

WHO WANTS TO LOOK LIKE A WALKING STICK? LOSE FAT, NOT MUSCLE TONE. SAFELY SLIM



**RUNNERS**  
NEW YEAR  
NEW YOU!



Only \$1 an Issue

# RUNNER'S WORLD

SUBSCRIBE

Log In or Register to join The Loop

SEARCH Forums Blogs Video Tools Personal Trainer Log Trail Store Race Directors Contact

HOME	CHALLENGE	TRAINING	RACES & PLACES	SHOES & GEAR	INJURY PREVENTION	NUTRITION & WEIGHT LOSS	MOTIVATION	MORE	SUBSCRIBE
------	-----------	----------	----------------	--------------	-------------------	-------------------------	------------	------	-----------

## INJURY PREVENTION: INJURY TREATMENT

STAYING HEALTHY

INJURY TREATMENT

PAIN RELIEF

STRETCHING

BLOGS

ASK THE RUNNING DOC

VIDEO

TOOLS

THE RUNNER'S BODY

### SPONSORED FEATURES

Get your 12-month plan to race well at every distance, stay motivated, have more fun, and experience your best year ever.

### PROMOTIONS



## THE ART OF HEALING

Active Release Techniques, a new trend in body repair, helps injured athletes get back in action fast.

By Robin Rinaldi

Print | Email | Share | RSS  
Comments 0 | Recommend

From the August 2004 issue of Runner's World

When you're a veteran of 15 half-marathons and six marathons, running through discomfort is familiar territory. So when Shirley Cornelius, 43, of Spokane, Washington, developed a painful tightness in her glutes, she didn't stop training—even when her stride began to shorten, her knees started to hurt, and her right leg felt numb. New shoes and orthotics didn't help, nor did six months of physical therapy. Desperate to get better, Cornelius turned to Active Release Techniques (ART), a rigorous and interactive form of massage therapy in which a practitioner applies pressure to the affected area while moving the surrounding muscles through a full range of motion.

Cornelius's breakthrough came when Kelli Pearson, an ART practitioner and chiropractor in Spokane, discovered that both of the runner's sacroiliac joints (which lie between the spine and the pelvis) were "locked up," meaning their range of motion was very restricted. She used her hands to search the muscles for "adhesions"—places where injury, repetitive motion, and inflammation had left dense, tight scar tissue. Pearson pressed into the scar tissue, and ran her hand along it in one direction as she instructed Cornelius to move her legs through a proscribed set of motions, including moving each leg forward and back. The next day, Cornelius was sore. The day after that, she felt better. And by the time her next half-marathon rolled around, the pain was gone. "After three months of weekly sessions, I'm 100 percent better," she says. "The difference is amazing."

While ART, which Colorado chiropractor Michael Leahy patented in 1988, remains virtually unknown to the general public, many elite athletes rely on it to heal their soft-tissue injuries. The NFL, NHL, and Major League Baseball have begun contracting ART practitioners to keep players healthy; ART booths are popping up at marathons and triathlons; and Olympic runners, such as Maria Runyon, credit ART for helping them recover from injuries such as plantar fasciitis.

At first glance, ART might appear similar to a standard massage. A key difference is the direction of the rubdown, says Bill Ross, M.D., a sports medicine specialist at St. Francis Memorial Hospital in San Francisco. "Other kinds of deep-tissue massage move in any direction," Dr. Ross says. "ART lengthens the tissue in the same direction as muscle fibers naturally move. That's what stretches out the adhesions and causes healing."

Being "active" also sets ART apart. You participate in an ART session by moving your limbs to help release tension. Unlike most forms of massage therapy and chiropractic care, ART isn't designed to be an ongoing treatment or preventive tool—it's done to heal a specific injury. The average recovery requires six to 10 sessions, though some patients feel an immediate change.

A key to ART's apparent success might lie in Leahy himself, a triathlete who has completed 31 Ironmans. His background as a chiropractor and an aeronautical engineer gives Leahy a unique understanding of the complexity of the soft-tissue system of muscles, tendons, ligaments, and fascia (overlying sheets of connective tissue). "You need to make the layers of tissue slide over one another in order to function correctly," says Leahy. "They all have to slide directionally or the runner feels weakness and tightness. ART has 500 specific protocols to address the ways these tissues slide across each other."

Learning these protocols takes three days of hands-on training and about \$2,000. ART certification is open to all licensed healthcare providers, including physical therapists, massage therapists, and trainers. There are about 3,500 certified practitioners worldwide. If performed by

### RELATED ARTICLES

- Band Aid
- The Big Hurt
- Midrun Mishaps
- Tape Yourself: Ankle Sprain
- Tape Yourself: Shinsplints

**RUNNER'S WORLD**

Get Runner's World Guide to Injury Prevention.



CLICK HERE

### RELATED DISCUSSIONS

- ITBS Support Group**  
In: Injuries
- toro labrum in hip**  
In: Injuries
- Achilles Tendonitis**  
In: Injuries
- Recovery from Compartment Syndrome surgery**  
In: Injuries
- Ischial Tuberosity Pain Syndrome??**  
In: Injuries

**BUILD STRENGTH, SPEED & ENDURANCE**  
For Your Best Run Ever!

Click Here >>

### NEWSLETTER SIGN-UP

Get free training tips, nutrition advice and motivation delivered to your inbox twice a week!

Enter your email:

a chiropractor or physical therapist, insurance will often cover the cost of treatment, which ranges from \$50 to \$100 a session.

Before you start looking for an ART therapist near you, know that so far, there's been only one published study on the method's efficacy. The research, published in 1998, was done at the University of California at San Diego, and found that 71 percent of patients reported improvement after four weeks of ART treatment. But only seven percent said their pain was completely gone, and the study wasn't randomized, nor did it use a control group--two precursors for scientific proof.

A random, controlled study with patients reporting their pain and functional levels would help scientifically back up what the anecdotal evidence on ART is suggesting. Such a study is planned for late this year at UC San Diego.

But seeing is believing, even for an M.D. like Dr. Ross. "I know that it works," he says. "ART is more effective for chronic inflammation than any other treatment available--and often a complete cure. I've been treating these problems for 25 years, and now I finally have something to recommend to my patients that works."

Treatment	Benefit	Recovery	Cost	Availability	Caution
<b>R.I.C.E. (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation)</b>	Relieves swelling and pain immediately	A few days for minor injuries; following treatment may be needed	Free	Do-it-yourself	To avoid frostbite, put a towel between your skin and the ice
<b>ART (Active Release Techniques)</b>	Practitioner rubs out scar tissue to treat soft-tissue injuries	Six to 10 treatments	About \$50 to \$100, sometimes covered by insurance	To find a provider in your area, visit <a href="http://activerelease.com">activerelease.com</a>	Treatment is often painful; don't go right after injury--wait until inflammation is gone
<b>CHIROPRACTIC ADJUSTMENT</b>	Adjusts vertebrae to solve structural issues causing the injury	About \$40 to \$100, often covered in part by insurance	About \$40 to \$100, often covered in part by insurance	Widespread	No scientific proof that adjusting vertebrae cures injuries
<b>DEEP-TISSUE MASSAGE</b>	Relieves tight muscles, improves blood flow to injured area	About \$40 to \$75, sometimes covered by insurance	About \$40 to \$75, sometimes covered by insurance	For a list of licensed therapists, go to <a href="http://amtamassage.org">amtamassage.org</a>	Untrained practitioner can cause more damage
<b>THAI MASSAGE</b>	Instructor coaxes you through yoga-like movements to improve blood flow to the injured area	About \$75 to \$100 per hour, sometimes covered by insurance	About \$75 to \$100 per hour, sometimes covered by insurance	Visit <a href="http://thaimassage.com">thaimassage.com</a> for a practitioner	You get up-close and personal with the trainer. Some find this uncomfortable or the positions difficult
<b>MING TECHNIQUE</b>	Similar to ART; however, a practitioner works on other areas (not the injured area) that might be contributing to an injury	Expensive (exact prices are undisclosed, but are in the hundreds per session); insurance may cover part of cost	Expensive (exact prices are undisclosed, but are in the hundreds per session); insurance companies may cover part of cost	Exclusive: There are only two therapists in New York and Toronto	Involves Chinese medicine, which some might feel uncomfortable with, and motions that some patients find hard to learn

[Your Privacy Rights](#)

[See All Newsletters](#)

**SIGN UP >>**



**Princess of the Marathon Cleveland**  
Lady Foot Locker  
MARCH 5-7, 2010

---

**marathon FOR THE cure™**  
A Program of Susan G. Komen for the Cure®

---

**Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon**  
October 3, 2010  
Register February 2

---

March 20 & 21, 2010  
[www.shamrockmarathon.com](http://www.shamrockmarathon.com)

---

**Click here to register before price increase on 2/20/2010.**  
[breastcancermarathon.com](http://breastcancermarathon.com)

[Print](#) | [Email](#) | [Share](#) | [RSS](#)

See More Articles in **INJURY TREATMENT**

**Comments**

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Login](#) | [Register](#)

SUBMIT

**Art Degrees Online**

Art degrees! Earn your Art degree at top online schools. Get info.  
[www.OnlineDegrees.com](http://www.OnlineDegrees.com)

**"New Smokeless Cigarette"**

Smoke Where You Want, When You Want. No Second Hand Smoke or Ashtrays.  
[www.National-Dental-Society.org](http://www.National-Dental-Society.org)

**Acne Gone In 3 Days**

Amazing New Treatment, No Drugs, No Doctors, No Risk, 100% Guaranteed  
[acnehomesolution.com/3-day-cure](http://acnehomesolution.com/3-day-cure)

---

**RELATED TOPICS**

**Running Form**

**Hydration**

**Strengthening**

**Running In Cold Or Heat**

**Beginning Running**

**Women's Running**

---

[Customer Service](#) | [Site Map](#) | [RSS](#)  | [International](#) | [About Runner's World](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Your Privacy Rights](#)

[Rodale](#) | [Running Times](#) | [Kids Running](#) | [Bicycling](#) | [Men's Health](#) | [Women's Health](#) | [Prevention](#) | [Organic Gardening](#)

---

© 2009 Rodale Inc.