can somehow penetrate your skull and *fry your brain!!*

Think about this: In 1990, there were only about 4 million Americans using cell phones. That year, there were only about 7 cases of brain cancer for every 100,000 people in the US. If we fast forward to 2002, there were about 135 million Americans using cell phones. That year, there were only about 6.5 cases of brain cancer for every 100,000 Americans.



While scientists can't explain the decrease in cases of brain cancer, no one seems to be able to prove that cell phones are causing it. In 1992, the Reynard v. NEC case was filed in which a man



tried to sue a technology corporation, claiming that their cell phone was to blame for his wife's brain tumor. While the shape and size of his wife's brain tumor held an uncanny resemblance to the shape of her cell phone antenna, the case was dismissed in 1995 because of the lack of information provided to prove his case.

Figure 1 <http://tech.fortune.cnn.com>

## There's A Solution!

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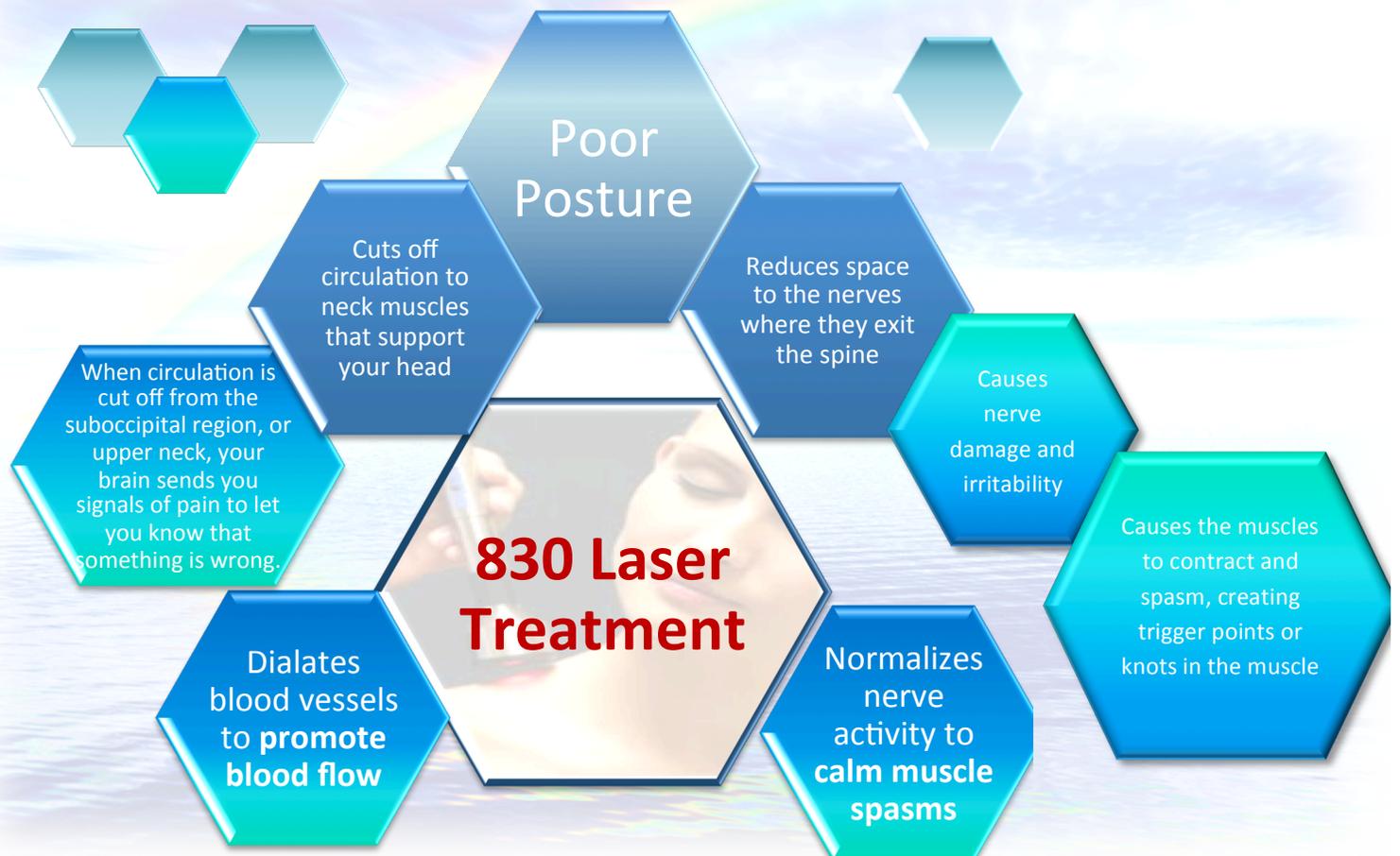
**Physical Therapy** can provide many types of revolutionary treatments that are sure to provide relief. Many patients feel better after just their first visit! If your headaches are caused by tension in the muscles, stress, poor diet, or many other things, wellness programs and other physical therapy treatment programs may be the best way to go! Most physical therapy clinics accept your insurance, and they even offer programs for those who are uninsured. Either way, they will help make sure that your experience with them is affordable for you.

When going to see a physical therapist about your headaches, be prepared to answer questions such as:

1. How frequently do your headaches occur?
2. Have you noticed any patterns about your headaches?
3. Do they only happen during a certain time of day?
4. How long do your headaches last?
5. Are there any factors that trigger your headaches? Sunlight, noise, etc.
6. Do certain foods trigger your headaches? Sweets, MSG, citrus?
7. Are you currently taking any medications?
8. Have you recently had any injuries or trauma?

Print out these questions and have them with you when you visit your physical therapist. Being prepared will help you to give your PT ALL the information he or she needs to know!

If your headaches are caused by something outside the realm of physical therapy, your therapist will be more than happy to refer you to the right direction to ensure that you receive the care that you need.



# 830Laser and Strengthening Postural Muscles

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## 830Laser Program

The ML830 Laser has proven effective as a successful treatment for a variety of aches/pain, injuries, wounds, fractures and neurological conditions. As experts in pain relief, we recommend our non-invasive breakthrough technology. Our laser therapy is versatile, convenient and effective while producing safe, significant results.

Even if you have not had success with other treatments, this program is for you. We address the root cause rather than merely treating symptoms. This results in a more long-lasting relief which is highly effective in preventing recurrent problems. The ML830 Laser, in conjunction with our advanced hands-on techniques, will promote rapid recovery and can help conditions that have not previously responded to other treatments.

### How long before benefits are realized?

Following a laser therapy session, approximately 75-80% of patients can notice an immediate improvement in their condition. More chronic and severe the conditions may take longer to respond to treatment. Most simple conditions resolve in 4-6 sessions, while chronic or complex cases can take up to 10-18 treatments.

### Why Act Now?

Don't put it off any longer. The more you wait the more serious your problem may become. Don't let your problem get to the point of no return. Call and schedule an appointment today and you'll receive a FREE ML830 Laser Treatment with your free screening.

## Conditioning Postural Muscles and Core

“Even the position of your pelvis can affect the position of your shoulders. A simple example of this is the hip flexor muscles. With society demanding more sitting at a computer, driving, television, the hip flexors adaptively shorten, creating stress on the lower back.

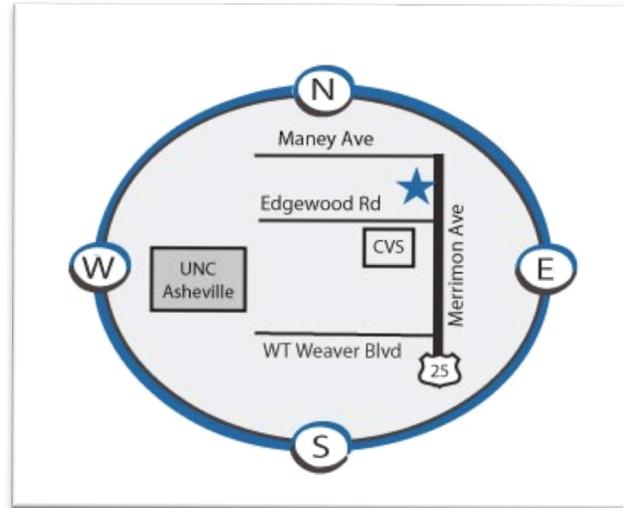
What many miss is that this dysfunction of the lumbar spine affects posture up and down the chain. For instance, if we sit in a slouched posture, the pelvis rocks back, the mid back rounds forward, and the head tilts up with the chin forward, so you can continue to look ahead. If you only change the position of your pelvis (rock forward) to put a slight arch in your back, your mid back straightens, the shoulders come back slightly, stress is reduced in the neck and shoulders. Seeking advice on the internet for headaches, neck pain, shoulder and arm pain generally leads to treatment of strengthening of the upper back, neck and shoulders, as well as stretching of the chest. These things can help, but is only a portion of the solution.”

- **Trevor Field, Physical Therapist**



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## We Care

When searching for care, it's important to be wary of places that merely prescribe pain killers and don't try to resolve the problem. If your headaches are serious or chronic, your doctor should be running tests to determine the root of the problem and checking for other serious health conditions that could be related to the headaches.

Misdiagnoses are also important to watch out for. Many sinus headaches are passed off as tension headaches, so the infection or allergy goes untreated.

Many people who suffer from chronic headaches often become depressed and feel hopeless. Don't let your headaches take control of your life! Don't let them make you feel like you are stuck in a prison of pain. Break free from your headaches today and call your local physical therapist. Request a free screening to see if you are a good candidate for their services!



**Christopher Taylor, MPT**  
graduated from WVU in 2001 with a Masters degree in Physical Therapy. In the past fifteen years, Chris has been practicing in outpatient orthopedics, specializing in head and neck challenges, adolescent sports rehabilitation, ergonomic assessments and injury prevention. He is a Certified ASTYM provider and specializes in relieving pain from soft tissue restrictions. He is also a Certified 830Laser Therapy Clinician and gets results with  
**No Drugs, No Injections, No Surgery.**