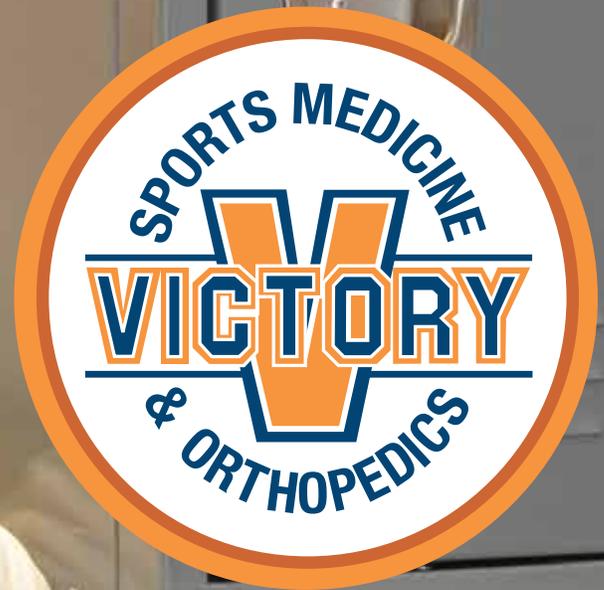


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VICTORY SPORTS MEDICINE AND ORTHOPEDICS:

By Eileen T. Jevis

Established in 2001 by Dr. Marc Pietropaoli, Victory Sports Medicine and Orthopedics in Skaneateles uses the latest techniques and technologies to heal patients as quickly and safely as possible.

The orthopedic and rehabilitation facility offers treatment for all types of sprains, strains, broken bones, dislocations, ligament tears, joint problems, and more. “We are able to return patients to health more quickly because of our integrated approach to healthcare,” says Dr. Pietropaoli. “Beyond the most up-to-date equipment, our facility offers sports medicine, orthopedics, arthroscopic surgery, and physical therapy/rehabilitation. We also provide medical sideline coverage at athletic events, strength and conditioning services, athletic training, sports massage therapy, and injury prevention programs such as Sportsmetrics™.”

Since opening 11 years ago, Pietropaoli has seen steady growth in his practice. Lifestyle changes are one of the primary reasons for an increased number of patients. Each year, Pietropaoli sees more and more people push themselves to their physical limits. “We see a lot of overuse injuries from people doing too much too soon, or just being overactive,” he says. “These days, young people are playing multiple sports

year-round. Professional athletes don’t play three games in one day or play in three different leagues at the same time, but that is what we are seeing in our youth. We also see a fair number of ‘weekend warriors’: those who do too much too soon or push too hard to get back to doing the things they used to be able to do.”

Pietropaoli says the practice also sees many patients who are obese and have conditions related to obesity, such as Type 2 Diabetes and heart disease, that can adversely affect both non-operative and operative treatments. As part of its focus to continually improve patient care and customer service, the practice invested in one of the best portable MSK ultrasound devices on the market. “We use this device for diagnostic purposes as well as needle guidance for injections,” explains Pietropaoli. “It allows us to guarantee we are able to get the medicine we are injecting in precisely the location desired.”

One such injection is called Platelet Rich Plasma Therapy (PRP), a non-surgical procedure for pain and injury. PRP is the

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Jennifer Eldredge – MRI Technologist Radiology Technologist



Taryn A. Bader PT,DPT



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portion of the blood that contains concentrated platelet cells that initiate healing due to releasing growth factors they contain. This relatively new treatment allows physicians to use a person's platelets as a way to help heal. The process isolates the blood platelets and harnesses their healing potential, offering, in some cases, an alternative to long-term medication or surgery. Injecting concentrated platelets into damaged tissue and/or ligaments, where growth factors take over, jumpstarts the healing process. "Because PRP uses a patient's own blood to stimulate the body's natural healing process,

there are virtually less side effects that are associated with traditional cortisone injections," explains Pietropaoli. "There is also no risk of allergy or rejection."

Dr. Peer Soderberg, a primary care physician with Family Care Medical Group in Elbridge, turned to PRP therapy as a last resort before surgery. Injury to his right elbow in 2008 resulted in chronic pain and markedly limited normal activities. He had medial epicondylitis, otherwise known as "golfer's elbow." "I was in such pain, I couldn't shake someone's hand or manipulate the manual transmission in

my car," explains Soderberg. Over the next 18 months, Soderberg tried every remedy possible to minimize the pain, including physical therapy, rest, heat, ice, and anti-inflammatory medications. "I also received two steroid injections with limited results and temporary improvement. The pain came back each time."

In 2010, Soderberg decided it was time to see Dr. Pietropaoli. "We went through the history of my treatments and I explained that I had been doing home therapy to try to manage the pain," says Soderberg. "Dr. Pietropaoli ordered



an MRI which showed the non-healing area revealed chronic tendonitis.”

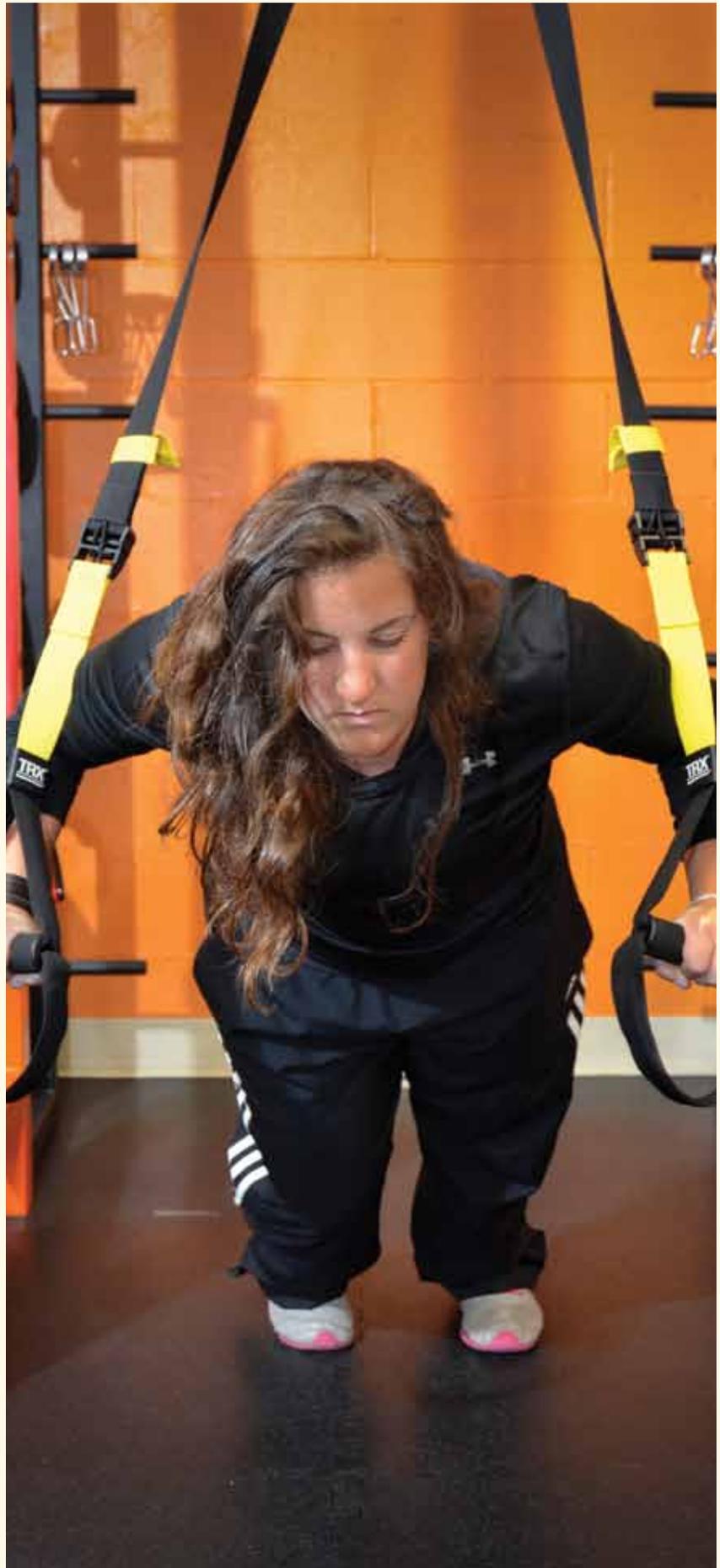
PRP works the opposite of steroid injections. Cortisone, an anti-inflammatory medication, treats inflammation and is not a pain relief medication. Pain is reduced because the inflammation is diminished. The injections usually work within a few days and the effect can last up to several weeks.

“PRP is pro-inflammatory, using the platelets to inflame the injured area,” explains Soderberg. “Instead of telling the immune system to leave you alone, you’re telling the body to come and heal the area by using one’s own platelets. PRP injections are releasing growth factors and calling in inflammatory mediators to repair and heal the area.”

Soderberg said the PRP injections have been a lasting cure for his chronic tendonitis. After the first injection, he again began physical therapy and experienced approximately 70-80 percent improvement. “The treatment was generating inflammation and generating repair. Because I was still experiencing mild pain, I had a second injection. After that, I was back to my baseline of movement and activity.” He has been back to normal since then.

Pietropaoli said that PRP treatment can be used for many types of degenerative conditions, such as rotator cuff injuries, golfer’s and tennis elbow, elbow tendinosis, patellar tendonitis, knee ligament sprains and tears, hamstring strains, ankle sprains, Achilles tendonitis, plantar fasciitis, and more. While he has seen a satisfying level of success with this treatment, he says that his practice tries every other possible method of non-operative/non-procedural treatment first: rest, ice, heat, physical therapy, anti-inflammatory medication, massage therapy, or cortisone injections. “PRP injections are a last resort prior to surgery,” explains Pietropaoli. “It doesn’t work for everyone, and it may take two or three shots for some to get the full effect and/or cure. However, about 67 percent of the time, one shot effectively heals the injury.”

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Patients start physical therapy within a few days of the injection, with limitations on normal activities for up to a week, depending on the area of injection. Heavy lifting and/or strenuous exercise are generally avoided for approximately one to two weeks, and full activities can resume in approximately six to eight weeks, depending on the activity or sport. “We really emphasize the number of restrictions put on the patient before and after the PRP injection,” says Pietropaoli. “It may take up to three or four months to notice the full effect of the healing.” Victory Sports Medicine and Orthopedics has its own physical therapy department and the therapists there have rehabbed

more PRP injection patients than any other therapy department in Central New York. “The therapy is just as important, if not more important, than the injection itself. Our therapists are the best at rehabbing this and are a big part of the success we have had using PRP.”

PRP injections have been used internationally with much success for many years. While the treatment has been FDA approved for wound healing, especially at the time of surgery, it has not been FDA approved for chronic degenerative conditions; therefore this is considered an “off-label” use. Further research will continue, eventually giving both patients and doctors more options

for treating degenerative conditions. But the future looks bright for platelet injection therapy as people seek out less invasive treatment options for injury and other types of conditions.

Soderberg had such a positive outcome to the therapy; he has referred several patients to Dr. Pietropaoli. He believes all of them have had a positive response to the injections. “As a physician, I was overwhelmed by the clinical response to the PRP injection,” says Soderberg. “It sped the recovery of my injury. I think that with the correct application, it’s the way to go in the future.”



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