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SPOTLIGHT

Patients say new MLS laser frees them from pain

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Feb 17, 2018



Chiropractor Trenton Talbitzer positions himself on the MLS laser therapy machine. He says it's an effective way to treat pain, especially of the back, hips, neck and knees.

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KEARNEY — Jessie Johnson of Upland was hurting after the birth of her fourth son. The infant had pressed against her back throughout her pregnancy, and after his birth, her low back pain lingered.

When her chiropractor, Trenton Talbitzer, purchased a new MLS laser therapy machine to treat pain, Johnson offered to give it a try. "I told him I'd be 'the guinea pig,'" she said.

After six 16-minute sessions with the machine, her pain disappeared. That was almost a year ago, and she's been pain-free ever since. "It was totally worth it," Johnson, general manager of Platte River Radio and radio station KKPR, said without hesitation. After hearing her success story, one of Johnson's friends tried MLS therapy, too. Her results were just as positive.

Talbitzer, who practices at the Platte Valley Chiropractic Acupuncture and Wellness Center at 3800 Ave. A, is equally enthusiastic. Aside from helping relieve pain, the machine could stem dependence on opioids, he believes. The over-prescribed painkillers have created a national crisis and turned patients into addicts. "We need to find other ways to combat chronic pain," he said.

The MLS machine is one of those ways. Its laser runs two parallel wavelengths to parts of the body. Photons of light from lasers penetrate deeply into tissue and accelerate the growth of new cells. The laser light reduces scarring, too. "It decreases inflammation, irritation and swelling. It also stimulates the tissues to heal," he said.

Nita Payne of Kearney is another MLS enthusiast. She has long been plagued by an old whiplash injury. "When it flares up, the pain is so intense I can't even move my head," she said. She ranks that severe pain at 7 or 8 out of 10. It was so severe that when Talbitzer suggested MLS therapy, "I was willing to give it a try."

After six treatments, she was so improved that she opted for six more. "It's a night-and-day difference," she said. Her pain rates no more than a 1 or 2 now.

Talbitzer first saw the MLS machine in Omaha. He recognized its advantages right away. The laser can track back and forth over the affected area for 15-25 minutes, but the machine also has a hand-held unit that can target specific muscle knots. The machine's wave lengths can be adjusted to treat specific pain and inflammation.

Talbitzer purchased a machine, trained in Chicago and began using it here in November 2016. "We've had good results. Eight out of 10 patients feel significant relief," he said.

For Payne, that "significant relief" reduces the need for painkillers and the cost of treatment, too. When she had surgery on her hand last fall, "even with insurance, it cost me \$350 to buy four days worth of non-habit-forming drugs. We filled that prescription just once," she said. By contrast, she said, "People can purchase an opioid like oxycodone for \$5 or even nothing," she said. The MLS machine is an effective alternative to that, she added.

Talbitzer became a chiropractor because he injured his knee while playing sports as a young man and knew its benefits. "I loved chiropractic because it would have an immediate effect. Most people stand up after one treatment and say, 'I feel better,'" he said.

A 2005 graduate of Kearney High School, he graduated from the University of Nebraska at Kearney with a double major in psychology and human biology in 2009. In December 2012, he graduated from Logan College of Chiropractic outside St. Louis. He also has a master's degree in nutrition and human performance. He is married to the former Sarah Garringer.

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