



## The Spinal Column

### What's Inside

Volume 2 | Issue 1  
January 2009

#### WHAT'S NEW AT LSI

- » Patient Charts Go Paperless
- » Ask the Expert
- » LSI: A Year of Progress

#### PATIENT SPOTLIGHT

- » Walk of Courage

#### WELLNESS 101

- » Ask The Doctor
- » Staying Active at Home

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### What's New at LSI

#### Patient Charts Go Paperless

LSI is excited to announce the roll out of the new Electronic Medical Records (EMR) process. This new information gathering tool will replace paper charts and allow for

quicker and easier access from all LSI departments and locations.

» [More info...](#)

» [Read more about LSI Services](#)



## Ask the Expert

Ask the Expert is the newest addition to *The Spinal Column*. This Q & A article gives readers an opportunity to ask a member of the LSI team questions relating to LSI surgical centers, staff, services and other related topics.

This month's topic is Finance with Consumer Finance Specialist Clay Grossman.

» [Read the Q & A](#)

» [LSI Frequently Asked Questions](#)

## LSI: A Year of Progress

Over the past three years, LSI has made great strides in its effort to provide the highest quality of care to patients. The year 2008 has been particularly significant in LSI's commitment to growth, innovation and service.

» [Full story...](#)

» [Watch LSI's Five Day Process Video](#)

## Patient Spotlight

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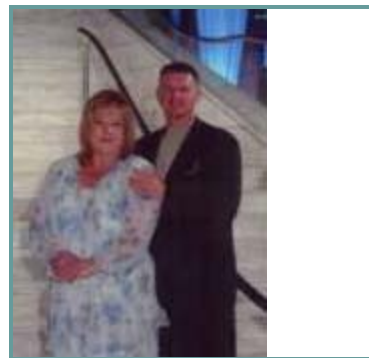
### Walk of Courage

*"I hit my all time low when my husband, Steve, and I were out dining with friends and in front of them, I could not cut my own steak."*

Former LSI patient Barbara "Babs" Warren shares her story and the courage it took to start her life again.

» [Read Babs' Story](#)

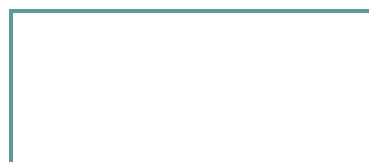
» [Read more LSI Patient Success Stories](#)



## Wellness 101

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### Ask The Doctor



**Q:** I just received a copy of my MRI report, but I don't know how to read it. What do all of these terms mean?

» **The Answer**

» **Spine Conditions That Cause Back Pain**



## **Staying Active at Home**

As colder weather arrives, we find ourselves spending more time indoors and doing less physical activity. To help keep you active, here are a few exercises to keep your body warm.

» **[Click here for more information.](#)**

» **[Visit the LSI Resource Center](#)**



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#### Table Of Contents

- Patient Charts Go Paperless
- Ask the Expert
- LSI: A Year of Progress
- Walk of Courage
- Ask The Doctor
- Staying Active at Home

#### Front Page

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#### Table Of Contents

- Patient Charts Go Paperless
- Ask the Expert
- LSI: A Year of Progress
- Walk of Courage
- Ask The Doctor
- Staying Active at Home

#### Front Page

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Volume 2 | Issue 1  
January 2009

## Patient Charts Go Paperless

LSI has recently adopted the Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system to replace paper charts and create a more efficient system for medical records retrieval.

Many physicians and hospitals have transitioned to some level of EMR in an effort to enhance information, maximize security and improve patient care. The dedicated LSI operations team is confident that the benefits of the EMR system are aligned with the company's commitment to providing the highest quality service to patients.



With the introduction of EMR, LSI patients will benefit from the following:

**Speed** – Simplifying the retrieval process by inputting the information directly, rather than sorting through paper charts, EMR offers the clinical staff more time with patients. This organized infrastructure also reduces troubleshooting, for example, locating a chart or films.

**Storage** – During the LSI process, a patient undergoes a complete evaluation, imaging and diagnostic testing, if necessary, in addition to medical history review and clearance. All of this information can be kept safely and well organized within the EMR system.

**Security** – A patient's records are kept confidential and made available to authorized users only.

**Accessibility** – Authorized users from different LSI departments will be able to access a patient's electronic file at the same time, ensuring timeliness and accuracy. If a patient should visit more than one LSI location, records can

be sent and accessed from different locations as well. For example, an outside MRI facility can use EMR to send up-to-date patient images to LSI.

**Efficiency** – A patient's pathology, clearance, images, discussions and testing can be compiled and accessed with EMR quickly and easily by an LSI authorized user. The EMR process improves workflow, which results in quicker and more informed healthcare decisions for the patient.



The EMR system provides a secure, organized patient record infrastructure and will evolve as LSI continues to offer the best and most efficient healthcare to patients in need of spine-related minimally invasive surgical treatment.

[Read more about LSI Services](#)



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- LSI: A Year of Progress
- Walk of Courage
- Ask The Doctor
- Staying Active at Home

#### Front Page

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Volume 2 | Issue 1  
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### Ask the Expert

**Q:** Due to the current economy, I am concerned about the upfront cost that I might accrue. Is there any type of affordable monthly payment plan that has an uncomplicated approval process?

**A:** We can determine your total upfront cost after we verify your current insurance coverage. It is important to note that the upfront cost may not represent your eventual net cost of having surgery at LSI. You will most likely have the opportunity to subtract any insurance reimbursement and also deduct the remaining non-reimbursable amount from your taxes. I stress the importance of the possible tax deduction mostly because many of us do not get the chance to deduct medical expenses in a given year. If **Clay Grossman** you do not currently itemize your taxes and use "write-offs," it is highly recommended to reconsider during the year that your surgery is performed.



With regard to payment plans, LSI has established relationships with a few national healthcare finance companies that offer affordable monthly payments. This type of financing is a great option, but not necessarily the best for everyone. I recommend first looking into your personal resources, for instance:

- 1) Home Equity Loan
- 2) 401(K) or any other retirement/savings accounts
- 3) FSA (Flexible Spending Account) – medical payment plan offered by your employer

Even though the economy has tightened, these are viable options offering the lowest interest rates. For example, it is realistic to find a Home Equity Loan for 4 to 5 percent because the current Prime Rate is showing 4 percent. If

equity is not available, you may want to take advantage of your 401(K) funds. A majority of finance companies are offering loans penalty-free from a retirement account. This type of loan provides a greater return than the current average retirement plan.

It is my goal to help patients gain a better understanding of the programs, specifically created to offset any additional healthcare expenses after insurance reimbursement and tailor the right solution for the patient.

### [LSI Frequently Asked Questions](#)

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#### Table Of Contents

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- Ask the Expert
- LSI: A Year of Progress
- Walk of Courage
- Ask The Doctor
- Staying Active at Home

#### Front Page

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Volume 2 | Issue 1  
 January 2009

### LSI: A Year of Progress

In an effort to relieve their life-altering pain, over 8,000 patients have visited LSI for surgery conducted by Dr. James St. Louis' award-winning surgical team. LSI has streamlined the outpatient endoscopic surgical process to be completed in as little as five days. The benefits of LSI's procedures have attracted patients worldwide, from countries such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, Guatemala, Dubai, Argentina, Thailand and Spain, to name a few.



**LSI in Scottsdale**

With over 65 million Americans suffering from spine-related discomfort, billions of dollars are spent on doctor visits, conservative treatment, prescriptions, comfort care products and surgical procedures each year. State-of-the-art surgical centers in Tampa, FL and Scottsdale, AZ as well as a San Diego medical office have expanded LSI's reach to the millions of sufferers in need of a solution.



**Ingrid Honzak**

Patient success stories after surgery have touched the hearts of the LSI team. Former patient, Harry Carlson, at age 101, now visits the gym regularly and still enjoys traveling. After surgery, Ingrid Honzak finished the New York City marathon. Reilly Fitzgerald is teaching English and coaching soccer in Nova Scotia, having been on disability for two years. Greg Stanley toured Florida and spent two weeks in Jamaica with his family. PGA TOUR and Champions Tour veteran, Andy Bean, won two tournaments this past year, subsequent to his care at LSI. After LSI care, these patients were able to return to the activities they love.

After LSI care, these patients were able to return to the activities they love.

In an effort to educate others on the advanced minimally invasive endoscopic technique, LSI visited 33 cities, hosted over 10,000 attendees and conducted consultations with over 5,000 potential patients. LSI's complimentary seminars inform the public about spine anatomy, pain analysis, conservative treatment and advantages of minimally invasive spine surgery over traditional methods.

Patients are educated throughout the LSI experience, from initial contact through follow-up after surgery. The wealth of information combined with receiving the best healthcare available from an outpatient endoscopic spine facility is priceless to patients who have experienced LSI's five-star service. LSI will continue its mission of growth and innovation as the leader in minimally invasive spine surgery.

[Watch LSI's Five Day Process Video](#)



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#### Table Of Contents

- Patient Charts Go Paperless
- Ask the Expert
- LSI: A Year of Progress
- Walk of Courage
- Ask The Doctor
- Staying Active at Home

#### Front Page

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Volume 2 | Issue 1  
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### Walk of Courage

Babs' pain spanned over 20 years with bulging discs from car accidents and, over time, degeneration and bone spurs added to her pain. After an unfortunate slip and fall accident at her home in 2005, she began experiencing severe neck pain and numbness from the base of the neck down to her hands and fingers. As the pain and numbness worsened, Babs became increasingly incapable of performing the most mundane tasks. "I hit my all time low when my husband, Steve, and I were out dining with friends and in front of them, I could not cut my own steak." Babs painfully recalled.



**Barbara & Steve Warren**

Once she had lost most of the feeling in her hands, Barbara decided to seek relief. "I went to over 23 doctors and tried everything under the sun, except surgery." She found two facilities advertising to be the "best" in Arizona. However, representatives at both facilities advised Babs that her MRI does not warrant surgery and to seek alternative medicine. Frustrated by this response, she asked one representative, "what other alternative medicine might I seek, I have tried acupuncture, epidurals, facet injections, chiropractic, physical therapy and continued pain prescriptions. When will my MRI warrant surgery?" To her astonishment, the representative told her to call back once she had lost all feeling in both of her arms!

By this time, Babs' friends and family became involved in her search for relief. She received a call from her best friend, Karyn, who had seen an LSI advertisement. Immediately, Babs contacted LSI and sent her MRI films for review. Babs was both stunned and excited when her advocate, Jeff, told her that LSI could help.

After numerous failed attempts to find relief, a glimmer of

hope was 2,000 miles away in Tampa, Florida. During her first visit with Dr. Walter Wheelhouse, she was overwhelmed with joy that he was actually listening to her and “treating the patient, not the MRI film”, which is what she had been asking doctors to do for years!” On August 26, 2008, Dr. Kevin Scott performed her surgery. “I felt instant relief, while I was on the operating table I felt all the pain leave my body,” Babs exclaimed. She stated, “Two hours after surgery, I took a 30 minute painless walk on the beach and, that night, I went to dinner and ordered the biggest, fattest steak I could find and cut it myself with no help!”

Since the surgery, her friends tell her how well she looks without the look of pain on her face. Babs now enjoys walks without holding onto a grocery cart or using her cane. She is grateful for everyday activities like combing her hair, applying makeup or driving the car without fear of losing control. Babs is back to sewing and painting for the first time in three years and excited to play baseball with her grandchildren. In 2009, she looks forward to rejoining her friends at the APS Clown Troupe as “Hot Pockets” and the Autocross car club with her husband, Steve. She plans to be the driver!

Babs credits her success to the “outstanding conscientious LSI surgical team and the sharing, caring and endlessly giving professionalism of the entire staff” even after her surgery. She will tell you that, “on August 26, 2008, I began the first day of the rest of my life when I took that walk of courage to obtain help from LSI!” After her successful procedure, Babs has volunteered as an LSI patient referral, pointing people on the West Coast who suffer from pain in the direction of relief.

[Read more LSI Patient Success Stories](#)



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#### Table Of Contents

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- Ask the Expert
- LSI: A Year of Progress
- Walk of Courage
- Ask The Doctor
- Staying Active at Home

#### Front Page

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Volume 2 | Issue 1  
 January 2009

### Ask The Doctor

**Q:** I just received a copy of my MRI report, but I don't know how to read it. What do all of these terms mean?

**A:** Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a technique that is used to produce detailed images of internal organs or structures in the body, such as, the spine. MRI reports are comprised of two key components; a visual representation of the spine and your specific diagnosis.



The key to reading an MRI report is to understand the area of your back where the pain is located. There are four areas of the spine, three of which LSI treats: - the cervical (neck), the thoracic (upper back) and the lumbar (lower back). The fourth area is the sacral region, which LSI does not treat. The cervical region has seven vertebrae, abbreviated (C1 through C7), the thoracic region has 12 vertebrae, abbreviated (T1 through T12) and the lumbar region has five vertebrae, abbreviated (L1 through L5).



Each report will be indicative of the specific diagnosis, such as, degenerative disc disease, spinal stenosis, foraminal stenosis, bulging/ herniated discs, facet disease or spondylolisthesis. So, now that you have a basic understanding of the anatomy of the spine, we will simplify some of the complex terminology that frequently appears on MRI reports.

**Anular Tear**– Discs separate the vertebrae in the spine and have soft, jelly-like substances in the center. The outer layer is known as the annulus. When a tear occurs in this area, the jelly-like

substance leaks and may cause pain or sharp stabbing sensations.

**Bulging/Herniated Disc-** This is an out-pocketing of disc material. Pain or numbness results when the herniated disc presses against a nerve root.

**Disc Degeneration-** This condition occurs as a result of excessive wear and tear on the discs and can cause pain in the lower back.

**Facet Hypertrophy-** Also known as facet arthritis, this condition is basically an enlargement of the facet joints. Since the facet joints connect the vertebrae to each other, providing support, stability and mobility, enlargement of these structures results in pain and limits joint movement.

**Fragment/Extrusion-** When part of the disc material breaks free from the disc itself, it is called an extrusion or fragment. This piece of disc can compress the nerve root, causing pain.

**Level-** A common misconception is that the term level refers to regions of the spine, i.e., lumbar, thoracic or cervical. However, it actually refers to the vertebrae on which the problem is located. For example, an MRI report reading that the patient has a "Degenerative Disc at L4/5" simply means that there is a Degenerative Disc in the Lumbar region of the spine, specifically between the 4th and 5th vertebrae.

**Osteophyte-** This is the medical term for bone spurs and refers to a bone growth, which forms along joints, causing pain and limiting joint movement.

**Spondylosis-** This condition occurs as a result of excessive wear and tear (degeneration) on the disc and vertebrae. When this condition occurs, it may place pressure on the nerve roots, resulting in pain.

**Stenosis-** This term refers to narrowing, which can occur in the spinal canal, compressing the spinal cord, or the foraminal canal, compressing the nerves. Both scenarios can cause pain as a result of the nerve impingement.

Under the guidance of Medical Director Dr. Michael Perry, LSI's MRI Review department reviews over 250 MRIs and CT Scans on a daily basis. LSI encourages you to submit your film, CD or report for symptoms and diagnostic assessment.

## [Spine Conditions That Cause Back Pain](#)



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#### Table Of Contents

- Patient Charts Go Paperless
- Ask the Expert
- LSI: A Year of Progress
- Walk of Courage
- Ask The Doctor
- Staying Active at Home

#### Front Page

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Volume 2 | Issue 1  
January 2009

## Staying Active at Home

As colder weather arrives, we find ourselves spending more time indoors and doing less physical activity. An at home workout is just as effective as working out at a gym or outside. It is important to consult with your physician before beginning any exercise program.

To help keep you active, here are a few exercises you can do at home to create a plan for aerobic training, strength training, and stretching during the winter months.



Start with a light warm up for a few minutes to get your blood circulating and raise your body temperature. A simple warm up can be walking, marching in place or stepping from side to side.

Perform each of the following strength training exercises for 30 seconds to two minutes depending on your condition and ability.

#### WALL SQUAT-THRUST

Standing one foot from a wall, lean in with your hands keeping your feet shoulder width apart. Slowly lift one knee toward your chest, holding for one second. Return to the starting position, repeat with other leg. As you become comfortable with this exercise, increase your repetition moving your weight onto the ball of your rear foot.

#### WALL SIT

With your back against a wall, and your feet about two feet away from the wall, slide down until your knees are at a 90 degree angle. Hold the position as long as you can.

There are several options for indoor aerobic training such as videos and home machines. To help keep cardio workouts

fresh and exciting, rent or buy various videos. Mix it up with different genres of aerobic exercises.

### **SHADOW BOXING**

For a quick cardio and strength workout, stay light on the balls of your feet and keep your knees bent. Using quick, controlled movements, punch the air, practicing jabs and uppercuts. For more resistance, hold a bottle of water in each hand.

Stretching is an activity that is critical to overall fitness, but often is overlooked. As weather gets cooler, our muscles start to tighten. Stretching helps to avoid injuries to your body and keeps you lean during the winter months.

### **HIP AND LEG STRETCH**

Start by standing straight. Lift one leg and place on knee (as in a sitting position) to stretch hip and leg muscle. Hold for 30 seconds, and then change to the other leg, doing a minimum of two sets per leg.

### **ARM STRETCH**

Reach your left arm across your body extended towards your right shoulder. With your right hand, pull your arm inwards towards your body. Hold for 30 seconds. Then, extend the left arm straight over your head. Bending at your elbow, reach down towards your back. With your right hand hold the left elbow to help stretch triceps. Hold for 30 seconds and then change to other arm, doing a minimum of two sets per arm.

Boredom and monotony can be a problem with indoor workouts. Utilize the internet to search new exercises or rent fitness DVDs to prevent your workouts from becoming dull. Set a workout time and stick to it just as you would with a trainer or going to the gym.

[Visit the LSI Resource Center](#)

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Oakleaf Waste Management**



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