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What's Inside

Volume 4 | Issue 4
April 2011

HEALTHY SPINE GUIDE

- » Take the pain out of spring yard work.
- » Ask the doctor.

PATIENT SPOTLIGHT

- » Laser Spine Institute helps patient rediscover his love of water sports.

LSI HEADLINES

- » Laser Spine Institute gives back to the community with sponsorship of a nationally televised charity golf tournament.
- » Laser Spine Institute opens new medical consultation facility in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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Healthy Spine Guide

Take the pain out of spring yard work.



It is that time of the year when many look forward to planting flowers and making gardens beautiful once again. The rewards of this work will come to light in the summer with green lawns and bright blooms, but you don't want to achieve this at the cost of back and neck pain.

» [Full story...](#)

» [Register for an educational seminar about back pain near you.](#)

Ask the doctor.

Q: During a recent appointment, my physician mentioned that my symptoms might be related to my facets. What is a facet joint?

» [The answer.](#)

» [Learn about the conditions that Laser Spine Institute treats.](#)

Patient Spotlight

Laser Spine Institute helps patient rediscover his love of water sports.

Kite surfing was John's passion. A bicycle/scooter shop owner in Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, John loved riding big waves in his spare time. But when sciatica symptoms – including pain, tingling, burning, and tightness in his back, buttocks, hips, and down both legs to the bottom of his feet – took away his ability to kite surf, the most severe consequence of his condition became apparent.

He could no longer enjoy the sport he loved.

» [John's story.](#)

» [Read about more patient success stories.](#)



LSI Headlines

Laser Spine Institute gives back

to the community with sponsorship of a nationally televised charity golf tournament.



As the leader in endoscopic spine surgery, Laser Spine Institute has become well known from coast to coast by people looking for a solution to their chronic back and neck pain. Increasingly, the company is also gaining attention for its support of people in need through charitable organizations.

The company recently agreed to become the title sponsor for the Challenge, one of the signature events of the Outback Steakhouse Pro-Am.

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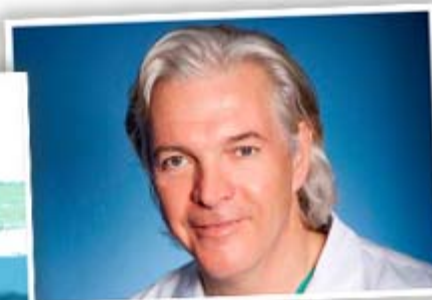
Laser Spine Institute opens new medical consultation facility in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Are you suffering from chronic back pain or neck pain, and living in New Mexico? If so, we have good news – Laser Spine Institute is expanding yet again and is proud to announce the opening of our new medical consultation facility in Albuquerque, New Mexico on May 2, 2011.

» [More info...](#)

» [Find out more about our newest medical consultation facility in Albuquerque, NM.](#)

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Table Of Contents

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Take the pain out of spring yard work.

It is that time of the year when many look forward to planting flowers and making gardens beautiful once again. The rewards of this work will come to light in the summer with green lawns and bright blooms, but you don't want to achieve this at the cost of back and neck pain.



There are several guidelines to follow that will allow you to do most of your gardening, while protecting your spine. These include job selection, time spent during each job, keeping the loads small and using good body mechanics during each activity. Before you start a day of gardening, review all of your jobs and place each activity in order ensuring that you don't spend more than 15 minutes on one job. For instance, weed, then trim a hedge, dig a hole for planting—all in 15-minute increments. Keep rotating from one job (and one posture) to another.

Avoid heavy lifting by only filling large bags half full with leaves or brush. Make sure it is light enough to lift easily, and do not leave all the lifting for the end of the day. Raking and sweeping can be very stressful on our backs, as leaning over places a lot of strain on your joints and ligaments. Stand upright and walk with the broom or rake rather than pulling it with your back and arms. This way, your spine is straight and your legs are doing the work.

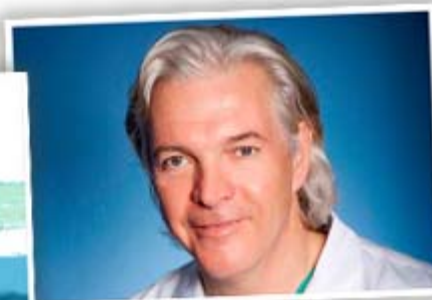
Also, avoid leaning and bending over for long periods of time—even more than five minutes can be excessive. Sit on a cushion when weeding on the ground, stand close to bushes and trees, when trimming, and use tools with long handles so

you can remain upright while gardening.

In order to enjoy the day, don't forget the cool lemonade and sporadic rests during the workday and make sure to lie flat and unload the joints in your spine after completing the day's work. Finish the day with an ice pack for 30 minutes to prevent swelling or inflammation that may have occurred in your joints and muscles during the day, if you have aches and pains. Then, enjoy the fruits of your labor. If pain persists, please consult your physician for an examination.

[Register for an educational seminar about back pain near you.](#)

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Ask the doctor.

Q: During a recent appointment, my physician mentioned that my symptoms might be related to my facets. What is a facet joint?

A: The facet joints work in pairs to link the vertebrae directly above and below to form a working unit, which allows movement of the spine. Facets are synovial joints, similar to those found in the wrists and fingers. Repetitive motion and stresses can lead to degenerative changes in these joints, causing them to become enlarged or hypertrophied. This leads to enlargement of the bones that make up the joint, often resulting in spinal stenosis, causing pressure on the spinal canal. A thick liquid, known as synovial fluid, surrounds the joint, allowing the bones to move without friction. They can become arthritic, causing pain or pushing directly against the nerves on the spinal cord to cause nerve pain and dysfunction. Facet joint syndrome, which is pain that occurs in the facet joints, is another common condition, which affects the lower back and neck.

It is often difficult to pinpoint facet joint syndrome, based on the symptoms of the disease, as many of them are remarkably similar to back pain. Joint pain may also be caused by other underlying factors, like osteoarthritis, in which case, facet syndrome becomes merely a symptom and not the primary factor or actual ailment.

Some of the symptoms of facet joint syndrome include:

- Acute episodes of lumbar and cervical facet joint pain are typically intermittent, and occur a few times within a month.

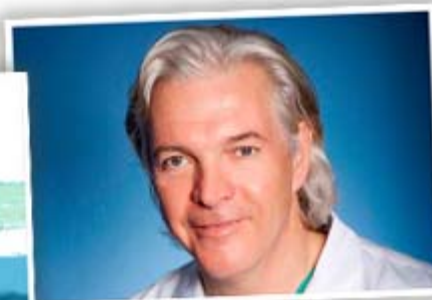
- Tenderness, overlying the inflamed facet joints and some degree of loss in spinal muscle flexibility.
- Discomfort while slightly leaning backward more than leaning forward.
- Low back pain from the facet joints which radiates down into the buttocks and the back of the thigh.
- Cervical facet joint problems may radiate into the shoulders or upper back.

At Laser Spine Institute, we provide proven relief to patients experiencing pain associated with the facet joints. After a thorough evaluation and diagnostic testing, our surgeons typically perform a Facet Thermal Ablation to clean the affected joint to relieve the nerve that stimulates the joint.

For further information on this procedure, contact a Laser Spine Institute Patient Coordinator today.

[Learn about the conditions that Laser Spine Institute treats.](#)

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He could no longer enjoy the sport he loved.

John says he was depressed because of his pain, unable to muster the drive to do much of anything. "I felt my life was over," John says. "I couldn't play with my kids or help my wife."

A multitude of treatment options failed miserably in bringing any semblance of relief. John says he tried massage, acupuncture, spinal cord stimulation, chiropractic treatments, visits with multiple neurologists and neurosurgeons, and more, all with no results.

But then John found Laser Spine Institute, underwent one of our minimally invasive procedures, and found the life-changing pain relief he was looking for. Describing his experience as "awesome" and "amazing," John says he valued the personalized care he received from the Laser Spine Institute medical team, calling them "empathetic,"



"professional," and "God-sent."

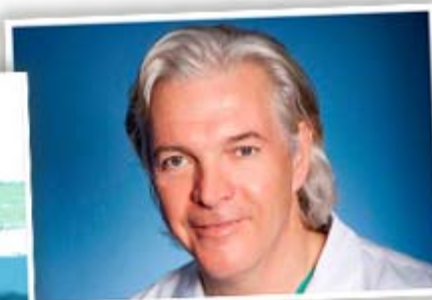
With his pain now gone, John has been able to get back out on the water and ride the big waves once more, and he encourages anyone else suffering from chronic pain to contact Laser Spine Institute immediately.

"Don't waste time. Get your life back now!" John says. "See you out on the water!"

If you'd like to learn more about the endoscopic procedures we perform at Laser Spine Institute and how they may be able to help you find relief from chronic back or neck pain, contact us today.

[Read about more patient success stories.](#)

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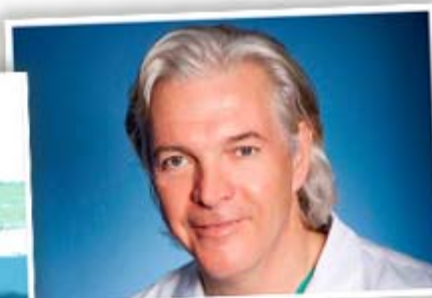
The company recently agreed to become the title sponsor for the Challenge, one of the signature events of the Outback Steakhouse Pro-Am. This popular golf tournament is televised nationally, and features competition with Champions Tour professionals and celebrities. Since its inception 23 years ago, the tournament has contributed over \$8.7 million to Tampa Bay area charities.

In recognition of our significant support of the tournament, Laser Spine Institute has been named the Official Spine Surgery Provider of the Outback Steakhouse Pro-Am.

[Learn more about the outpatient, endoscopic procedure that got Professional Golfer Peter Jacobsen back on course quickly.](#)



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Located at 8801 Horizon Blvd. NE, Suite 310, the new Albuquerque consultation facility offers stunning views of the nearby mountains and mesas. Here, prospective patients will be able to speak with board-certified physician Dr. John Spallino to learn more about the condition that is causing their pain. Dr. Spallino can review an individual's MRI or CT scans to determine whether one of our endoscopic spine procedures might be able to help them find relief.

This latest expansion is an exciting new step for Laser Spine Institute as we seek to offer even more convenient locations for prospective patients around the country and the globe to learn about – and undergo – our minimally invasive procedures.

If you live in or are visiting the Albuquerque area, be sure to contact our new consultation center today to reserve an appointment.

[Find out more about our newest medical consultation facility in Albuquerque, NM.](#)



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