

ACTIVE RELEASE TECHNIQUE®

What is ART®?

Active Release Technique®, or ART®, was developed in the mid 1980's by Dr. Michael Leahy, a Colorado based Chiropractor and aeronautical engineer. It is a state of the art, hands-on soft tissue technique designed specifically to find scar tissue in damaged tissues and release the adhesions that are resulting. This scar tissue is primarily caused by repetitive use or overuse of a certain muscle or tissue. Often athletes and industrial workers suffer from such overuse injuries, however, anybody can be affected by this injury.

How Does ART® work?

Healthy tissues in the body normally slide over each other smoothly. When tissues are injured either by an acute trauma or repetitive micro trauma over time, the tissues experience tiny tears, and these tears fill in with scar tissue. This scar tissue is the body's simplest grade of tissue, and often in the intent to repair the injury, the scar tissue does more harm than good. Scar tissue build-up hinders the muscle's ability to glide smoothly or to lengthen fully. Often the scar tissue can entrap nerves, reduce blood flow to muscles, and restrict movement creating pain, swelling and decreased range of motion. ART® works by breaking up the scar tissue that binds muscle fibers together. This is done by starting with the muscle in a shortened position as the practitioner traps the scar tissue under their finger or thumb, then the muscle is lengthened fully. Patients may feel sore the day after treatment, but later many report significant pain reduction.

Who Uses ART®?

ART® is highly regarded in the sports medicine community, utilized in professional sporting leagues (NFL, NHL, MLB), as well as at numerous sports venues such as triathlons, marathons, and sport tournaments. Many elite athletes will use ART® before trying any other means of treatment. Specifically Donovan Bailey is a strong advocate of ART®, claiming that ART® was invaluable to his gold medal success in Atlanta.

How Effective is ART®?

Research studies claim that ART® has a success rate of 70% or higher. This, of course, is dependent on the patient's compliance to rehabilitation and stretching of the problem tissues which led to its breakdown in the first place. Changing positions often, taking "micro-breaks" at work, or modifying athletic movement mechanics is necessary for full recovery to occur. ART® is usually effective in as little as 2-5 treatments.

Who Can Certify and Practice ART®?

Active Release Techniques® certification is open to licensed health care professionals including Chiropractors, Registered Physiotherapists, and Registered Massage Therapists. There are over 500 specific ART® protocols within 3 separate Certifications (Upper Extremity, Lower Extremity, and Spine) that the trainees must learn before becoming certified. Annual re-certification is necessary for health care practitioners in order to keep up with new findings in the technique and to keep skills sharp.