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## [Physical therapist Debra Martin uses laser therapy to get local athletes moving](#)

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The 830 Laser resembles a small flashlight. Contributed photo.

Chattanooga, TN is teeming with world-class athletes across a number of sports and disciplines, and most of them don't want a little thing like an ankle sprain, knee inflammation or a shoulder tweak to slow them down or, worse, prevent them from competing.

A growing number of local athletes are turning to laser therapy to return them to action. Yes, laser.

But it's not the kind of laser most people think about when they hear the word. This is 830 Laser, which is used for low-level light therapy that has fast-acting and long-lasting benefits.

Physical therapist Debra Martin was skeptical when she first heard about the 830 Laser, even though, since its benefits were discovered in 1967, more than 2,000 clinical studies have been published. It has been used in Europe, Canada and Asia for more than 30 years and the FDA approved its use in 2002.

"I saw the advertisements when I was thinking about buying it," said Martin, whose Archer Physical Therapy clinic is located on North Market Street. "But I thought, 'there's no way.' I thought it had to be a gimmicky thing."

But the company that produces the laser, which resembles a small flashlight, was offering a 60-day money back guarantee, so Martin took the plunge. It didn't take longer for her to realize she wouldn't be asking for her money back.

"Two weeks," Martin said. "That's how long it took me to realize it was getting results. It blew me away."



Physical therapist Debra Martin says many of her clients report quick results after being treated with the 830 Laser. Photo by Wendy Tipton.

When Martin talks about results, she's got client testimonials to back them up. There was a golfer who hadn't played in four years because of shoulder pain. After one laser treatment, he went out and hit 70 balls, pronounced himself back in action and embarked on a golf trip. Martin had to convince him that one procedure was all it took.

"He said it was a miracle," Martin said. "For a long time, he'd come back to me before another golf trip. And I'd tell him 'you really don't need the laser treatment now. It's better. You're not going to hurt anymore.'"

The laser apparently works quickly, too. Many times Martin has treated ankle injuries for runners two or three days before a race and gotten them back on the road in time to compete. But she always issues some sound advice with every treatment.

"The laser doesn't fix mechanical issues that might be going on," she said. "You can do this event on Sunday, but I need to see you to make sure it doesn't happen again down the road."

How does the 830 Laser work? Martin knew that question would come up, so she explains on her website:

"The 830Laser sends light (photons) into your injured tissues and stimulates healing and reduces pain instantly. The low level light can penetrate two inches into your body without being absorbed by the skin, fat, or blood. No heat is generated, so it is safe for use anywhere (exercise precaution when applying on the thyroid, fetus, ecoli, or any known cancers) on the body. Once the photons find the injured tissues, they stimulate and energize the cells to repair and strengthen at a remarkably fast rate. Collagen production is stimulated so the ligaments and tissues grow stronger than with normal healing!

"This laser therapy treatment does NOT wear off like most medicines, electrical stimulation, heat or ice. When it reduces inflammation, it stays away. It increases your body's own healing power and enhances that process. True healing. If you do not reinjure the area, the pain should not return."

Laser treatments have been proven effective on carpal tunnel syndrome and a variety of other injuries/conditions, including arthritis, back pain, bursitis/tendonitis, TMJ and even migraines. The New England Patriots credited the 830 Laser with helping them win the 2004 Super Bowl, and the procedure was done many times to keep recently retired NBA star Shaquille O'Neal on the court.

Martin obviously mentions the success by professional athletes in her marketing, but she delights more in telling the tales of ordinary athletes she's treated.

“Last week I saw six people over the course of three days,” she said. “I got emails from all those people before 8 o'clock the next morning. It was great to have that feedback every morning for three days in a row from people who were saying, ‘my ankle's better,’ ‘my back's better.’”

“It really makes me happy to hear that it's having that kind of success.”