



Achilles HEAL

By Stephen P. Weiss, M.D., P.A.

It was the Ides of March, and after a particularly poignant sharing with another participant in the retreat I was attending in Boulder, the workshop facilitator put on some uplifting music and we all started to free-flow dance. I was feeling a sense of unbridled joy and allowed myself to get absorbed into the music. Moments later my ecstatic absorption was shattered when I heard a loud snap reverberate through the room. It sounded like a rubber band the size of a conveyor belt had been pulled apart. I fell to the ground and knew instantly that my Achilles tendon had ruptured.

My initial feeling was one of shock. Before I could even utter any profanities, however, I was surrounded by a group of angelic beings in human form who instinctively knew how to care for me. One of them fetched a bottle of homeopathic Arnica, another whipped out a bottle of Rescue Remedy and began massaging my ankle. A 3rd woman said prayers while directing her palms towards me, and several others practiced the ancient art of laying on of hands. I relaxed deeply, and tears of gratitude welled up in my eyes as I consciously received this outpouring of love and healing. If this had to happen, I could not think of a better place.



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The first thing most people tell me when they hear I ruptured my Achilles is “I’m so sorry. I’ve heard that’s REALLY painful.” That was not my experience at all. While in Colorado, I took frequent doses of homeopathic Arnica and Ruta, a time-tested remedy for tendon injuries. I didn’t have to take ANY prescription painkillers for my injury—homeopathy worked wonders for the pain! When I returned to ABQ, I consulted Dr. Ping Chen, a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, for weekly Acupuncture sessions and Chinese Herbs, and continued to see Kerry Leigh for Core Synchronism and Dr. Trey Stiles, Network Chiropractor, who are all experts in their respective fields. I also added TENDON FORTE,



The human angel brigade attending to me—Body, Mind & Spirit.

our proprietary supplement for healing tendons and ligaments, which tennis maestro Rafael Nadal used as part of his extremely effective therapeutic regimen to heal his bum knee, and Symphytum, homeopathic Comfrey Root. Also known as “boneknit”, homeopaths use it to repair torn tendons as well. Symphytum is one of homeopathy’s miracle remedies. Francisco, a 65 year old gentleman, consulted me years ago for several health problems. He limped into the office with the help of a cane. During the course of the visit, I learned that a decade earlier, he fractured his leg and in spite of the best conventional Orthopedic care, it never healed. Although he did not come to my office seeking help for his non-union fracture, I told him I might be able to heal his leg. He was very skeptical, but he reluctantly agreed to

take Symphytum. The next time I saw him, he was walking comfortably without the use of a cane!

I was no stranger to this injury. Several years ago, the same thing happened to my father. His however, was due to the Levaquin he was given shortly before. Levaquin, and other antibiotics in the same class known as Fluoroquinolones (FQs), of which Cipro (generic = Ciprofloxacin) is the best known, can damage tendons and make them susceptible to rupture, as well as cause many other severe side effects. FQ’s are potent weapons in the fight against infection and have saved countless lives, but they are irresponsibly over-prescribed. If your doctor prescribes a FQ, (which are easily identified because the generic name ends in “floxacin”), tell him/her that you are aware of the serious dangers of these antibiotics, and ask them if there is a safer alternative that is equally effective. If you are prescribed a FQ for relatively minor infections, such as bladder or most skin infections, and your doctor refuses your request, demand it or find a new doctor. Some authorities in Integrative Medicine are recommending taking Magnesium with FQs to reduce the risk of tendon damage. Beware! Magnesium containing antacids, calcium, iron and zinc, as well as Aluminum containing antacids (which I never recommend due to

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Showing off my zippy knee scooter.

ago with symptoms of urinary burning and urgency. They diagnosed a simple UTI, and gave her Ciprofloxacin. Her symptoms quickly resolved. A short while later, while carrying 2 heavy bags, Jennifer's wrist began to hurt, her fingers became stiff, and her hand became swollen. By the time she consulted me, she was in a lot of discomfort. Within minutes of applying MagneSul to her wrist and hand, a magnesium cream we sell at the office, Jennifer felt noticeably improved. I also prescribed TENDON FORTE

their aluminum content) and a few prescription drugs should be taken either 2 hours before or 6 hours after FQs because they can inactivate them. Since these drugs are dosed every 12 hours, Magnesium can easily be taken without disrupting the FQ. Topical Magnesium may be more effective than oral, according to reports I have read.

Jennifer is a 66 year old woman who went to a local Urgent Care Center a year

and oral Magnesium, 400 mg twice a day. Her symptoms completely resolved on this regime. She stopped all the supplements, and the symptoms started to develop in other joints, so she restarted oral and topical Magnesium. Her symptoms dramatically improved again. She was extremely grateful, and later told me, "I'm so happy I decided to come see you, I can thank my lucky stars. Few doctors would have properly diagnosed my condition, and only a handful of those know how to properly treat it."

After doing my due diligence, I decided to treat my Achilles non-surgically, having read in high quality studies that the results 5 years out are equal to those who went under the knife, without the potential complications of deep infection, skin death and tendon death in up to 10% of patients, as well as nerve damage. I consulted a respected local Foot and Ankle surgeon, who immediately recommended surgery. He kindly agreed to read the meta-analysis (study of studies) I brought in, and reluctantly consented to the non-operative approach involving a brief period of non weight-bearing immobilization, followed by a weight-bearing boot and intense functional rehabilitation/physical therapy. 3 weeks later I returned for my follow up, and to my dismay discovered that there had been virtually no healing of the tendon, as indicated by my continued inability to point my toes. I then discovered that the surgeon had not followed the correct protocol--had not given me a

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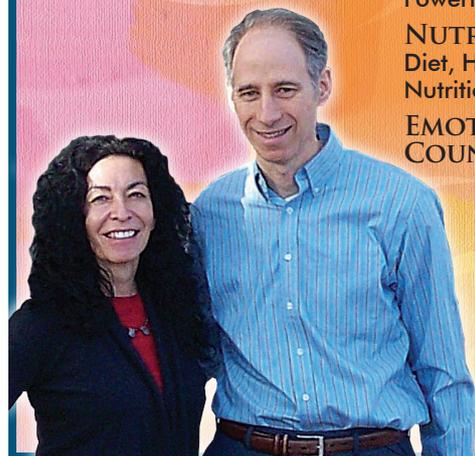
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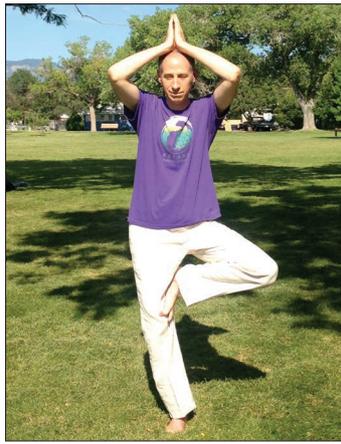
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high enough heel lift to allow the tendon fragments to reconnect. I was furious. I contacted the lead author of the study and asked him if he had used the protocol on anyone three weeks out from the injury. He said he had not and recommended surgery. I then consulted a different Albuquerque Foot and Ankle Surgeon. He too recommended surgery. At my request, he was willing to try the non-surgical approach, and put me in a cast with my foot at the appropriate angle for 2 weeks. This proved to be the game-changer, as I had regained significant ankle mobility once the cast was removed. I was very disturbed, however, to be told that he did not want me to go to physical therapy—the most important component of the non-operative protocol—because he was concerned that it would over-stress the Achilles.

By the time I had digested this news, the good doctor was out the door, on to his next patient. I summoned his nurse, and told her I needed to speak to the doctor again. I reminded him of the protocol we were following, and insisted he send me to P.T. He obliged.

Fast forward. I continue to see Jimmy Minner, Doctor



Performing the Tree Pose Vrksasan—3 months & 9 days into the healing process on my injured ankle.

of Physical Therapy, at Langford Sports and Physical Therapy, who is great, and have been able to decrease my visits from twice a week to once a week. Both he and my orthopedic surgeon are delighted with my progress. My range of motion is virtually back to normal, and strength is not far behind. At my last follow up, the Orthopedist told me that after observing my recovery, he has started to use the protocol on some of his other patients. When he happened to mention that his greatest desire is for something to treat non-union fractures with, I gifted him several bottles of Symphytum.

This story of personal heal-ing truly exemplifies the work that both Melissa Parra, CFNP, and I do at our clinic. We practice Integrative Medicine at its finest. We follow our convictions. We artfully blend Western and Alternative Medicine into a tapestry that changes lives.

If you are reading this in time to join us on September 5th, we would love to see you at our Open House! Please see the Community Events section for details.

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