

Ask the Experts

Dr. Stuart Weitzman



Q: Recently I have had 2 people approach me with calf problems asking: Can you help me? BUT, I am running a Marathon (NYC & Boston) and I have very little time (2 weeks and 8 weeks prior) until race day. I still want to do it. Can you help me? Will I be able to do it?

A: Obviously, helping these runners depended on many factors: How bad was the injury to the muscle? How long had they had symptoms or felt something in the muscle? How hard were they training (and if correctly)? How old are they? Any past history of injury to the area? Referring back to my article "Are You Breaking the Law" in last issue of this publication, I spoke about how problems can come and go symptomatically or painfully, but the problem can still be there. Both runners had to consider that in the last part of their training that they would not be training as efficiently, so their times may suffer. Both runners had to realize that if they were feeling that problem come on in the Marathon, it would be hard to gut out 26.2 miles. I advised both runners of these facts, but knew I could improve the function of their muscles and mechanics of their joints. As a Chiropractor, I look at were there any misalignments affecting the way the muscle was able to fire. I specifically look at joints of the ankle, knee, hip and pelvis to start. Then since over time and training (the repetitive stress of

running) it may have strained the muscle enough to damage it ever so slightly or brought out an old injury that had not healed thoroughly. Picture a hole in your shirt and instead of putting a patch on it, you sewed it up with the thread by pulling the hole closed. Now pull on the fabric of the shirt and see how the part with the hole sewed up is different. This is what happens to the damaged soft tissues (Muscles, ligaments and tendons) and then the forces being translated through the muscle are inefficient and detrimental to the damaged portion in negative feedback loop. With each contraction of the muscle, it aggravates the condition. So imagine what would happen to a damaged calf muscle that is training for a MARATHON!!!! In each case, I cleared out all of the restrictions of the affected joints and then went to work on the muscle with Active Release Technique (ART) Myofascial Release (MFR), PNF stretching and other manual techniques to increase the efficiency of the muscle. By doing these procedures, I am able to have the muscle fibers lay down properly and heal more thoroughly then if you just let it sit and hope it gets better. Both runners saw changes quickly and got back to training slowly and both finished their NYC and Boston Marathons respectively within their expectations.

Dr Stu

"If you don't take care of your body, where are you going to live?"

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