



PROfiles: Muscle Injuries

Active Release Technique (ART®) is a form of body manipulation that helps to break through scar tissue and allows muscles to work smoothly again. For many athletes, the ability to move without pain can be truly miraculous.

Active Release Techniques (ART®) is not a miracle, neither is it random or unexplainable. It combines sound scientific principles with the skill and sensitivity of highly trained health care professionals. The result is often a fast and complete recovery from such problems as carpal tunnel syndrome and repetitive strain injury. Recovery that may seem miraculous, but it's really just good medicine.

In order to understand what Active Release Techniques is, perhaps it is helpful to first understand what it is not. It is not chiropractic care, although it is often administered by a chiropractor accredited in ART®.

Chiropractic care works on the nervous and skeletal systems – movement of joints -- to keep the body's structure in line and functioning properly. ART® is neither massage nor physiotherapy. Those procedures relieve muscle and motion dysfunction, but do not necessarily address the underlying problems caused by scar tissue formation.

Active Release Techniques is a non-invasive healing procedure that locates and breaks down scar tissue and adhesions that cause soft tissue injuries. It is a "hands-on" manipulation that targets very specific problem areas and heals through a combination of pressure, tension and motion. ART® is a fast and effective way to heal a variety of strains, sprains, traumas and repetitive injuries in most people.

When a muscle, tendon, ligament or nerve is damaged through trauma or overuse, the body will repair the damage with scar tissue. When you cut your finger scar tissue is the body's way of gluing the cut together so it heals. But when scar tissue glues one piece of muscle to another, or perhaps a tendon to a nerve, improper healing occurs. This causes pain, stiffness, weakness and numbness. Using ART®, a skilled provider can not only relieve pain, but also heal the injury.

Dr. John Prokopiak, a chiropractor based in Sarasota, Florida, has been providing ART® since 1994. Dr. PRO is a Naval Academy graduate and former steam propulsion engineer. Using his engineering knowledge he is able to look at the pains and problems of his patients with an understanding of the workings of complex systems and interrelationships of their parts. He teaches that the function of nerves, muscles and surrounding tissues of the human body are incredibly complex, and have to work together to perform well.

Only specially trained and accredited practitioners may perform Active Release Techniques., Dr. John PRO, is certified full body as well as the advanced biomechanics certification, ART® care "ARTDOC". He had to demonstrate advanced knowledge of anatomy, neurology, and muscle physiology to take part in an intensive training course, and then score above 95% on both a written and practical exam. But the results for his patients are well worth the effort.



During a therapeutic session, Dr. PRO detects and pinpoints the scar tissue causing problems. Then, through touch, he manually breaks the adhesion and, simultaneously, uses specific motions to force the layers of muscle, tissue and nerves to work together properly. Because it is manual manipulation, and because it is breaking through scarring and forcing a body part to correct a movement, ART® can be uncomfortable-- even painful. But it is the "hurts good" kind of pain, the kind that comes from knowing you're solving a problem and healing an injury.

Is Active Release Techniques for everyone? Of course not, no one method will solve every problem for every person. It is not a preventative technique, and it is not effective for injuries resulting from diseases such as Diabetes or hypothyroidism. But ART® has proven itself to be a fast, effective, non-invasive way to heal a wide range of soft tissue injuries, to correct injury-based mobility problems, and to get people moving again, comfortably and without pain.