

Low Intensity Laser Therapy to Relieve Pain



By Dr. W.
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What can you do if you've tried every conceivable way to relieve pain? You've been treated by anti-inflammatory drugs, cortisone, painkillers, physiotherapy, massage and finally, surgery. Yet the pain continues unabated. A technique, known as "Low Intensity Laser Therapy" (LILT) could be the answer.

Dr. Fred Kahn is Director of the Meditech Laser and Rehabilitation Centre in Toronto, and a specialist in pain control. He believes in curing the pain by curing the cause. I've talked to several of his patients about how LILT eased their pain and changed their lives.

PC, a 43-year-old jogger, collided with a glass door on returning to her hotel. When the door shattered, a large fragment of glass penetrated her knee. It left her with osteoarthritis and a life on crutches. Doctors claimed knee replacement was her only hope to relieve pain. After 11 treatments with LILT over a five-week period, PC threw away the crutches and returned to work.

GM, an 85-year-old former World War II pilot, had four back operations. A surgical error caused nerve damage, another resulted in infection and 26 weeks in hospital. Cysts formed in his spine and he required a morphine pump to ease the pain. Now after a three-month

treatment with LILT he walks upright without a cane and is being taken off morphine. He says he's 75 percent improved and can't believe it's happened.

A 17-year-old equestrienne had the misfortune of a 1000 pound horse falling and rolling over her hip joint. This left her with a visible limp and an audible click when she walked. Specialists told her they had little to offer but painkillers for her pain and drugs to treat her subsequent depression.

When seen by Dr. Kahn she had extensive soft tissue damage in the hip and thigh and so much injury to the joint capsule of the hip that it almost popped out with every step. After four treatments with LILT the pain had subsided and she stopped pain medication. She continued treatment three times a week until she returned to a normal gait.

LILT jump-starts the body's natural healing process by sending energy into the muscles and joints that's then transformed into biochemical energy. This decreases swelling, accelerates healing time and increases the pain threshold.

Dr. Kahn says LILT also triggers release of endorphins, morphine-like substances that inhibit the sensation of pain. It also increases cortisol, the forerunner of cortisone and angiogenesis, the formation of new blood vessels along with a number of other physiological processes.

The majority of patients seen at Meditech suffer from degenerative arthritis involving

the lumbo-sacral spine. Sixty percent of these patients also have degenerative disc disease, bulging discs causing compression of spinal nerves or spinal stenosis, a narrowing of the diameter of the spinal column. In the process of evolution, learning to stand upright has exacted a toll on the human spine. Maybe we should have stayed in the trees!

Another large group of patients suffers from sports injuries. These younger patients respond quickly to LILT. At the clinic I also saw several patients suffering from The Shoulder-Neck-Arm Syndrome and The Carpal Tunnel Syndrome both related to long hours at the computer.

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Others had rheumatoid arthritis and diabetic ulcers of the feet.

Many patients have been told, "You have to live with your pain". But this is not always the case. Rather, the use of low intensity laser therapy has proven to be a pain-buster alternative, and improves over 90 percent of patients who have significant problems. And it does not involve the use of medication, a huge advantage today.

I discovered that Dr. Kahn, a dedicated physician, and I, share the same wavelength. We deplore seeing patients drugged into oblivion by painkillers. And we both believe that surgery should be done only as a last resort.

Today doctors, even with the help of MRIs, often can't be sure of what's causing pain. In these instances, tincture of time along with a course of LILT may be the best solution.