

LSI



LASER SPINE INSTITUTE

Get your life back



## The Spinal Column

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Volume 2 | Issue 8  
August 2009

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### What's New at LSI

#### A Definitively Different Experience - LSI Scottsdale

LSI opened an office-based surgery center in September



2008. Four months later, in January 2009, the outpatient surgical center, LSI Scottsdale, was unveiled. Since then, close to 1,000 patients have been treated for chronic back and neck pain.

» [Full story...](#)

» [Read about LSI Surgeons](#)



## Patient Spotlight

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### Life is Good

Jason Trueman, a triathlete with a hectic training schedule, suffered many setbacks because of his chronic cervical pain. A fusion was simply not an option for Jason who wanted to accomplish his athletic dreams.

» [Find out why...](#)

» [Read LSI Patient Testimonials](#)



## Wellness 101

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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?

» [The Answer](#)

» [Facet Disease and Other Spine Conditions](#)



### Play It Safe

From the morning jogger to the professional athlete, proper physical conditioning and prevention can protect the body injury. Are you susceptible?

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

» [Read LSI FAQ's](#)

### Be a Good Sport – Tips for Protecting your Spine

For those of you who enjoy an active lifestyle, follow these tips to prevent injury and keep moving.

» [More info...](#)

» [LSI Resource Center](#)

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August 2009**A Definitively Different Experience - LSI Scottsdale**

LSI Scottsdale welcomed patients in January 2009 after successful operation of an office-based surgical center four months prior to the mega-center opening. Servicing the Mid-West for close to a year, LSI Scottsdale, under the direction of Eric Miko and Chief Spine Surgeon Dr. Michael Weiss, has helped close to 1,000 patients who suffer from chronic neck and back pain. In response to the growing demand for LSI's advanced techniques, the surgical team expanded to include Drs. Mark Flood and Timothy Luke within six months of opening. The comprehensive surgical team has over 25 years of combined experience in minimally invasive spine surgery. This team of experts is dedicated to the research and development of endoscopic spine surgery and constantly enhancing procedures to provide the most advanced level of care available today.



With four operating rooms, 12 exam rooms, imaging center and physical therapy department, the professionals at LSI Scottsdale have brought an "Above and Beyond" level of outpatient spine care to the western U.S. Patients have found comfort within the facility, which resonates a "Sedona-like" spa resort. Greeted by a concierge, patients are guided through the surgical

process from evaluation to recovery by the helpful staff, ensuring a cohesive and care-free experience for the individual and their families. Executive Director Eric Miko comments, "Scottsdale is a definitively different experience

from any other healthcare facility offering high-end hospitality and advanced spine care.”

If you are interested in learning more about LSI Scottsdale, please visit [www.LSIScottsdale.com](http://www.LSIScottsdale.com) or contact your Patient Advocate for more information.

[Read about LSI Surgeons](#)

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Volume 2 | Issue 8  
August 2009**Life is Good**

"My name is Jason Trueman. I had surgery at LSI in July 2008 on my cervical spine by Dr. Wolff. My recovery has been going very well. Here are a few details about me, my injury and planned racing schedule for the next 18-24 months.



I've always been active and really enjoyed sports. Growing up, I ran track, cross-country, played baseball, golf and ice-hockey (yes, I'm Canadian). My wife and I moved to Bermuda in 2003 and still live here. The Bermuda climate allows for continuous 12 month training.

I wanted to complete a full ironman in 2006, but once I injured my cervical spine in 2005 I had to stop my training. I was basically in chronic pain for 6 months and lived on percocet. Eventually, the pain subsided, although my fitness was basically gone and I had suffered severe muscle atrophy through the right side of my upper body. Over the next two years, I tried to get back to an active lifestyle of running, biking, swimming and golf, only to continually suffer setbacks associated with my neck injury. I had 5 MRI's on my cervical spine between July 2005 and July 2007. The various surgeons I spoke with recommended spinal fusion; something I was not comfortable with being in my early 30's and still hopeful I could accomplish my longer term athletic dreams.

Then I found the Laser Spine Institute in Tampa. Since my surgery and recovery, my life is back to normal- finally! After 10 solid months of training, I'm in the best shape of my life. I'm able to complete 4-5 hour training days without neck pain, tingling or muscle spasms. Life is good."

**Jason's Race Schedule for the remainder of 2008**

Race the RockStar, 8 hour adventure race on July 25th:  
[www.racetherockstar.com](http://www.racetherockstar.com)

Muskoka Ironman, 70.3 on September 13th:  
[www.ironmanmuskoka.com](http://www.ironmanmuskoka.com)

Frontier Adventure Racing Championships, 14 hour race on  
September 26th: [www.raidthenorth.com](http://www.raidthenorth.com)

Fall Marathon to try and qualify for the 2009 Boston  
Marathon.

### **Jason's Schedule for 2009 & Beyond**

Boston Marathon

Full Ironman Triathlon with hopes of qualifying for the World  
Ironman Championships in Hawaii.

*"I am extremely grateful to LSI for giving me my  
athletic life back."*

[Read LSI Patient Testimonials](#)

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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. After repetitive motion and stresses, these joints can lead to degenerative changes, where they 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. Again, 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, generally unpredictable, and occur a few times within a month.

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- 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 LSI, we successfully treat numerous patients experiencing pain associated with the facet joints. After a thorough evaluation and diagnostic testing, the surgeons at LSI typically perform a Facet Thermal Ablation to clean the affected joint to relieve the nerve that innervates the joint.

For further information on this procedure, contact your Patient Advocate.

### **Facet Disease and Other Spine Conditions**

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### Play It Safe

At some point in their lives, most people will experience back or neck pain in some capacity. However, those who enjoy an active lifestyle, from the weekend warrior to the professional athlete, are more susceptible to many types of stresses on the spine, which can result in injury.

#### Did you know that 20-percent of sports injuries are related to the neck and back?

Injury can be caused by acute trauma or chronic stress as a result of poor conditioning, flexibility and posture. Contusions, sprains and strains are the most common injuries for an active individual. Athletes are more likely to suffer from muscle sprains and ligament strains due to resistance, overstretching and physical exhaustion. Contusions are caused by a sudden blow to the spinal region. Frequently, pain or muscle spasm is a protective mechanism to avoid further injury around a joint or a nerve.



The symptoms of a serious injury are severe pain, inability to touch the toes, pain radiating down one or both legs, or leg weakness. Medical professionals typically look for Spondylolysis or Spondylolisthesis and possible disc damage. Spondylolisthesis is caused by spine instability when a vertebrae slides forward on another vertebrae, which is common among football players and gymnasts. In terms of

potential disc damage, the discs are jelly-like substances that serve as a cushion between the vertebrae. Long-term stress and strain weaken the vertebrae, causing disc protrusion, pinching nerve roots that exit the spinal column.

At the first sign of pain or tingling, applying ice to the area is a common treatment. However, it is important to consult a physician when suffering from an acute injury or any abnormal symptoms to determine the extent of the problem. Common injuries can be healed with proper rest, therapy as well as “active” rest, for example; strengthening, improving flexibility and walking. Beginning treatment in the early stages of symptoms will help the active person rebound quickly. If back or neck pain is ignored without proper rehabilitation, a simple injury can progress into severe symptoms.

It is important for any athlete at any level to protect their body and practice prevention. Proper physical conditioning, such as aerobic exercise and muscle strengthening should prevent most common injuries to the body.

[Read LSI FAQ's](#)

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August 2009**Be a Good Sport – Tips for Protecting your Spine**

Professional athletes are known to have rigorous routines before and after competition, in order to prevent injuries and stay ahead of the competition. If you live an active lifestyle, it is important for you to follow this practice.

Here are some simple tips provided by the Laser Spine Institute's Functional Rehabilitation Department:



1. Complete a stretching and warm-up routine before playing. It is a good idea to do spinal stretches lying down. For example, perform flexion, rotation and extension stretches. We can achieve better muscle and ligament stretching of the spinal joints if we do them in this unloaded position. Include the specific body stretches and warm-ups recommended for your specific sport.

2. Following a sports activity, it is good to ice your spine to reduce any inflammation or swelling and prevent muscle spasm and nerve irritation. All sports place some strain on our spine and icing is good aftercare. Cycling keeps the spine in a prolonged flexion posture, running results in spinal joint pounding, tennis creates joint compression etc.

3. Professional athletes usually leave the competition if they have an injury. It is highly recommended not to play through pain or spasm. Recognize that painful symptoms typically indicate a more serious injury. Continuing to play may result in permanent or more serious injury to the spine.

4. Avoid over-playing, such as several days in a row, because spinal muscles and joints need a recovery period after

strenuous exercise. If you continue to play with fatigued muscles, there is a much greater likelihood of sustaining joint and nerve injury.

5. Build some rest days into your training and sports activities to allow your body to heal and muscles to repair.

6. Consider cross-training to stay balanced and healthy. Keeping muscles conditioned will provide extra support to the spine.

7. Swimming and pool exercises provide excellent aerobics and overall muscle strengthening having support of the water allows less strain on the body. Remember with all our training programs - our muscles are often stronger and capable of heavier exercise than our joints. If your spine is stiff and uncomfortable 24 hours after your training or sports activity, that is often a sign of swelling and inflammation in the spinal joints or nerve tissue. Decrease the intensity of your training, give yourself more rest days and restructure your sport, so that this does not persist.

Your goal is to play your sport well and successfully, but avoid permanent spinal injury that can affect the rest of your life.

### [LSI Resource Center](#)